POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT ACTION- PEA) PROJECT

MID-TERM REVIEW

Time-frame of the evaluation: September 2020 – December 2020

Date of the report: March 11 2021

Countries of the evaluation intervention: Bangladesh; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malawi; Mauritania; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nepal; Rwanda; Tanzania

Evaluator: Maria Onestini

Name of the organizations commissioning the evaluation: UNDP - UN Environment UNEP

Acknowledgements: The mid-term review consultant would like to acknowledge and thank all who kindly shared their time, information, and inputs for the interviews, dialogues, questionnaires and consultations that took place as part of this process.

Disclaimer: This report is product of an independent external review. The analysis and recommendations contained in this document only represent the analysis and views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the analysis, views and opinions of the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Environment Programme, donors, nor any other project stakeholders.

PROJECT INFORMATION TABLE

Project Information	
Project title	Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (Poverty-Environment Action - PEA)
Atlas ID	PID: 111963 (output ID: Global UNDP1/IDN 110689, 110690, 110691, 110692); Bangladesh 87607 (output ID: BGD 94549); Lao PDR 116379 (output ID: LAO 113551); Malawi 115077 (output ID: MWI 112834); Mauritania 107394 (output ID: MRT 107700); Mozambique 102786 (output ID: MOZ 112543); Myanmar 111777 (output ID: MMR 110608, 110620, 110621); Nepal 114483 (output ID: NPL 112484, 116781, 121846); Rwanda 115035 (output ID: RWA 112808); Tanzania 92476 (output ID: TZA 115525, 115526)
Corporate outcomes and outputs	UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome(s): Outcome 1 – Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions UN Environment Midterm Strategy Outcome(s): Expected Accomplishment b: Institutional capacity and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development UNDP Strategic Plan Output (at design): Output 1.1.1: Capacities developed across the whole of government to integrate the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international agreements (includes Addis, Istanbul, Quito, SAMOA, Sendai) in development plans and budgets, and to analyse progress toward the SDGs using innovative and data-driven solutions. Newly introduced (2020) Outputs SP Output: 1.4.1 Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains SP Output: 2.4.1 Gender-responsive legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened, and solutions adopted, to address conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing of natural resources, in line with international conventions and national legislation (newly introduced in 2020) UN Environment Midterm Strategy Outputs: Output 1: Advisory services and capacity development to strengthen institutional capacity and policy and legal frameworks for

	effectively and inclusively addressing the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals. Output 2: Advisory services to support countries in applying integrated approaches to the three dimensions of sustainable development in planning and policymaking, including in United Nations common country programming processes and in the context of promoting poverty and environment linkages in countries' policymaking, planning and budgeting. Expected Joint Project Outcome: Strengthened and more coherent policies, plans, regulations and investments to support Poverty-Environment priorities.	
Countries	Bangladesh; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malawi; Mauritania; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nepal; Rwanda; Tanzania	
Regions	Africa; Asia and the Pacific	
Date project document signed	August 23 2018	
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	September 1 2018	August 31 2022
Project budget at design	**20 Million USD**	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation (as of 31 August 2020)	**$3,098,239 USD**	
Funding source	**Austrian Development Agency/European Union/UNEP (Governments of Norway and Sweden), UNDP, UNEP, others**	
Implementing party	**This is a Joint Project by UNDP and UNEP.** **Managing Agent is UNDP**	

EVALUATION INFORMATION TABLE

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type	**Project**	
	Midterm review	
Period under evaluation	**Start**	**End**
	September 2018	December 2020[1]
Evaluator	Maria Onestini	
Evaluator email address	rponesti@criba.edu.ar	onestinimaria59@gmail.com
Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**
	September 2020	March 2021

[1] The report was produced in December 2020. The Evaluation Management Unit added three review/commenting stages to the report produced in December which were not part of the Terms of Reference. Due to this the final date of the report produced in December 2020 is March 2021.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
MA	Managing Agent
MTR	Mid Term Review
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
P – E	Poverty - Environment
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PEA	Poverty-Environment Action
PEI	Poverty Environment Initiative
ProDoc	Project Document
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
TA	Poverty-Environment Action Technical Assistance
TBC	To Be Confirmed
TdR	Terms of Reference
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (PEA) is a global project jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as strategic actors within the UN system to advance the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. PEA attempts to leverage the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation processes not only to mainstream environmental sustainability and related climate concerns for poverty eradication, but also to gradually shift government priorities and resource allocation towards addressing these issues. Further, it provides opportunities to improve the quality of private sector investments to support poverty-environment objectives. This is the focus of Poverty-Environment Action: aligning finance and investment with poverty, environment, and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation. The Project deals with the poverty – environment (including climate) nexus through the integration of environment and poverty considerations in development policies, plans and investments, assuring that the environmental dimension is not left behind when addressing poverty and promoting development.

PEA aims to strengthen integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems that integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication. It also aims at this so that public finance and investment frameworks that incentivize shifts in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication are drawn; and SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up the use of integrated poverty environment mainstreaming approaches and tools.

The intervention has been in implementation since September 2018 with a four months inception period from September to December 2018. The full expected project implementation runs from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2022. Eight full-fledged countries are being supported through the initiative with four in Africa (Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique and Rwanda) and four in Asia (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Nepal) with different implementation arrangement modalities. Tanzania and Indonesia are being supported with technical assistance since the beginning of the Project but are not full-fledged countries – with Tanzania being a hybrid reflecting the higher level of PEA and UNDP CO support. Other countries and regional initiatives supported with technical assistance have been recently added or are in the process of being approved. These are initiatives of global nature as well as regional initiatives in Africa and in Asia and Pacific. At design the Project was planned to leverage USD 20 million of donor funds. PEA is financed by the European Union (EU), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Norway and Sweden (through UNEP), as well as core and in-kind resources from UNDP and UNEP, and other financial resources mobilized locally i.e., in the countries where it is being implemented.

When this review process began, the PEA Project was in its second year of implementation and, therefore, scheduled to carry out a Mid-Term Review (MTR) according to its monitoring and evaluation plan. The main objective of this process is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and to identify early signs of project success or failure. The latter with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The objective is not only to assess what has been done, but also to determine how the achievements are arrived at (contributing factors) or not (hindering factors). The MTR also reviews the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. Based on the MTR findings, the ultimate purpose for this process is to provide a framework for strengthening achievements, and / or make recommendations to correct what needs to be corrected in the next year and a half of implementation. The review used a variety of data sources, primary, secondary, qualitative, quantitative,

etc., extracted from document analysis and desk review, online interviews, as well as a questionnaire (also implemented online).

PEA's technical support has been well received by many actors, at the national and at the regional and global levels in order to work towards its overall aim of strengthened and more coherent policies, plans, regulations and investments to support Poverty-Environment priorities. The Joint Project (PEA) is implemented between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)–United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and builds its development upon the experience and lessons learned of the UNDP–UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). PEA, however, not only has it built upon original approaches to mainstream the PE nexus in planning, but also has been innovative in conceptually incorporating innovative features of this nexus. These are financing aspects, work with the private sector, and promoting South – South cooperation. The planned and –eventually—leveraged budget for this global endeavour is moderately small for what its expectations are and what it pretends to achieve in eight countries and through (potentially) ten technical assistance processes. Therefore, given this limited scope, the future of PEA lies also in promoting linkages (concrete and specific) with key partners, within and without the UN System. The PEA Project intends to generate a basis upon which integrating and integrated approaches and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication in development planning and budgeting are fostered.

At the output/outcome level there has been low delivery. Of the total number of outputs/outcomes expected to be achieved at mid-point (170) only 56 percent of these were achieved. Therefore, using this metric, there is an indication of low delivery. If proper adjustments are implemented (at several levels, such as programmatic, operational as well as conceptual) there is a potential for achieving at least a greater number of outputs and output-related outcomes. However, for this the Project would have to enhance and streamline delivery in the period remaining in order to achieve expectations to an acceptable degree as well as to foment sustainability of what has been accomplished.

There are a number of contributing factors to achievements thus far, which clearly emerge as inputs for intended achievements at the output and, ultimately, at the outcome levels. Among the most salient ones is the targeted technical support the PEA Project provides to the country-level activities and outputs (both as broader support to full-fledged countries and as targeted support through the technical assistance projects). The global and regional expertise that the overall project team fulfils, in particular technical support articulated at both regional levels, is a crucial factor that contributes to performance. A second important contributing factor is the explicit building upon PEI achievements, tools, instruments, through the groundwork already carried out in the specific countries involved as well as at the regional/global levels. Furthermore, localising SDGs efforts, that is the proactive and explicit localisation of SDG by mainstreaming P-E by embedding SDGs and targets within the context of national and sub-national development plans, is a contributing factor. Although the sub national level is at times more complex to work with, it is agreed that this is innovative in many countries within the PE and climate nexus and can be a strong contributing factor for achievement.

There are also a series of issues which are hindering factors for the Project's performance. Many of these have been associated to the delays the Project is experiencing, such as operational issues (managerial and resource planning not commensurate with project scope and expectations), delays in implementation due to the fact that design was finalised in the first half-year of project implementation, long processes for the conceptualisation and approval for both full-fledged and technical assistance activities, a weakened strategic outlook, national level problems with implementation ranging from issues entrenched on how Country Offices function and their relations with governments when these are not fluid, and also to issues pertaining to national shifts in development priorities. Some of these priority shifts and operational challenges are, undeniably, associated to the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected the socio – economic architecture of developing countries.

The factors that can contribute, eventually, to sustainability of results are also wide-ranging as can be expected from a multi – country and multi-layered endeavour. Recognised contributing factors are the issues of applicability (technical and political) of the different outputs developed, the purposeful imbedding of outcomes and outputs institutionally, national ownership of the different processes that deal with the PE/climate nexus in the context of the SDGs as well as national institutional capacities to sustain effects beyond implementation. Lastly, other factors that have been identified as contributing to sustainability are current and potential partnerships --in country and at the regional and global levels--, association with other UN agencies and with other development actors (such as donors and non-UN development organisations, as well as with financial institutions).

There are, evidently, also a number of factors that can hinder PEA's potential sustainability of current and potential results. The main factors are a lack of exit strategies, lack of ownership or shifting national priorities in some countries, as well as weak national and subnational capacity to implement outputs and outcomes. Also, in those countries where the national project operates in isolation, without a thorough utilisation of partnerships with other development actors, the prospect of sustainability once the Project ends is diminished.

It is undeniable that the Project is behind schedule in obtaining what it has aimed to achieve in terms of outputs and outcomes at the midpoint stage of implementation. Yet, with the proper routing of decisions to steer and improve implementation at all levels, while seeking sustainability once the project ends, it is understood by this review that expected outputs and outcomes can be achieved at approximately expected levels by project end. That is, ***if*** measures are taken as soon as possible to proactively steer the Project at this midpoint and proper adjustments are implemented, then the Project can fulfil its expected outputs at a substantial level. However, it should be made clear that these adjustments need to be implemented as soon as possible and be proactively managed. With adjustments and steering of managerial as well as strategic characteristics in the next two years, there is a possibility that the outputs will be achieved fairly and to a certain degree in line with the expected and planned levels.

This report ends with a series of recommendations regarding the areas that it would have to improve in order to seek implementation to realise its intended achievements as well as to secure sustainability factors. The recommendations are clustered under six topics: (a) resource mobilisation and financial contingency plans; (b) operational issues and programmatic issues; (d) PEA's strategic outlook and sustainability; (e) gender mainstreaming; (f) adapting to COVID-19 impacts; (g) partnerships. The potential to conclude a PEA project with achievements and with sustainability beyond its implementation span is there if adjustments are made swiftly and profoundly.

INTRODUCTION: DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (PEA) is a global project jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as strategic actors within the UN system to advance the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. PEA attempts to leverage the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation processes not only to mainstream environmental sustainability and related climate concerns for poverty eradication, but also to gradually shift government priorities and resource allocation towards addressing these issues. Further, it provides opportunities to improve the quality of private sector investments to support poverty-environment objectives. The focus of Poverty-Environment Action is: *aligning finance and investment with poverty, environment, and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation.* The Project deals with the poverty – environment (including climate) nexus through the integration of environment and poverty considerations in development policies, plans and investments, assuring that the environmental dimension is not left behind when addressing poverty and promoting development.

PEA aims to strengthen the integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems that integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication. It also aims at this in order to engender this by promoting public finance and investment frameworks that incentivize shifts in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication are drawn. Furthermore, it endeavours to further SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up the use of integrated poverty environment mainstreaming approaches and tools.

The focus is based on operating at different levels (global, regional and national) and with a bifocal complimentary approach. The two tracks and approaches are as follows:

- Deepen mainstreaming efforts to integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication into development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems into public and private finance and investment.
- Broaden the dissemination and use of the programme's substantial body of country-level experience in the application of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools through stepped-up efforts in knowledge management and sharing—including through targeted technical assistance to selected countries, South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation, and proactive engagement with key global and regional actors supporting national SDG implementation and acceleration processes

Poverty-Environment Action builds on the experience and lessons learned of the UNDP–UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). PEI, which was implemented from 2013-2018, is the predecessor initiative to PEA. PEI fostered integrated approaches to mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages in national development planning and implementation processes. PEI developed specialized knowledge, a comprehensive Poverty-Environment mainstreaming tool kit and a number of case studies, which PEA builds upon.

The joint project is linked to several strategic corporate priorities, as follows:

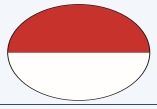
UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome(s):	Outcome 1 – Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions
UN Environment Midterm Strategy Outcome(s):	Expected Accomplishment b: Institutional capacity and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.
UNDP Strategic Plan Output:	Output 1.1.1: Capacities developed across the whole of government to integrate the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international agreements (includes Addis, Istanbul, Quito, SAMOA, Sendai) in development plans and budgets, and to analyse progress toward the SDGs using innovative and data-driven solutions. SP Output: 1.4.1 Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains. SP Output: 2.4.1 Gender-responsive legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened, and solutions adopted, to address conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing of natural resources, in line with international conventions and national legislation (newly introduced in 2020)
UN Environment Midterm Strategy Outputs:	Output 1: Advisory services and capacity development to strengthen institutional capacity and policy and legal frameworks for effectively and inclusively addressing the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals. Output 2: Advisory services to support countries in applying integrated approaches to the three dimensions of sustainable development in planning and policymaking, including in United Nations common country programming processes and in the context of promoting poverty and environment linkages in countries' policymaking, planning and budgeting.
Expected Joint Project Outcome:	Strengthened and more coherent policies, plans, regulations and investments to support Poverty-Environment priorities.

The intervention has been in implementation since September 2018 with a four months inception period from September to December 2018. The full expected project implementation runs from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2022.

Eight full-fledged countries are being supported through the initiative with four in Africa (Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique and Rwanda) and four in Asia (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Nepal) through different implementation arrangement modalities. Tanzania and Indonesia are being supported with technical assistance since the beginning of the Project but are not full-fledged countries – with Tanzania being a hybrid reflecting a higher level of PEA and UNDP CO support. Other countries and regional initiatives supported with technical assistance have been recently added or are in the process of being approved. These are initiatives of a global nature as well as regional initiatives in Africa and in Asia

and Pacific. The countries chosen to participate are those that signalled substantive advances in Phase 2 (2014–2018) of the Poverty-Environment Initiative, and that had high potential to deliver on the shift in investments expected from Poverty-Environment Action.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT ACTION COUNTRY PROJECTS[2]

Country	Project	Description
Lao PDR	Improving Quality Investment for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Lao PDR	Strengthen government's regulatory capacity to coordinate and promote higher-quality investment; and improve ease of doing business, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of investment management for achieving the SDGs. Help government address and remove investment regulatory and business barriers which currently hinder development of a healthy, vibrant, competitive business environment; while regulating compliance and obligation of investment projects to create more jobs for local people and build skills of national staff.
Malawi	Poverty-Environment Action for the SDGs	Jointly implemented with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UN Women. Focuses on poverty-environment mainstreaming in broader national and sector policy and budget processes. Promotes climate-resilient and gender-responsive agriculture by influencing agricultural investments.
Mauritania	Project to support the implementation and monitoring of the Poverty / Environment objectives of the SCAPP and sectoral policies in relation to the SDGs in Mauritania	Support implementation and monitoring of poverty-environment objectives in the national development plan and sectoral policies as a contribution to achievement of the SDGs.
Mozambique	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources for Resilient and Equitable Development (SUNRED II)	Influence climate and environmental budgeting and expenditures across sectors and strengthen management of natural resource revenues to optimize revenue collection and benefit-sharing mechanisms with vulnerable groups to promote environmental sustainability.
Myanmar	Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project	Embedded in UNDP Myanmar Country Office's Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project (2018–2022). Aims to promote (i) mainstreaming of environment and poverty considerations into investment and management systems, (ii) mobilization of green investments in environmental goods and services, and (iii) improved organizational performance by lead agencies responsible for environmental management and climate change.
Nepal	Accelerating implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal	Enabling environment and capacity development to mitigate SDG financing gap as well as through accelerated implementation. Outcomes include (i) planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting systems at all levels of government are SDG responsive and functional; and (ii) resilient and innovative financing available for SDG implementation.
Rwanda	Poverty-Environment Action for SDGs	Direct private and public investments towards poverty-environment action by influencing investment incentive structures and guidelines and build capacity for the use of mainstreaming tools, including multidimensional poverty assessments which include an environmental sustainability perspective, in planning and budget processes.
Indonesia 	Sustainable Development Finance Facility (SDFF)	Supports outputs that will deepen sustainable finance at the provincial level through provincial budget tagging; strengthening gender-responsive climate change budgeting; and strengthening Indonesia's first Islamic Green Bond, granted in 2018.
Tanzania	Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Gender-Climate Change into Local Economic Development and SDG Localization for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication in Tanzania	Support local government authorities and the central government in applying poverty environment analytical tools in the implementation of district development plans, sector strategies and regional investment guidelines.

[2] Source: Horizons of Hope: PEA for SDGs. Annual Progress Report 2019.

UNDP serves as the Managing Agent (MA) for the project which –at design-- was planned to leverage USD 20 million of donor funds. PEA is financed by the European Union (EU), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Norway and Sweden (through UNEP), as well as core and in-kind resources from UNDP and UNEP, and other financial resources mobilized locally i.e., in the countries where the Project is being implemented. Following is a chart indicating funds and sources at planning stages[3].

Total estimated donor funded project budget:	US$ 20M	
Out of which approximately:		
Funded budget:	US$ 15.7M	
Unfunded budget:	US$ 4.3M	
Source of funded budget:		
UN Environment (pooled funds) (Norway/Sweden Pooled Funds)		US$ 4M
European Commission		US$11M
Government of Austria		US$ 735K
Core agency contributions:		
UNDP (parallel, in kind staff and TRAC)		US$ 6M
UN Environment (in kind staff)		US$ 6M

[3] This information will be updated in different sections of the report indicating the differences between planned resources and actually leveraged resources to date.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, APPROACH, METHODS, AND DATA ANALYSIS

The PEA Project is in its second year of implementation[4] and, therefore, scheduled to carry out a Mid-Term Review (MTR) according to its monitoring and evaluation plan. The main objective of this process is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and early signs of project successes or failures. The latter with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The objective is to not only assess what has been done, but also how the achievements are arrived at (contributing factors) or not (hindering factors). The MTR likewise reviews the project's strategy and its risks regarding sustainability. Based on the MTR findings, the ultimate purpose for this process is to provide a framework for strengthening achievements, and / or make recommendations to correct what needs to be corrected in the next year and a half of implementation. Given the COVID-19 pandemic context, the MTR also analyses its impact on the Project and includes suggested measures to minimize risks and negative impacts of the pandemic upon PEA implementation.

The key deliverables and outputs of the MTR were established in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1: Terms of Reference). These were: • Kick-off meeting; • MTR Inception Report; MTR debriefings; • Draft evaluation report; • MTR report audit trail; • Final MTR report; • Presentation of final evaluation report.

Evaluation Scope: The temporal scope of the MTR includes the entirety of PEA's activities at the outcome and output levels from 2018 (start of the Project) to the MTR start date. The geographic scope of this review entails all of the countries where the Project takes place, such as full-fledged countries as well as those countries which are being supported with technical assistance but are not full-fledged countries.

Evaluation Approach: The approach for the review was participatory and consultative ensuring close engagement with key stakeholders and partners. Key stakeholders and partners were defined at the onset of the midterm review process as the Global PEA Project Team, PEA – associated stakeholders at UNDP and UNEP, donors and other members of the Project Board, PEA teams at country level, staff at UNDP Country Offices, as well as government counterparts.

Evaluation Methods: The review used a variety of data sources, primary, secondary, qualitative, quantitative, etc., extracted from document analysis and desk review, online interviews, as well as a questionnaire (also implemented online). The approach entailed the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to validate and triangulate information. Also, through this combination of methods, feedback between the various tools and validation between different levels and types of data collection was sought to triangulate the information, and thus ensuring the validity of the data that give rise to the evaluation process and to this report. Regarding specific methodologies to gather assessment information, the following tools and methods were used: Document Analysis; Key Informant Interviews; and Questionnaires.[5] A first tool developed for this review process was an evaluation matrix used to map data for an assessment and aid in triangulating the available evidence. This matrix identified the key evaluation questions and how they were answered via the methods selected to map the data and as a reference in planning and conducting the assessment. It also served as a tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology at onset. The matrix identified the key evaluation questions and sub questions, ordering them by criteria, and presented indications as well on verification and methods to be used to assess each of the questions/sub questions. The interviews were steered by a set of guiding questions set at this review's planning stage (See Annex 2: Guiding Questions

[4] The Project was in its second year of implementation when this review process began.

[5] In annexes a list of consulted documents as well as a list of stakeholders engaged with are found.

for Interviews/Group Discussions). When stakeholders were not available for an interview or to avoid language barriers, the guiding questions were sent as a questionnaire, translated for the non-English speaking countries.

The typology of stakeholders was identified at onset and inception of the review process.[6] There was engagement with all of these types of stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels, as well as other stakeholders who were deemed as key informants and were included as the interview/group discussions advanced (such as consultants, for instance). In annexes (see Annex 10: List of stakeholders the review engaged with) the names and affiliations of the 48 stakeholders that participated in the review can be found. The process for the midterm review included a number of different debriefings which were held for validation of analysis as well as to inform key stakeholders of the midterm review process.

Ethical considerations were fully considered, abiding by UNEG's 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators'. Particularly, ethical considerations were followed bearing in mind measures and guidance to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants.

Evaluation Criteria: The following evaluation criteria was used to assess performance: *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.* For the purpose of the MTR these are defined as follows:

- *Relevance* - the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change;
- *Effectiveness* - the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups;
- *Efficiency* - the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way; and
- *Sustainabilit*y - the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue after project closure.[7]

Furthermore, as indicated in the Terms of Reference, the MTR was requested to analyse two further areas of review: *human rights* and *gender equity*. Terms of Reference are found in Annex 1: Terms of Reference. In that annex, as well as in other evaluation tools, further specific information on criteria, evaluation questions, etc. are found.

[6] Global PEA Project Team, PEA – associated stakeholders at UNDP and UNEP, donors and other members of the Project Board, PEA teams at country level, staff at UNDP Country Offices, as well as government counterparts.

[7] OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation. Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use. February 2020.

Evaluation Questions: In accordance with the review's Terms of Reference, the review was guided by three broad evaluation questions, as follows:

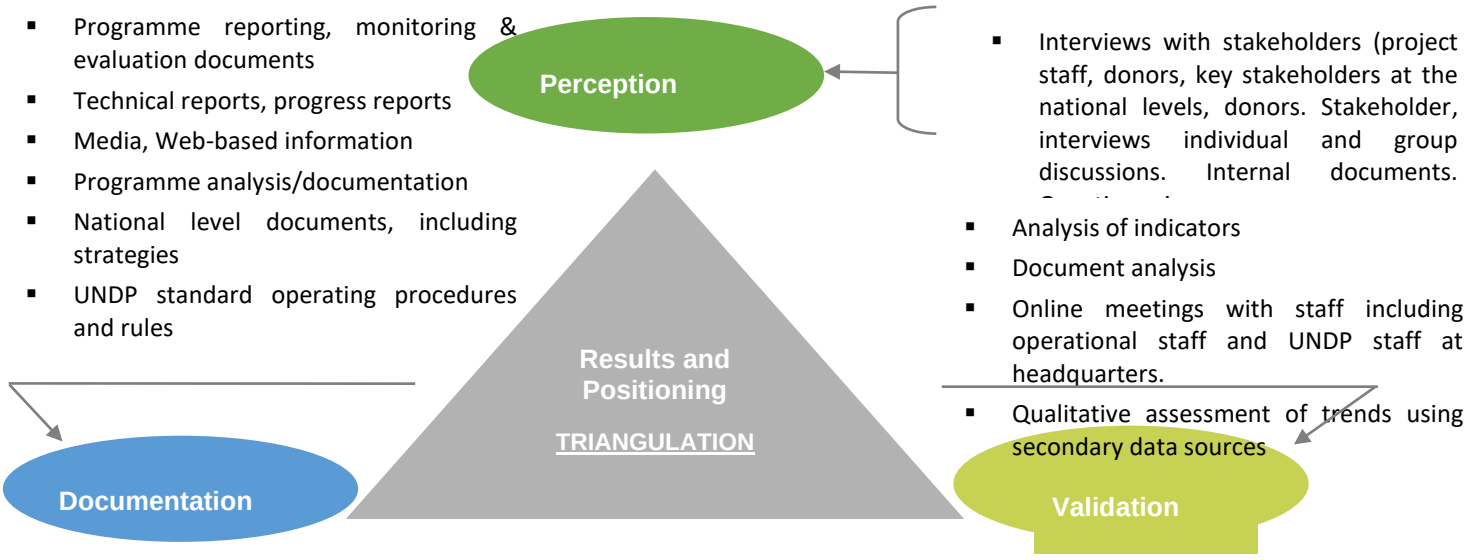
FIGURE 2: MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- What did the PEA project intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made at the outcome level?
- What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?

These three main evaluation questions were supplemented (as stated in ToRs) by a group of 39 other questions and sub questions encompassing all of the evaluation criteria. The report is organised by the different criteria (Relevance including Human Rights and Gender Equality, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability) and it relates to questions indicated for each criterion as indicated in the ToRs (the questions are listed in the Terms of Reference as seen in Annex 1: Terms of Reference).

Data Analysis: The use of both qualitative and quantitative data supported the validation and triangulation of information. Through a combination of methods feedback between the various tools and validation between different levels and types of data collection was sought to triangulate the information, and thus ensuring the validity of the data that give rise to the evaluation process and to this report. The following figure graphically indicates the evaluation approach for analysis.

FIGURE 3: EVALUATION APPROACH FOR ANALYSIS



Rankings. Through the Terms of Reference for this review an analysis by reviewing the framework indicators against progress made towards the project outputs targets was requested. This analysis was to be colour coded in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved at the output level.

After the data gathering stage ended, this reviewer was further requested to generate and apply an additional ranking system. For this, a ranking scale was adopted for the different criteria (relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness) and another for sustainability ratings. For the criteria a six-point scale was adopted while for sustainability ratings a four-point scale was used (as seen in Annex 3: Rating Scales).

Limitations. Reviews normally face limitations, such as time, resources, data availability. Yet this midterm review was faced with further limitations by having it take place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main functional impact was the lack of in-country missions that were originally planned for the review. Other issues that have been predicted to have effects upon evaluations and reviews by the UN, such as additional time needed for stakeholders to respond to the review's requests, access to online platforms by different stakeholders, were not relevant. For carrying out the review, therefore, UNEG's Guidance on Evaluation Planning and Operation During COVID-19 was followed for the design and implementation of the assessment process. The data and information were gathered through a desktop review (as originally planned before the pandemic), yet the personal interviews were done using remote mechanisms (video conferences and online platforms, telephone calls, questionnaires etc.) as necessary. Notwithstanding the emergency, the review followed a collaborative and participatory approach while using remote engagement with the all of the key stakeholders. Therefore, it is understood that this midterm review was not overly affected by the situation and that the methodologies used were pertinent and appropriate.

FINDINGS

Overview: The aim of this intervention entails mainstreaming of poverty-environment objectives into policy, budgeting, programming and investments. The Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goal is a Project by the United Nations Development Programme–United Nations Environment Programme (UNDP–UNEP). The forerunner initiative, the UNDP–UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, validated the concept that improved environmental sustainability can address this challenge and contribute to poverty eradication.[8] The PEA Project has as its specific foci to deepen and broaden P – E mainstreaming as well as to align public finances and private investments with climate objectives as well as with poverty/environment links.

Two sorts of interventions are being implemented within the PEA program and are divided into two types: Full Fledged Countries and Technical Assistance interventions. PEA has engaged from its very beginning with what it has defined as full – fledged countries (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal and Rwanda). The technical assistance component of PEA deals with poverty-environment mainstreaming to selected countries, regions and sub-regions that do not have a full-fledged country PEA project. The objective of the technical assistance modality is to catalyse PEA and broaden the use of poverty-environment mainstreaming tools and approaches through wider UNDP and/or UNEP programmes that contribute to the overall PEA expected outcomes and outputs and instrumenting this through expertise and knowledge resources. Therefore, the outputs, the focalisation, and even the expected outcomes, are very dissimilar between the two modalities.

The funding architecture of the PEA Project is multi-layered and involves a number of financial sources and types of financing. As planned (that is, as stated in the Project Document) the total formulated budget for this four – year initiative was to be of 20 million US dollars. The sources are wide-ranging. They are donor funds (Austrian Development Agency, European Union and through UNEP funds from the Government of Norway and from the Government of Sweden); and agency contributions from UNDP instrumented via in-kind staffing. Contributions by UNEP are instrumented via operations and in-kind staffing. At the country level, funding is instrumented via UNDP core resources/TRAC, government co – funding, as well as other sources.

In the following sections of this report an analysis vis-à-vis the review criteria are found. At the end of the document, lessons learned and recommendations are drawn, the latter as suggested changes that PEA may implement in order to fulfil its objectives in its remaining implementation period.

DESIGN

Findings on Design: The design of the Project follows a standard strategy for this sort of intervention with the inclusion of an expected objective, expected outcome and outputs and key areas of activity as well as key deliverables. Design has strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the design derive mainly from the fact that PEA is strategically anchoring to induce change in poverty – environment linkages and in poverty-environment mainstreaming. This is also as illustrated by its theory of change. Design weaknesses mainly are derived by a degree of lack of specificity at project inception regarding its log frame indicators, design documents complexity, as well as weak financial architecture.

[8] For information on the progression of different PEI phases, PEA, and the endeavours' key features see Annex 4: Overview of PEI Phases and PEA

The design of the Project follows a standard strategy for this sort of intervention with the inclusion of an objective, expected outcomes and outputs and key areas of activity as well as key deliverables. The design process was a concerted integrated effort with consultative and participatory discussions between and among different stakeholders (such as UNDP, UNEP, PEI Project staff, donors, beneficiaries).

The expected Outcome for the intervention as a whole is*: Strengthened integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs***.**

This is anticipated to be achieved through three interrelated outputs:

- Output 1: Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
- Output 2: Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
- Output 3: SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools.

In turn, these outputs are made up of a series of anticipated deliverables (such as policy and technical advisory services, capacity-building activities, knowledge management products) to support poverty-environment mainstreaming for the SDGs in line with country's demands/needs.

Each output comprises a package of key deliverables and policy and technical advisory and capacity-building services to support poverty-environment mainstreaming for the SDGs in line with country demand/needs. (see Annex 12: Results Framework for a full log frame and list of outputs as indicated in the Project Document).

It is also of note that the design of the project is anchored strategically to induce change. It follows, conceptually, several definitions. For instance, as seen in the box below, whereby the strategy set at design defines poverty – environment linkages and poverty-environment mainstreaming.

FIGURE 4: DEFINITIONS (SOURCE: PROJECT DOCUMENT)

Poverty-environment linkages primarily reflect the contribution of sustainable management of the environment and natural resources to social and economic development outcomes. Addressing these linkages embodies concepts of pro-poor environmental sustainability, including sustainable management of natural resources, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, a focus on poverty reduction and equity especially for marginalized groups (including women and indigenous peoples), working towards inclusive green growth (UNDP 2010), as well as security, resilience and migration.

Poverty-environment mainstreaming is a sustained iterative process of institutional change to integrate poverty environment linkages into policy and planning, budgeting and implementation processes at national, sector and sub-national levels. The aim is to enhance environmental and natural resource sustainability as a means to help achieve poverty eradication and other economic and social development goals. It is a multi-year, multi stakeholder effort that entails working with state actors (such as head of state's office, environment, finance and planning bodies, line ministries, parliaments and local authorities) and non-state actors (civil society, academia, the private sector, the general public and communities, and the media). This integrated approach requires an understanding of the different roles played by women, men and indigenous peoples in environmental and natural resource management, and the different ways they are affected by the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change.

Design has a specific Theory of Change which focuses on the environment – poverty nexus. The Theory of Change describes a conduit through which mainstreaming of the poverty – environment nexus would be an outcome framed within national and subnational development processes. The expected aim indicated in the Theory of Change is to contribute to implementing the 2030 SDG agenda by means of the localization of these goals at the national and subnational levels. The Project's Theory of Change is still relevant at this point. A graph with the ToC is found Annex 5: Theory of Change.

Overall, the design process broadly benefitted from and built upon the Poverty-Environment Initiative, in particular its Scale-up Phases. Specifically, also, the design process benefitted from the information about the countries where PEI was implemented. Baseline knowledge was provided by conceptual tools developed for PEI as a whole as well as by assessments of PEI, such as this initiative's final evaluation, supporting the design of PEA. Nevertheless, as will be seen in other sections of this report, the perception by several stakeholders at different levels is that this endeavour (i.e., PEA) is a continuation or a new phase of PEI (which is not). This has caused a series of confusions concerning implementation, resource base, achievements, effectiveness, as well as regarding management modality.

Initial risk assessments to acknowledge potential risks were developed in the design document (ProDoc). For instance, when drawing PEA's monitoring plan, design indicates that, through the implementation of monitoring activities, specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results should be identified and risk logs (for the global as well as for the country level activities) should be used for this. To mitigate potential risks, the Project Document indicates that management should propose actions to the Project Board in order to implement risk-management procedures and engage in course correction. A preliminary generic risk log is also included in the Project Document where risks are ranked according to their potential impact, severity, and probability of occurring.

Although the expected results framework follows a standard strategy of anticipating to achieve an outcome through the implementation of concrete outputs, there are –however—some issues with design. First of all, the designed results log frame did not have baseline indicators nor output/outcomes indicators since was planned in such a way that new baseline/output and outcome indicators were to be established as a result of related studies within the first six months of project implementation. The indicators are presented as metrics to be determined in most cases. This is puzzling to some degree and perplexing to several stakeholders given that the PEA Project design is largely based on knowledge derived from the former UNDP/UNEP initiative (PEI) that dealt with the environment – poverty nexus in the countries where PEA is being developed. Furthermore, this lack of indicators demanded time and effort in the first six months of implementation (half a year of what the Project indicates is a period of inception). Additionally, the lack of measurable indicators from onset retarded early monitoring efforts as will be seen in the sections further ahead that specifically deals with this matter.

While the Project indicates that changes are aligned with Delegated Authorities signed by the UNDP country teams, changes in the planning processes for national level activities and outputs have, nevertheless, caused confusion and have posed challenges, particularly at the country level. The project document processes for the development and approval of national – level activities and outputs changed from the previous format used in PEI development, involving proportionally more resources (time, staff commitment, etc.) vis-à-vis the scope of the initiatives at the country level.

Furthermore, the above issues are compounded by the lack of a robust financial resource planning imbedded in the development process. Resource limitations manifested themselves, predominantly in the last few months of implementation before this review, in particular due to a shortfall of funding expected at design. This can also be considered a design weakness. At the time of design, funding of US$1.2m for the joint PEA programme as indicated in PRODOC signed in August 2018 were to be drawn from UNEP's funds originating in the resources that Norway contributes to this agency. This commitment was further anchored by two successive Memoranda of Understanding between UNDP and UNEP. The

1.2 million USD corresponds approximately to one-third of total commitment by UNEP to the overall project pledge. The total committed funds, however, have not been allocated in recent years to the level pledged. Also, in – kind support (mainly operationalized as staff time) has not materialized from UNEP to the expected levels. The design weakness comprised here, therefore, is the issue that activities, outputs, processes and country – support indicated at design cannot be guaranteed with the funds and in – kind support truly mobilized to date. Moreover, this gap has also had impacts on the Project structure and processes as it pertains to management and technical support at the regional levels.

RELEVANCE

Findings on Relevance: The Project is relevant given that the overall objectives established respond to needs and priorities established by the different countries involved as well as corporate UNDP and UNEP priorities. Overall project strategy is still relevant and pertinent at this implementation stage. The project strategy does provide the most relevant appropriate route towards expected results with the necessary adjusting to changing circumstances in different levels. Human rights and gender equality issues, as a component of relevance, are included in design and in implementation. However, in implementation, gender equality mainstreaming is done at varying degrees.

Rating: Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings.

Relevance, in the context of evaluations, is the extent to which an intervention's objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

The PEA Project responds to the priorities and needs of targeted countries and beneficiaries and continues to do so at this stage. As defined in the Project Document, the individual country proposals were analysed against a core set of criteria in order to determine eligibility to take part in this endeavour, as well as provide a framework to respond to each country's needs. For instance, eligibility implies that countries had a low to medium ranking on UNDP's Human Development Index, with priority given to low human development countries. Concrete evidence of significant environmental degradation and natural resource unsustainability that affects poor and vulnerable groups were also factors considered to determine the relevance of PEA vis-à-vis countries' needs. Relevance therefore is imbedded from each individual country proposal.

The Project has, as designed and as is beginning to demonstrate, a strong potential for the promotion of South – South cooperation and exchanges, indicating inherent relevance for these sorts of exchanges. It is noteworthy that one of the innovative emphasis of PEA and one of its two – pronged strategies of deepening and broadening support to countries on poverty-environment and climate mainstreaming is specifically to broaden the dissemination and use of the programme's substantial body of country-level experience in the application of integrated P-E mainstreaming approaches and tools through stepped-up efforts in knowledge management and sharing through South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation. Although implementation of this South – South knowledge exchange has not

been fully matured yet (and has been one of the matters delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic as will be seen ahead) this area of work is highly relevant and shows strong potential for the near future.

The project addresses priorities in each of the countries involved and is it aligned with national development plans, UNDAF, UNDP and UN Environment priorities, and strategic plans, formally as well as conceptually, as evidenced in each of the individual country's proposals. Formally all countries presented agreements at design signalling their alignment with the Project's objectives and the alignment of the Project with their respective countries' priorities. These agreements mark, furthermore, that the Project is formally appropriately responsive to national needs.

Nevertheless, country priorities and their ensuing policies are not static. Stakeholders indicate that greater success has been achieved for PEA in the last two years when an individual country's priorities are still fully aligned with their overall objectives and aims in dealing with the Poverty – Environment nexus and where –therefore-- ownership is still strong. Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 has indeed impacted on countries' priorities and priority shifts.[9]

Relevance is also gaged by alignment with overall UNDP and UN Environment priorities as well as with each agency's portfolio. This is not only pertinent with regards to coherence and complementarity within overall programming but also to leverage resource mobilization opportunities. This is key for complementarity with programming, partnerships and –eventually- regarding sustainability of PEA's achievements at the national, regional, and global levels. At design, several initiatives which could provide backing and be counterparts in programming and aid in resource mobilisation have been specifically identified as such. These were: Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), UN-REDD, SWITCH-Africa/Asia, UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), the UN Environment Finance Initiative, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) or the United Nations Capital Development Fund's Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility. Throughout implementation in the first two years of PEA there have been links with several of these as well as with other partners.

Therefore, the global PEA project is relevant vis-a-vis UNDP's and UNEP priorities, given that the Project is well aligned with both institutions' corporate priorities. This is highlighted in the Project Document by indicating PEA is integrated within UNDP and UN Environment strategic frameworks, such as UNDP Strategic Plan (2018–2021) and other corporate policies on helping countries achieve Agenda 2030. For UN Environment PEA is aligned with the Programme of Work and Mid-Term Strategy for 2017–2021, and with UN Environment Assembly-2 Resolutions on supporting the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and sustainable management of natural capital for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Implementation is, therefore, aligned with these corporate priorities.

Relevance is linked to other critical issues: human rights and gender equality. The PEA Project is, by its very nature, focused on human rights given that by working on the environment – poverty nexus it focuses on marginalised and disadvantaged groups benefiting from the project's interventions in contributing to enhance fulfilment of people's economic and social rights. Furthermore, from design onward a focus on economic and social rights is made explicit at all levels and relevant in application.

The Project design documents emphasize that a new and additional feature of PEA programming (in comparison and building upon PEI) is that it would have a stronger focus upon incorporating gender and rights-based approaches in country-level poverty-environment mainstreaming efforts. For this, PEA would promote human rights standards in P-E strategies and mainstreaming other efforts, including the right to information, public participation in decision making, and access to justice by poor and marginalized groups while addressing discrimination/exclusion which generates and sustains poverty and

[9] This issue and the way that PEA has responded regarding priorities, relevance and the pandemic will be further analysed in the section specifically dedicated to this matter.

unsustainable management of natural resources, and inhibits access rights of the poor to natural resources and other environmental assets.

The implementation process has followed to some degree these notions, either tacitly or specifically. Since the SDGs are rights-based approaches and the implementation of SDGs through linking poverty and environment issues, the Project's core work is rights-based. Some activities/outputs carried out within the Project specifically link with the rights-based approach. Examples of this is the Project-sponsored background study on '*Leaving No One Behind in Bangladesh"* or the development of a portfolio of good green pro-poor business cases from the region being carried out in Myanmar.

Furthermore, alliances with specific areas of the human rights architecture within the UN have also fostered (and can continue to foster through further partnerships) the insertion of poverty – environment mainstreaming through PEA via work with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to contribute to SDGs. Additionally, new linkages are also being sought with the UN Human Rights sphere, for instance with the office of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, which sustain the design aims of relevance vis-à-vis human rights.

POVERTY – ENVIRONMENT – GENDER LINKAGE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PEA

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is a cross – cutting issue in PEA. It, as many other topics, builds upon PEI-developed instruments and analyses. Gender issues have been addressed in project design with a general gender marker code assigned as well as with gender equality details indicated in the Project Document. The gender marker for the Project is Code: GEN1. The gender marker indicates the contribution of a project to the achievement of gender equality. A GEN1 marker specifies that a project's outcome would have some contributions to gender equality. It is also indicative that gender is partially mainstreamed. That is, that only some of the activities of the output address gender, and do so in a limited way. The marker assigned to the project is representative of realism given that gender equality is mainstreamed partially in some outputs as well as through the support of some gender-specific processes and outputs.

The Project Document indicates that a feature of this project's programming would imply applying a stronger focus on incorporating gender in country-level poverty-environment mainstreaming efforts. This would include the promotion of gender equality in poverty-environment strategies and in mainstreaming efforts. Additionally, also at design, partnerships were endorsed in order to achieve this, particularly with UN Women, on capacity building, awareness raising and policy analysis for influencing a number of sector policies to be aligned with specific SDGs to increase the participation of women in policy (as indicated in SDG target 5.5.), enhance women's ownership and control over natural resources including land (pertaining to SDG targets 1.4 and 5.a) and increase women's productivity and strengthen their climate resilience in the agriculture sector (as indicated in SDG targets 2.3 and 2.4). Furthermore, a detailed strategy on how to integrate gender in PEA was also a part of the project design documentation.

As background to support specific work on Gender – Poverty – Environment linkages within PEA, several assessments were accomplished to establish gaps in government systems in addressing poverty-environment linkages and gender. In Myanmar an organizational capacity needs assessment of its Environmental Conservation Department was carried out in order assess the needs for fostering a comprehensive organisational capacity and human resources development strategy for the department. In Rwanda an environment / gender gap assessment was implemented while in Indonesia a gender-responsive public climate budgeting assessment took place. Tanzania undertook a poverty diagnosis using the Multidimensional Poverty Analysis Tool (MPAT) developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and established baselines in target areas. The goals of these assessments are for them to

be used to formulate tailor-made strategies to build required capacity to deal with the P-E Gender interface in the mentioned countries.

Implementation in these last two years has given rise to products and processes with a broad variance regarding gender mainstreaming. There are activities which are gender-specific. Also, there are products --such as the Technical Assistance process framed within an agreement signed with UN Women-- with key activities to (a) conduct evidence-based capacity building of targeted governments on integrating gender sensitive Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) approaches in policies; and, (b) to conduct South-South cooperation on mainstreaming and implementing gender responsive CSA policies and strategies.

Furthermore, another TA project is ongoing at a regional level to deal with economic empowerment of women through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices in Africa. This TA initiative intends to deal with economic empowerment of women through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices (partnering with UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Region). This TA intends to support a broader UN Women project specifically dealing on expanding the gender-agriculture and environment tools in target countries in Africa. The aim of the tools will be to influence decision-makers to provide enhanced support to female farmers, by demonstrating that addressing the gender gap in agriculture will bring development benefits through improved food security and reduced poverty.

At the national level there is a series of processes that explore gender issues as they relate to the Poverty – Environment nexus. For instance, in Rwanda gender environment and climate change performance indicators were developed and they are planned to be integrated into 2021/2022 Sectors and Districts plans. In Indonesia studies were carried-out on gender responsive public climate budgeting which are being integrated into draft guidelines to measure gender transformative change and adaptive capacity of poor women as to identify indicators that can promote transformative change and a guidance note for relevant ministries is being developed to identify appropriate policies on financing climate actions toward gender co- benefits.

Other countries have also placed a focus on gender in several of the processes and products they are developing. For instance, Malawi (in partnership with FAO and UN Women) is introducing an emphasis on how non-inclusive and unsustainable natural resource management issues reduces agricultural productivities, hampers poverty reduction and gender equality efforts.

Although the above are positive gages that PEA addresses, at some levels of implementation, gender equality and empowerment of women, and the promotion of positive changes in gender equality, is not a cross-cutting issue in all countries nor in all of PEA endeavours.[10] When stakeholders in those countries in PEA that do not deal with gender equality as a cross – cutting issue are posed with the question on why this is so, they tend to indicate that either they do not have the data to do so or that it is not a priority for implementation. This is not a positive pattern since mainstreaming gender equality within PEA is to be a focus of the Project. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that PEA --by building upon PEI tools—can also aid in mainstreaming gender equality given that the previous initiative developed a number of gender-specific instruments and analysis that can apply across the different countries and technical assistance projects. This is the case in order to promote the institutionalisation of a gender approach through its systematic integration across the whole Project to reduce inequalities and exclusion.

[10] In some countries this would require, *inter alia*, some additional studies as gender disaggregated data and analysis are often lacking.

EFFECTIVENESS

Finding on Effectiveness: PEA effectiveness at implementation midpoint has been moderate, given that the Project has achieved at this stage a level of outputs (and some outcomes), particularly if delays in start-up and the COVID-19 emergency are considered. Given that over half of expected outputs were achieved at midpoint, with this straightforward metric it is illustrated that effectiveness could have been enhanced but yet considering internal circumstances and external factors, PEA was effective to some degree. It is found that, intrinsic to this finding, there are very clear factors that have contributed to achievements thus far and that should be anchored for further solidifying of the Project while working on correcting the hindering factors identified.

Rating for Effectiveness: The overall rating for the criteria of effectiveness is Moderately Satisfactory (MS): (more or less meets expectations and/or some shortcomings).

Effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results. It is the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved considering their relative importance. It is also an aggregate gage of the merit or worth of an activity, i.e., the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives in a sustainable fashion and with positive institutional development impact.

In the following graphics, are charts where the straightforward and basic metric of whether or not the output was achieved overall as measured by the M&E indicators set as design. This is displayed in a colour coding format and is closely linked to efficiency. Following this, there is a narrative on effectiveness as to contributing and hindering factors based on informational evidence, documents, internal communications and information gathered through interviews.

FIGURE 5: COLOUR CODING FOR OUTPUT TARGET ACHIEVEMENTS

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

FIGURE 6: ACHIEVEMENTS BY INDICATOR OUTPUT 1 AS OF AUGUST 2020[11]

Global Indicators			Global baseline	Global Targets	Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output	**Indicator**	**Description**					
1. Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	1.1	Number of planning frameworks, legislation and regulations that integrate the poverty-environment nexus (per country)	22	95	56	16	**28% achieved**
	1.2	Policy position(s) on poverty-environment issues formulated by non-government actors	0	7	5	0	**0% achieved**
	1.3	Number of government-led inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms that promote coherence of planning, frameworks, legislation and regulations	5	35	21	6	**28% achieved**
	1.4	Number of countries where environmental/social/economic data are collected, analysed and reported applying a poverty-environment nexus perspective through national development and SDG monitoring systems	3	7	7	**8**	**Over-achieved**
OVERALL					89	**30**	**34% achieved**

As the graphic above illustrates, expected outputs were achieved to a certain degree using the basic measurement of fulfilling indicators. For sub outputs 1.1 and 1.3 about a third of expected outputs were achieved, while for sub output 1.2 none were achieved[12] as of August 2020. For sub output 1.4 the indicators were overachieved, even at mid-point. Therefore, as a composite a third of expected achievements at the output level have been met until August 2020 using this metric. Regarding Outcome 1, as well as other Outcomes to some degree, there is an evident increase in the pace of activities accelerating to some degree since mid-year (i.e., after the latest overall project implementation exercises

[11] Just over half of the targets for 2020 have been met, not ultimate targets.

[12] The date of August 2020 is used in this section since it corresponds with the last monitoring reporting done for the Project as a whole for presentation to PEA's board meeting of October 2020 and shared with this review.

at midyear) due to an adaptation to the pandemic restrictions, adaptive management by the different teams, and lifting of some national travel restrictions.[13]

FIGURE 7: ACHIEVEMENTS BY INDICATOR OUTPUT 2 AS OF AUGUST 2020

Global Indicators			Global Baseline	Global Targets	Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output	Indicator	Description					
2 Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	2.1	Number of key budget policy documents (e.g., budget statements, economic surveys, budget call circulars) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate priorities for poverty eradication (per country)	91	25	16	6	**37.5% achieved**
	2.2	Number of countries with increased annual and medium-term sector budget allocations (including national and sub-national levels) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate for poverty eradication	0	6	3	1	**33% achieved**
	2.3	Number of countries with fiscal instruments (tax, incentives, user fees, etc.) adopted in policies and regulations that prioritise quality investments	0	3	0	1	**Over-achieved**
	2.4	Number of guidelines and tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality investments	8	31	8	12	**Over-achieved**
OVERALL					27	20	**75% achieved**

For expected Output 2, as a composite, a great number of expected outputs were achieved at a composite level. That is, three-fours of expected outputs were achieved which is considerable given the slow start up and the influence of the pandemic on the overall project as well as its impact at all national levels. While guidelines and tools are least affected, and achievements have been reached beyond the expected levels in Output 2.4, the adoption of these products and processes seems to be lagging behind prospects. As several key stakeholders at the national and regional levels have pointed out, the standstill or slow-down in political processes in the countries (as well as shifting priorities) has made upstream work slower than expected at the national level in the countries involved in PEA and this a causality factor for the slower than planned achievements.

[13] This is reflected through the interview processes with the country teams and regional staff carried out as part of this review process.

FIGURE 8: ACHIEVEMENTS BY INDICATOR OUTPUT 3 AS OF AUGUST 2020

Global Indicators			Global Baseline	Global Targets	Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output	Indicator	Description					
3. SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools	3.1	Number of Poverty-Environment Action knowledge-sharing and learning products that are referenced by regional and global networks	23	63	20	17	**85% achieved**
	3.2	Number of countries adopting Poverty-Environment Action tools/approaches resulting from South-South knowledge collaboration	9	18	5	2	**40 % achieved**
	3.3	Number of regional and global Poverty-Environment Action partner programmes and agencies that apply an integrated mainstreaming approach	13	18	4	7	**Over-achieved**
	3.1	Number of Poverty-Environment Action knowledge-sharing and learning products that are referenced by regional and global networks	23	63	20	17	**85 % achieved**
	3.2	Number of countries adopting Poverty-Environment Action tools/approaches resulting from South-South knowledge collaboration	9	18	5	2	**40% achieved**
OVERALL					54	45	**83% achieved**

For expected Output 3, the achievement level is quite high being eighty-three percent of what was expected to be achieved at mid-point. While some achievements are quite high for different sub outputs, others lag behind more, particularly those that imply concreted adopting of policies, instruments, etc. Nevertheless, the overall expectations are very nearly met for this output.

FIGURE 9: SUMMARY PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS MATRIX – OUTPUTS ACHIEVEMENT AS OF AUG 2020

Output		Indicator	Description	
1	Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	1.1	Number of planning frameworks, legislation and regulations that integrate the poverty-environment nexus (per country)	
		1.2	Policy position(s) on poverty-environment issues formulated by non-government actors	
		1.3	Number of government-led inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms that promote coherence of planning, frameworks, legislation and regulations	
		1.4	Number of countries where environmental/social/economic data are collected, analysed and reported applying a poverty-environment nexus perspective through national development and SDG monitoring systems	
2	Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	2.1	Number of key budget policy documents (e.g., budget statements, economic surveys, budget call circulars) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate priorities for poverty eradication (per country)	
		2.2	Number of countries with increased annual and medium-term sector budget allocations (including national and sub-national levels) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate for poverty eradication	
		2.3	Number of countries with fiscal instruments (tax, incentives, user fees, etc.) adopted in policies and regulations that prioritise quality investments	
		2.4	Number of guidelines and tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality investments	
3	SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools	3.1	Number of Poverty-Environment Action knowledge-sharing and learning products that are referenced by regional and global networks	
		3.2	Number of countries adopting Poverty-Environment Action tools/approaches resulting from South-South knowledge collaboration	
		3.3	Number of regional and global Poverty-Environment Action partner programmes and agencies that apply an integrated mainstreaming approach	

Total number of outputs expected to be achieved at mid-point:	170
Total number of outputs achieved at mid-point:	95
Percentage of expected outputs achieved at mid-point:	56 percent.

The latest monitoring reporting for the PEA Project highlights a series of processes and achievements for full-fledged countries and for technical assistance modalities that make up accomplishments and progress at the output as well as at the outcome levels. In annexes further descriptions are found on Project activities as well as specific processes that took place in the last two years of implementation (see Annex 8: Processes Supported for Output 1; Annex 9: Processes Supported for Output 2; and Annex 10: Processes Supported for Output 3). Some of these are highlighted in the box below and go beyond the simple metric of meeting with or not an output indicator.

BOX 1: EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS THUS FAR

Rwanda:

- Proposal developed that mobilized USD 1.82m to support in country efforts to revise the climate Nationally Development Contribution report.

Mozambique:

- Input from PEA to the new national development five-year plan (Plano Quinquenal Do Governo 2020-24) is manifested in priorities established in this document (priorities defined as *Strengthen the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources* and the *Environment - Strategic Objectives)* in addition to five specific strategic objectives derived from PEA work in the country.

Indonesia:

- With PEA support, a book was launched on Public Climate Finance Report in Indonesia 2016-2018, which provides analysis on the development of public policies to finance climate change, analysis of the public climate change budget in the 2016-2018 period. It also describes the policy implications to strengthen public finance management for climate change.
- PEA provided support in 2020 on the government's green sukuk (i.e., green bonds) initiatives that channel investments to green sectors with CC impacts. Annual green bonds allocations have increased in 2019 using the global and -for the first time- national financial markets.

Lao PDR:

- Targeted PEA focused investment project concepts identified for several provinces.
- The above is the basis of provincial investment profiles, and working on localising SDGs at the subnational levels.
- These tools are used by other partners outside of PEA creating replication opportunities.

It is very difficult, if not impractical, however, to make exhaustive comparative statements going as to the overall effectiveness of PEA at this point, however, beyond the basic analysis of whether or not output indicators have been met as seen above). If effectiveness is gaged quantitively by the degree of achievements thus far comparing expected achievement indicators vis-à-vis attained products and outputs levels (as seen in the different charts presented in this report) it is clear that the Project is delayed to a degree, with varying levels of achieving sub outputs. As a composite, nevertheless, it is evidenced the Project has made progress in several areas.

Overall, and as a composite view and considering start-up delays with the special situation faced in 2020 with delays and postponements of many planned activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is deemed that with proper steering mechanisms and continuous introduction of proactive change (and this is a basic essential condition), although the expected outputs were not achieved fully these could attained at approximately the anticipated levels by Project end.

However, no sweeping nor comparative qualitative statement can be made in many aspects on effectiveness and for many reasons. This is a midterm review applied at approximately the midpoint with very special issues external to the Project impacting upon it as a whole and at the different national levels of application. In addition, activities and outputs vary greatly from country-to-country. Furthermore, given, for instance, that some full-fledged countries have been working within the framework of PEA within the last two years while others have begun PEA-related activities only a few months before this assessment, therefore, there is no comparative assessment and none is possible due to this. That is, some countries are at approximately midpoint and several countries the activities are not nearly at midpoint, they are just starting. Therefore, doing a comparative analysis is not appropriate at this stage. Regarding

the TA projects the same pattern emerges given that some are being implemented for some time, some are just beginning and others are in the process of conceptualization and approval (i.e., they have not truly begun yet).

Since, the PEA Project implements very dissimilar types of initiatives through what are defined as full-fledged country's process and what are more circumscribed technical assistance processes, overarching statements regarding effectiveness between these two types of initiatives is also not appropriate at this stage. This is so considering the broad differences between the type of initiatives, the implementation stage that each one of them is at, and the overall matter that this is a midterm review of a project which has had several delays in implementation thus far.

Additionally, in several of the countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, for instance) PEA is embedded in broader umbrella initiatives for SDG delivery, in some countries it is challenging to ascertain effectiveness and attribute effects and impacts to PEA–related processes when programming and implementation is broader than that.

These matters notwithstanding, and the above as a caveat, the following components and factors that make – up effectiveness of the Project are explored.[14] This are overall effectiveness assessments based on the global, regional and national initiatives under the umbrella of PEA.

The lead overarching achievement of the Project, thus far, deals with laying the groundwork in diverse countries and with the aid of technical assistance initiatives for the inclusion of Poverty – Environment objectives in national planning and correlated budget allocations. It is indicated that the achievement is mostly visible in laying the underpinnings for these changes since, thus far, more perceptible concrete change, as a result of PEA, are not wholly observable in an aggregate manner.

Nevertheless, there is also a confusion on what it is stated as achievements thus far of PEA and what were achievements of the different PEI phases. Several key stakeholders have indicated the issue and this is corroborated by this review. When national stakeholders are posed with the question of what has been the effectiveness (i.e., achievements) of PEA thus far they revert to pointing out achievements attained in one or more of the PEI phases.

Notwithstanding the delays in delivery that the Project has been experiencing, the above assessment is not entirely negative since at midterm effectiveness is not fully apparent and midterm reviews need to identify *early* signs of success or failure regarding activities and products in process, not absolute effectiveness. Therefore, there are early signs of successes or failures that can be identified in this exercise and for which general lessons learned and specific recommendations to steer the Project to be more effective can be drawn. Since this is a midpoint review, also, most achievements are at the output level. Effectiveness, if gaged as effects is analysed at the outcome level, and in the case of PEA a number of products need to be developed and solidified in order to generate achievements at the outcome level.

Factors that have contributed to achievements thus far. There are a number of factors that have contributed to the accomplishments thus far. These should be anchored in further work in the concluding stage of PEA in order to generate sustainable achievements. Some are internal to the Project and some are external factors. The contributing factors identified are as follows:

- *Technical support*. The technical support PEA provides (based on the expertise of the project team, in particular at both regional levels, and the expertise the team leverages) is much valued at the country – level and contributes to achievements. External consultancies are also considered positive to some degree as a form of technical support. Yet this positive assessment of external consultancies is nuanced by the fact that the project should anchor national capacities thru technical

[14] As indicated earlier, the analysis of the criteria respond to the evaluation questions posed to this review in the Terms of Reference.

support that is applicable and germane to national systems, and that this is not seen in some cases vis-à-vis external consultancies.

- *Investment at the national level on capacity building.* At the national level, in most countries, there has been a high degree of investment in national capacity building, not only individual capacity upgrading but also institutional capacity strengthening. This is potentially a contributing factor not only for effectiveness features but also for sustainability.

- *Positive working relations between UNDP/UN Country Teams and national governments in many cases.* In those countries where relations between UNCT and national governments are fluid and constructive, higher degrees of achievements/effectiveness are observed. When PEA project development is imbedded intensely in national government structures and fluid working relationships are fostered through products or thru support of country structures and institutions, a greater degree of achievements is perceived. Involving what in general are considered non – traditional environment – poverty actors, such as ministries dealing with planning and ministries of finance or economic affairs, has been an added benefit, given that these stakeholders have been involved at country – levels since PEI. This is also a beneficial factor for national ownership.

- *Building upon PEI achievements, tools, instruments.* Although, as indicated above, at times many actors find it difficult to differentiate between what has been PEI and what is PEA, it is undeniable that the present project has greatly benefited from the groundwork done at the national, regional and global level by PEI. This is not only manifested on the working relationships established with the different countries and previous experience/expertise in the countries, but also for the factual and for the potential capacity to build upon toolkits, instruments, studies, etc., as developed nationally, regionally and globally through the PEI phases.

- *Localising SDGs efforts.* The proactive and explicit localisation of SDGs by mainstreaming P-E (that is, embedding SDGs and targets within the context of national and sub-national development plans) even when PEA efforts are imbedded in broader national programs, is one of the positive factors in seeking effectiveness. It is also noteworthy that stakeholders indicate that effectiveness is more likely to be achieved if subnational factors (i.e., working with sub national governments) are incorporated.

Factors that hinder achievements thus far. There also a series of factors that are constraining factors for achievements / effectiveness thus far. [15]

- *Not fully incorporating new PEA focus nor focusing upon effects/outcomes and more on outputs/products*. The new innovative focus of PEA deals with aligning finance (including from the private sector) and investment with poverty, environment and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation. However, many initiatives within the Project do not necessarily adopt this focus with several of them being "business as usual" or planning to carry out further studies to prove the poverty and environment nexus.[16] Furthermore, several initiatives within PEA continue with the development

[15] Operational issues have impaired several aspects of PEA. They are dealt with fully in the section on efficiency, yet although they primarily have an impact upon efficiency, they also have an impact on delivery/effectiveness. For these see section titled Efficiency.

[16] Although some stakeholders point out that PEA's heightened focus on aligning finance and investments P-E objectives requires understanding on how to do so and that some countries new tools are still being requested by countries to adequately support this PEA focus, what this hindering factor is pointing out is that in several cases countries are requesting further studies "in proving the P-E" nexus, not innovative studies. The contention here by this assessment is not regarding the new studies on finance and investment where relevant, but in the persistence on revisiting studies when they have carried out already.

of tools, yet there is an implementation gap between this and the application of these instruments for mainstreaming. Several key stakeholders have indicated that this could be a drawback related to the fact that PEA continues work done within PEI to some degree and it is not an altogether completely new initiative.

- *Weak strategic outlook.* Although the strategic relevance of mainstreaming the Poverty – Environment nexus within the SDGs agenda is not questioned, it is perceived that PEA in the last two years has rather lost sight of this due to its concentration upon more mechanical tasks of project implementation. Even if design was strategic by fostering new issues in the P – E interface, and proposing results – oriented sustainable processes such as planning frameworks and policy processes, this strategic outlook is at times lost. Although the reasons for this are varied, several stakeholders have pointed out that there is an intrinsic fatigue to a project, that --although it purports to be new and innovative-- it is to some degree an intervention that has been taking place for over 16 years in one way or another. It is perceived by key stakeholders that, in order to achieve sustained and sustainable outcomes there is a need to re-launch leadership roles from global/regional team in order to promote effectiveness.

- *Issues at the national level, external factors.* In countries that have shifted their national priorities or that have experience political changes since inception of PEA there are more difficulties in achieving outputs/outcomes and hence in being effective. In some countries, a lack of political support for outputs has been identified. Furthermore, when UN Country Teams have difficulties and present country – wide weaknesses in implementation, this evidently has repercussions on PEA effectiveness at the country level. In the countries where the UNCT has weaknesses in the implementation of projects and in integrating different development areas and programmatic units, this has a bearing on effectivity.

- *COVID-19 Pandemic.* Wide-ranging issues of the effect of the pandemic upon the Project are developed further along this report in a stand – alone section. Yet it should be addressed that COVID-19 has had an indelible impact on effectiveness and has been and will continue to be throughout the immediate future a hindering factor in obtaining achievements. Impact has not only been at the administrative level, but also at the policy and tool adoption level, since the upstream work with policy and decision – makers has drastically stalled in most countries for the first half of 2020 and, additionally, from national and international shifts in socio-economic priorities.

- *Conceptual weaknesses at design or issues which were not fully fledged on planning.* Several design limitations are manifesting their impact at this point. For instance, as seen above, many stakeholders indicate that the incorporation of private sector issues were not well considered nor fully planned on how this would unfold in concrete terms in several countries, and therefore, at present there is a difficulty in working with private sector issues in many countries. Furthermore, some areas –such as working with non-governmental organisations—were also inserted at design (e.g., as manifested through the expected output 1.2 *Policy position(s) on poverty-environment issues formulated by non-government actors))* yet how this would take place within the context of each country was not planned accordingly. Therefore, this indicator has not been achieved at all so far for any of the number of expected outputs at a comprehensive level.

BOX 2: PEA AND DELIVERY AS ONE APPROACH

A general achievement of the Project that does not fall under an arranged categorisation or indicator for these sorts of reviews and monitoring exercises, yet it should pointed-out as an effectiveness factor, is the issue of integration of UN work via PEA. Some examples are significant in order to highlight PEA within the UN Delivery -as -One approach. PEA, as was its predecessor PEI, is perceived as a positive example of UN inter-agency collaboration while reducing duplications, particularly at national levels. It is perceived by stakeholders that this collaboration at country levels is essential for the Delivering as One agenda and for fostering integrated UN reforms.

Even recently there have been examples of UNDP and UNEP collaborations and partnerships that can be applied to upscale and inform integration, not only at the national level but also at the broader corporate level. For instance, at the corporate level, PEA has been used to inform discussions on a forthcoming UNEP and UNDP global cooperation agreement; and it has been highlighted as a positive case for integrated approaches in UN planning processes e.g., UN Cooperation Frameworks.

Due to UN Reform processes, which entail an empowered Resident Coordinator System, this integration encompasses all organizations of the UN dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of their formal presence in the country. The RC system aims to bring together the different UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country level and therefore has created substantive opportunities for PEA to broaden its influence in some countries.

There are specific examples from the PEA that reflect this. In Asia the UN Joint Fund on SDGs proposal in Indonesia builds on PEA, while in Africa –specifically in Malawi— FAO, UNDP and UN Women have worked for deeper collaboration and joint delivery between the agencies using PEA as an example of such partnership.

This is an important overarching achievement of the Project that goes beyond the specific accomplishments that the intervention has had thus far.

***Project Framework Indicators and Targets*:** At design a project framework with outputs and outcome was set. The selection of outputs and activities were set at an appropriate level for this sort of interventions, yet baselines, targets and data sources were not specified at design since they are indicated as To Be Determined and not as indicators per se.

In charts on previous sections there is a comparison of baseline vs actual sub – output level indicators achieved at approximately mid – point of the overall project. In the sections following is a narrative on what the indicators were and whether they were SMART[17] or not, with examples from diverse countries following this sort of analysis.

[17] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Outcome indicators were set as follows:

Joint Project Outcome: Strengthened integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

- *Outcome Indicator 1:* Number of countries demonstrating alignment between poverty-environment objectives in plans and related budget allocations
- *Outcome Indicator 2:* Number of countries with increased investments in support of environmental sustainability and climate priorities for poverty eradication
- *Outcome Indicator 3*: Number of tools and approaches applied by regional and global partners in support of poverty-environment nexus for SDG acceleration.

Output indicators were set as follows:

1 Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication

1.1 Number of planning frameworks, legislation and regulations that integrate the poverty-environment nexus (per country)

1.2 Policy position(s) on poverty-environment issues formulated by non-government actors

1.3 Number of government-led inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms that promote coherence of planning, frameworks, legislation and regulations

1.4 Number of countries where environmental/social/economic data are collected, analysed and reported applying a poverty-environment nexus perspective through national development and SDG monitoring systems.

***

2 Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication

2.1 Number of key budget policy documents (e.g., budget statements, economic surveys, budget call circulars) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate priorities for poverty eradication (per country)

2.2 Number of countries with increased annual and medium-term sector budget allocations (including national and sub-national levels) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate for poverty eradication

2.3 Number of countries with fiscal instruments (tax, incentives, user fees, etc.) adopted in policies and regulations that prioritise quality investments

2.4 Number of guidelines and tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality investments

***

3 SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools

3.1 Number of Poverty-Environment Action knowledge-sharing and learning products that are referenced by regional and global networks

3.2 Number of countries adopting Poverty-Environment Action tools/approaches resulting from South-South knowledge collaboration

3.3 Number of regional and global Poverty-Environment Action partner programmes and agencies that apply an integrated mainstreaming approach.

As indicated in the section on design, although the outputs were established upon project planning, indicators to be used to tally achievements were not part of the results framework on design. These (baseline and target indicators) were established mainly during the inception phase which took place in the first half – year of project implementation. In Annexes (see Annex 12: Results Framework) the full results log frame is found. To illustrate the points above, and to support finding below, following are some concrete examples from different countries.

BOX 3: EXAMPLES OF SMART INDICATORS

To illustrate the points above, and to support the finding, following are some concrete examples from different countries:

Specific: **Malawi:** 2.2 Economic, financial and regulatory incentives and private sector initiatives encourage shift in private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication. Country Indicator: Number of guidelines, tools and strategies developed and implemented to diversify agriculture, increase revenue and manage soil fertility:

Targets:

Year 2: 1 guideline/tool or strategy developed for agricultural diversification

Year 3: 1 guidelines/tools or strategy developed for agricultural diversification

Total: 2 guidelines, tools or strategies developed

***Measurable*: Myanmar:** 1.2: Institutional mechanisms promote policy coherence to accelerate implementation of environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication. Country Indicator 1.3 (links to PEA Global indicator 1.3): Number of planning and implementation co-ordination mechanisms applied (at district, sector and national level) for an integrated approach gender, natural resource sustainability and agricultural productivity. Baseline: 2 coordination mechanisms exist. Targets:

Year 1: 2 planning and implementation co-ordination mechanisms applied for an integrated approach gender, ENRM and agricultural productivity

Year 2: 2 planning and implementation co-ordination mechanisms applied for an integrated approach gender, ENRM and agricultural productivity

Year 3: 2 planning and implementation co-ordination mechanisms applied for an integrated approach gender, ENRM and agricultural productivity

Year 4: 2 planning and implementation co-ordination mechanisms applied for an integrated approach gender, ENRM and agricultural productivity

Total: 10

Achievable: **All full-fledged countries, indicator already achieved in all of them.** 1.4 Number of countries where environmental/social/economic data are collected, analysed and reported applying a poverty-environment nexus perspective through national development and SDG monitoring systems

Relevant: Rwanda: 2.4 Combined values of private sector projects investing in sustainability

Baselines: TBD in year 1

Targets:

Year 1. Expenditure review including private sector investments in sustainability undertaken

Year 2. Number and value of private sector projects / investments in sustainability: + 5% from Year 1 Review

Year 3. Number and value of private projects / investments in sustainability: + 10% from Year 1 Review

Final. Number and value of private sector projects / investments in sustainability: + 10% from Year 1 Review

Time Bound: All indicators are time – bound since the expected date of accomplishment is the end of the Project's implementation period as specified in the log frame(s).

When indicators were ultimately set, they were SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound[18]) for the most part. For instance, they are specific and measurable (since they

[18] S -Specific: Indicators must use clear language, describing a specific future condition.

are expressed as number of countries or actions to be achieved). Outcome and effects are clear when policy and policy influence is a sought effect for instance. They are relevant since they are expressed as expected outputs that make contributions national and global developmental priorities and time bound since they are set within expected dates of accomplishment (such as Year 1 to 4). Nevertheless, as it is shown by analysis carried out by the Project recently, several of them are not deemed as achievable at this stage. Evidence of this is that the Project has embarked in a revision of indicators for several outputs, lowering the expected outputs for several countries.

EFFICIENCY

Finding on Efficiency: The delays in implementation are to a degree associated to the complex Project set - up, accompanied by lengthy processes for conceptualisation and decision – making of the different endeavours that PEA approaches. Furthermore, the managerial and reporting processes are also multi-layered and seen as overly complex by a wide-ranging type of stakeholders. This has hindered several of the implementation processes and reduced efficiency. Other factors have also come into play in efficiency (especially as indicated by delivery) have been the delays in set up, design, budget disbursement as well as delays in applying administrative and financial modalities associated with Poverty-Environment Action.

Rating on Efficiency: MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations.

Efficiency is the extent to which an intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. For this, economic is defined as the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. This criterion also includes operational efficiency.[19]

PEA governance encompasses a joint UNDP–UN Environment project team overseen by a Joint Project Board. The project team comprises posts either funded from Poverty Environment Action or co-funded from UN Environment, which were set at design. It is indicated in design documents that UNDP and UN Environment will see to fulfilling the project Co-Managers posts and those of thematic experts providing technical guidance to Poverty-Environment Action. At each country level PEA resources are managed by the relevant UNDP Country Offices. UNDP is the project's Managing Agent (MA) and, due to this, is responsible for overall project financial management, performance monitoring and reporting, evaluations and ensuring achievement of project results with inputs from UN Environment technical staff.

M - Measurable: Indicators, must have measurable aspects making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not

A - Achievable: Indicators must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve

R-Relevant: Indicators must contribute to selected priorities of the national development framework

T -Time-bound: Indicators are never open-ended; there should be an expected date of accomplishment.

[19] OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation. *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use*. February 2020.

As MA, UNDP is responsible to all donors for overall project implementation. UNDP directly executes PEA under UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)/Global Policy Network, Nature, Climate and Energy Team, and PEA is based in UNDP's Nairobi Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification in Nairobi (GC-RED).

The Project Board is a significant feature in PEA governance. The Project Board is co-chaired by UNDP (Deputy Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)/Global Policy Network) and UN Environment. The Board is responsible for making final decisions and approvals. These include guidance to PEA joint project co-managers, including approvals for all project-funded staffing decisions, annual allocations based on available resources, project annual work plans/related revisions and approval of all progress reports and publications. It has a myriad of detailed responsibilities including strategic, budget allocations, delivery, cash flow management, funding allocations, risk management, follow up of deliverables, assessment and approval of project changes and adaptive management, appraisal of work plans, as well as more conceptual tasks such as to ensure the integration of P-E-C mainstreaming into the work of the two agencies and linkages to other SDG support programs.[20] The Project Board meets regularly and sufficiently often (online as of late due to travel bans due to the COVID-19 pandemic) to align priorities and plans.

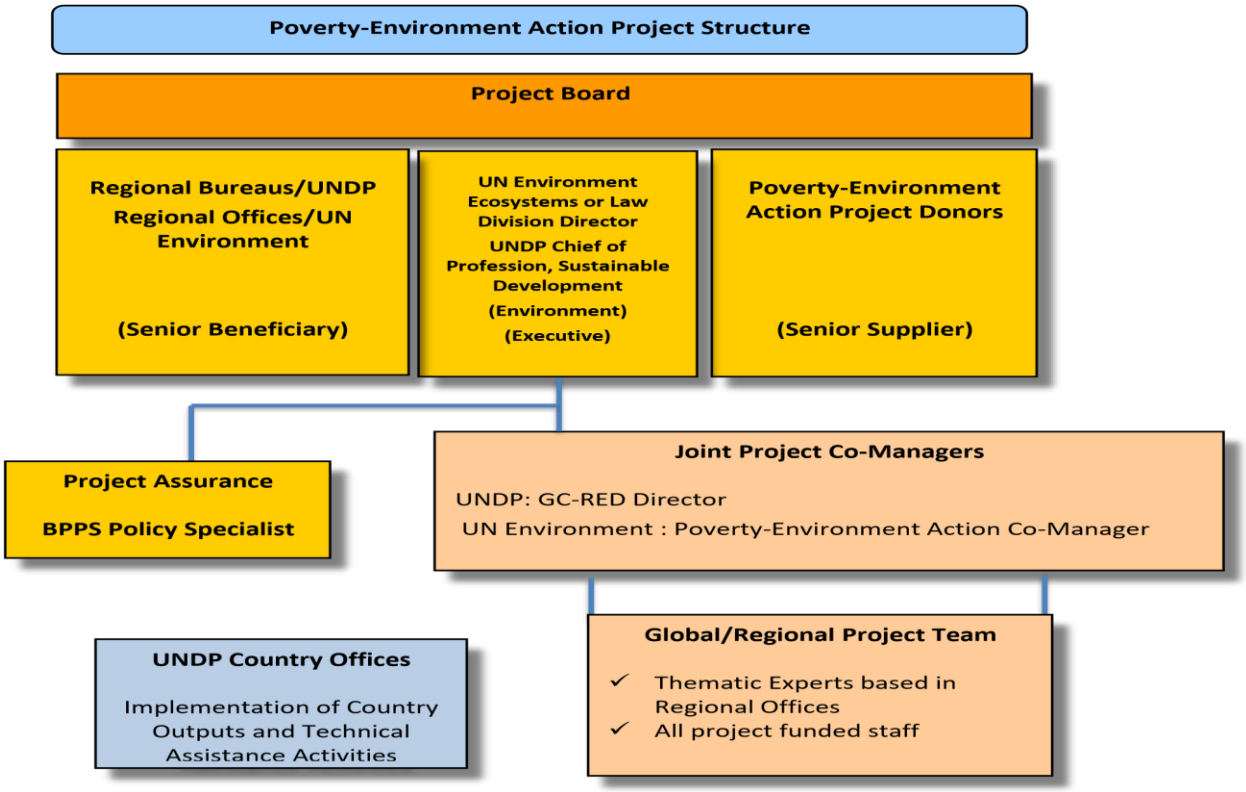
All full-fledged country outputs need to be approved by the Project Board for inclusion in the joint UNDP-UNEP project, and indicative allocations of funding are confirmed by the Project Board. For TA endeavours, board also has a driving role. The approval of TA proposals is verified for relevance and synergies through different Regional Management as part of the Senior Beneficiary role in the Project Board (with equitable representation by relevant UNDP/UN Environment Regional Senior Management) then approved by the Project Board as in line and in contribution to overall joint project objectives, outputs, deliverables and indicators.

Processes such as approvals of activities, outputs, or proposals is seen as time consuming and slowed by these drawn-out and time-consuming decision-making processes. Key stakeholders have indicated a lack of quick responsiveness in decision-making, and an indication of this is the time needed for approval and start -up. For instance, TA approvals and decision making take a long time evidenced by the fact that many approvals are still being processed and that several country level activities were only beginning a few months before this assessment began.

The PEA Project Structure (and agreed upon design by all parties at design as indicated in the Project Document) is –in a graphic format-- as follows:

[20] Source: Project Document.

FIGURE 10: PEA MANAGEMENT PROJECT STRUCTURE AT DESIGN (SOURCE PROJECT DOCUMENT)



The Project's governance structure is highly functional at the technical level in both regions where PEA operates (i.e., Africa and Asia) and the technical support it provides (based on the expertise of the project team in particular, at both regional levels) is much valued at the country – level. In fact, this is one of the contributing factors for achievements as well as a positive feature indicated by all full-fledged countries as well as technical assistance countries as a significant constructive characteristic, not only for efficiency but also for effectiveness and relevance of the Project's actual and potential outputs and outcomes.

However, at the managerial level this structure has found a series of challenges from proposal development stages for the full – fledged country and technical assistance endeavours onward as well as for its current monitoring, reporting and financial oversight arrangements. Other challenges presently manifesting themselves is the shortfall in funding vis-a-vis what was planned at design, which has had an impact on efficient management given the efforts and resources (management time for instance) given that extensive resources need to be placed in re – programming and decision-making in detriment of other more proactive managerial activities for seeking results.

The proposal development for in – country activities for all full – fledged countries has received a number of critiques and is indicated as a cause for delays in start – up of activities at several country levels as well as delays in delivery in general. A matter of contention by several stakeholders has been the proposal processes for the country – level activities. The procedures introduced by PEA with new project document templates, multi – layered processes, changing parameters, and what are perceived as duplication of efforts --and other such matters-- have caused a number of grievances from several stakeholders due to their being demanding on resources needed (time, inputs, etc.) to generate these proposals and begin delivery and implementation. These are also perceived as non – mandated by several key stakeholders.

The TA conceptualisation, proposal development and ensuing approval processes are also seen by several key stakeholders, including board members and key staff, as long – drawn and cumbersome. In particular when analysed vis-à-vis the scope and extent of TA initiatives.

Regrettably operational issues have impaired several aspects of PEA. Although the Project indicates PEA operational procedures are aligned with the MA procedures and donor requirements and that they should be followed by all, these have –nonetheless-- slowed down start-up and slowed implementation in the period being considered in this midterm review. The new proposal formats utilised in PEA (new in the sense that they were different than what was being used previously for PEI) proved to be too cumbersome for national teams and therefore slowed down the elaboration of project documents and of proposal development at the national level. Furthermore, this is also identified to some degree for technical assistance projects. Stakeholders at the decision-making levels of the Project have identified operational issues given that the conceptualisation and –therefore—approval processes are cumbersome and time consuming.

As indicated in other sections of this report, funding architecture, in particular when comparing what were planned financing commitments and what has truly been leveraged to date (as well as the perspectives of leveraging funding in the short term) has caused a number of issues and difficulties in project planning lately. The main issue is that PEA cannot leverage 1.2 million USD due to UNEP pooled fund reduction (Norway) as committed upon design.

Financial data reported by the Project in midyear (August 2020), including leveraged funds and resource mobilisation, delivery vs approved budget, expenditure per outcome, etc. is as follows:

- For every dollar of donor's funds approximately three dollars were catalysed supporting poverty-environment-climate mainstreaming at country and global levels.
- Local resource mobilization in 2020 was projected to be USD 3 million which is nearly USD 1 million more than in 2019 and USD 400K more than planned for 2020.
- Delivery against approved budget was at 43 percent, of which 34 percent are donor funds and 62 percent are UNDP core resources/TRAC funds.
- Proposed donor fund revised budget went from USD 4,921,796 to USD 4,075,912.
- Downward budget revision of $846K due to re costing plan from 2020 to 2021 and, budget savings, including travel costs funds.
- Project has carried – out a country level budget revision indicating that overall, in 2020, downwards by USD 330 000 (shifting funds from 2020 to 2021) given that many activities, products, and outputs could not be implemented due to COVID-19 related restrictions.
- Technical assistance budget reduced by USD 210 000.
- Total expenditures incurred under all funded sources vary between different outputs:
    - Output 1 expenditure was USD 1.8 million (39% of total expenditure)
    - Output 2 expenditure was USD 2.1 million (46% of total expenditure)
    - Output 3 expenditure was USD 700K (15% of total expenditure).

Following is budget and delivery information in a chart form as reported by the Project. After that figure there are two more charts that indicate received and projected total funds in 2018-2022 and total expenditure incurred under all funding sources (as reported by PEA from September 2018 to August 2020).

FIGURE 11: 2020 PEA ATLAS BUDGET AND DELIVERY AS OF 31 AUGUST 2020

		PEA donor funds			PEA UNDP core resources/TRAC funds			PEA total funds		
Output Description	Output ID	PEA DONOR APPROVED BUDGET for Jan-Dec 2020[1] on 26 May 2020 (in USD)	2020 TOTAL Delivery PEA donor funds as of 31 Aug 2020 (in USD)	2020 TOTAL Delivery Rate PEA donor funds (in %)	PEA LOCAL CO-FINANCING BUDGET for 2020 (in USD) on 26 May 2020	2020 TOTAL Delivery UNDP core resources/TRAC funds (in USD)	2020 TOTAL Delivery Rate UNDP core resources/TRAC funds (in %)	2020 TOTAL PEA budget (PEA donor and TRAC)	TOTAL PEA Expenditure (PEA and TRAC)	2020 TOTAL DELIVERY RATE (PEA donor and TRAC)
OUTPUT 1: PEA CO Outputs	00110689	2,919,083	1,031,600	35%	1,895,644	1,219,195	64%	4,814,727	2,250,795	47%
Activity 1 PEA Mauritania		357,463	137,419	38%	100,000 [2]	65,739	66%	357,463	203,158	57%
Activity 2 PEA Malawi		372,850	137,893	37%	385,000 [3]	256,950	67%	372,850	394,843	106%
Activity 3 PEA Mozambique		312,973	35,670	11%	123,256	37,111	30%	436,229	72,781	17%
Activity 4 PEA Rwanda		383,181	219,700	57%	200,000 [4]	179,496	90%	383,181	399,196	104%
Activity 5 PEA Bangladesh		309,838	136,224	44%	353,791	165,329	47%	663,629	301,553	45%
Activity 6 PEA Lao PDR		393,049	129,211	33%	100,000 [5]	95,028	95%	393,049	224,239	57%
Activity 7 PEA Myanmar		389,729	159,704	41%	283,597 [6]	297,542	105%	389,729	457,246	117%
Activity 8 PEA Nepal		400,000	75,780	19%	350,000	121,999	35%	750,000	197,779	26%
OUTPUT 2: PEA Technical Assistance Funding	00110690	931,625	300,769	32%	235,078	110,019	47%	1,166,703	410,788	35%
Activity 1 Tanzania		247,075	151,865	61%	135,078	110,019	81%	382,153	261,884	69%
Activity 2 Indonesia		195,000	116,904	60%	0	0	0%	195,000	116,904	60%
Activity 3 Blue Economy		69,550	32,000	46%	0 [7]	0	0%	69,550	32,000	46%
Activity 4 Gender		120,000	0	0%	0 [8]	0	0%	120,000	0	0%
Activity 5 South Africa		60,000	0	0%	0 [9]	0	0%	60,000	0	0%
Activity 6 Guidelines for PE mainstreaming (former MI)		120,000	0	0%	100,000 [10]	0	0%	120,000	0	0%
Activity 7 Capacity development on PEC mainstreaming (former Bhutan)		120,000	0	0%	0	0	0%	120,000	0	0%
OUTPUT 3: PEA Global Output	00110691	326,350	21,554	7%	0	0	0%	326,350	21,554	7%
OUTPUT 4: PEA Strategic Management	00110692	744,738	338,316	45%	0	0	0%	744,738	338,316	45%
TOTAL:		4,921,796	1,692,239	34%	2,130,722	1,329,214	62%	7,052,518	3,021,453	43%

Notes: The activity in Green is in progress

Grey figures still provisional until the 2020 AWPs are submitted and approved by the PEA co-managers or 2020 budget revision in progress

1 2020 budget was presented to the PEA Project Board virtually on 26 May 2020 and it was approved.

2 Mauritania - $50,000 additional cash and $15,000 in-kind contribution from the Government

3 Malawi - $93,250 additional locally mobilized contribution from UN Women and $82,800 from FAO (the funds to be managed by the partners)

4 Rwanda - $100,000 additional in-kind contribution from the Government

5 Lao - $150,746 additional in-kind contribution from the Government representing staff costs

6 Myanmar - no further resource mobilization needed. Unfunded amount covered by TRAC as from Aug 2020

7 TA Blue Economy - $190,000 contribution from ADB

8 TA Gender - UN Women is committing $71,921 from the Standard Bank and $25K from UN Women ESARO (tbc)

9 TA South Africa - $60,000 contribution from GIZ

10 TA Guidelines for PE mainstreaming (former MI) - UNDP Addis in-kind contribution in terms of staff time (tbc)

FIGURE 12: RECEIVED AND PROJECTED TOTAL FUNDS IN 2018-2022 (USD)

Source of funding	Donor	2018-2022
Donor funds	Austrian Development Agency	693,917
	European Union (ENV/2018/395-056)	10,212,056
	UNEP/Government of Norway	2,670,000*
	UNEP/Government of Sweden (SIDA)	
	Sub-total	**13,575,973**
Agency contributions	UNEP in-kind (staffing and operations)	5,191,149**
	UNDP in-kind (staffing)	773,209
Country-level co-financing	UNDP core resources	6,549,035
	Sub-total	**12,513,393**
	Government contributions	954,563
	Other local co-financing (outside of UNDP PEA Atlas project)	1,784,758
	Sub-total	**2,739,321**
Total		**28,828,687**

NOTE: *exclusive of UNEP direct project costs (DPC) reported for a programme management assistant as per global Project Document USD 55K in 2019 & USD 25K annually for 2020-22

**UNEP contributions for Sept 2018-Aug 2020 are based on actual figures, Sept 2020-Aug 2022 are estimated at USD 1.5 million per period

FIGURE 13: TOTAL SEPT 2018 - AUG 2020 EXPENDITURE INCURRED UNDER ALL FUNDING SOURCES (USD)

Expenditure	Donor funds	Agency contributions		Country-level co-financing			Total
		UNDP	UNEP	UNDP core resources	Government contributions	Other local funding	
2018 (Sept-Dec)	16,024	43,026	142,422	356,747	14,070	284,785	857,074
2019	1,390,123	239,874	1,195,176	1,387,843	220,994	397,201	4,831,211
2020 (Jan-Aug)	1,692,239	166,873	853,551	1,329,214	210,497	385,034	4,637,408
Total	**3,098,386**	**449,773**	**2,191,149**	**3,073,804**	**445,561**	**1,067,020**	**10,325,693**

Being UNDP the MA of this project, it follows UNDP rules for management, reporting, etc. Additionally, it follows donor's directives for management, visibility, financial components (particularly financial management). These multi - layered rules and directives add complexity to the operational/managerial format of the Project.

Although some of the processes are MA requisites and some are donor requirements, stakeholders perceive them as supplementary layers of administration which at times are perceived as non - mandated. In addition, implementation reporting is multi-layered and formats have been changed in the course of execution. Introduction of different reporting templates at midpoint, time sheets requirements, etc., are also perceived by key stakeholders at the corporate and at national levels as redundant and/or highly demanding time-wise. Lastly, financial reporting is also too complex and detailed in extreme for several countries to respond in an agile way, and this is reported by countries as a reason for slowed down timely transfer of funds to these countries when processes are stalled due to what at times are minor reviews. Which, in turn, has slowed down overall delivery.[21]

While operational, these high transactions costs are having an effect upon efficiency and, through that, an impact on effectiveness/delivery given that these matters take time to sort out and detract efforts away from more strategic work, as several countries reported. The strain caused by operational issues and funding variance between what was planned to what has been leveraged is at times causing process difficulties and internal tensions and stresses within the agencies involved in the Project that, in turn, also impact upon effectiveness. The identification of these operational issues as challenging is not only at the country level, but identification is also at the corporate and donor levels by key stakeholders.

Specifically, regarding reporting, several stakeholders have perceived duplication of efforts since reporting (and reviewing) is done in multiple layers (for instance through UNDP Country Office management as well as through the global PEA team, and validated at these two levels). Furthermore, several stakeholders have indicated that they have to report to a number of staff through different paths although for the same activities/processes, and that this is not only causing confusion and duplication of efforts (at the regional team level and at the national levels) but also it is proving that these matters are taking away from effectiveness in implementation and fostering underperformance given that they increase transaction costs.

The Project has financial controls and a very close monitoring of expenditures. These not only responding to the MA requisites but also catering to donor requirements since the MA is ultimately responsible for this. The PEA Project has suitable financial reporting processes in place to track progress of budget versus expenditure, aligning activities/outputs reporting to the corresponding financial budgets. As indicated in several documents, it also closely monitors compliance with donor parameters, eligible expenses, percentage ratio of expenditures between outputs, and other such matters. Reports on

[21] The Project professes that its quarterly financial reporting serves as a monitoring tool for country project management to keep the UNDP corporate requirements based on the policies and procedures (utilization to be aligned with the approved work plans) and donor requirements. Specifically, the Project indicates that, for quarterly financial reporting, country-level inputs are needed as only country-level colleagues can group and match expenses against specific activities. Furthermore, it is indicated by the Project that validation of summary data at global level was planned for the beginning of implementation only but its continuation appeared to be necessary due to significant misalignments found in the country reporting versus system data. With this acknowledgement, the Project indicates that they could stop verification of quarterly financial reports (and therefore lessen the burden of financial reporting –particularly at the country level). However, the Project has indicated to this review that they are no likely to do so since they believe misalignments would be significant.

expenditures and results are regularly submitted to donors through project progress reports. Since most of the funding for this tranche of the Project is from the European Union, there have been substantial changes from the means in which PEI funds were disbursed in relation to the manner in which PEA funds are disbursed and accounted for. First, those stakeholders and countries used to the previous modality have found it difficult to adapt and become accustomed to the new modality of funds disbursement and restrictions. Furthermore, the shift due to UNDP risk mitigation strategies has implied that funds cannot be directly transferred to partners, but that basically direct payments are the new approach based on close eligibility screening and scrutiny. This has proven a very burdensome task administratively mainly, for the countries, yet also as well as for global/regional management and it has an impact on timely flow of funds. A lot of effort has been placed in adapting to the new arrangements at the national levels, and therefore this is seen as an administratively cumbersome and time-consuming format.

Statements on evaluating the complexity of processes by stakeholders given to this review are substantiated and triangulated, through different sources, not only the interviews but also though internal documents of the PEA Project. Also, by the fact that the Project had to carry out training for staff and country – level stakeholders on management and reporting in mid-2020. [22] Given that PEA saw the need for this training at nearly midpoint of implementation in order to address bottlenecks, the need for several revisions of work plans, and the ongoing exchanges (country calls) for clarity by/for some countries, exchanges with some countries to specifically address bottlenecks to delays in finalizing work planning and budget setup, and so on, supports and triangulates stakeholders' assessments and perceptions vis-à-vis these issues as presented to this review.

The issues that hinder a more efficient process of implementation, and the issues that are associated to low delivery are not new to the last year (this is relevant bearing in mind that the scope of this mid-term review is from 2019 to 2020). As indicated in the last comprehensive self-monitoring exercise that the Project developed[23], they self – report a series of issues aligned with delays that co – relate with efficiency (delays which are validated by this mid-term review). Two of this were identified by this self-monitoring exercise as:

- Commencement of country-level initiatives and technical advisory initiatives was delayed due to project design, issues regarding recruitment of staff and recruitment of consultants, and budget disbursements taking longer than planned.
- Countries have taken more time than anticipated to satisfactorily apply the administrative and financial modalities associated with Poverty-Environment Action compared with PEI.

The Project, also in this self-monitoring exercise, identifies other issues and challenges that have arisen in implementation which have impacted by slowing start up and generating low delivery in the first year of implementation and therefore having an impact on efficiency. These are challenges more of a political or conceptual nature, and they continue to have an effect even after the first year of implementation and are valid issues for efficient delivery analysis. They have been identified as (a) generation of political support to ensure investment allocations to implement PE objectives; (b)

[22] Project professes that training has been done each year of the implementation (March 2019, March 2020) and that training done in March 2020 was mainly aimed for the new PEA countries that started with implementation at a later date. Project reports that for all other countries this training could either refresh the information or/and invite new staff. Yet the perception on complexity, mainly by national level stakeholders but also for some regional level stakeholders, remains and has been validated by this midterm review.

[23] PEA. Horizons of Hope Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals Annual Progress Report 2019.

challenges of focus on sub-national level capacity; (c) in-country political changes and restructuring that hinder institutional continuity.

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

The Project has a communication and visibility plan developed in line with the Joint Action Plan on Visibility and Joint Visibility Guidelines for EC-UN actions in the field, given that the EU supports PEA. In addition to this plan and the corporate guidance by the two agencies that jointly implement PEA (i.e., UNDP and UNEP) the Project engages in a number of internal and external communication activities. It also has a number of knowledge management products being produced in order to enhance visibility, enhance capacity building, and ultimately promote South – South exchanges, among other aims.

At this stage it should be noted that knowledge management is one of the two innovation emphasis that PEA has over other phases of P – E -type of endeavours. As stated from design onward, PEA places an accent on broadening dissemination and use of the programme's body of country-level experience in the application of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools through knowledge management and KM/information sharing.

PEA has recently established a web presence though the launching of a stand-alone website in June 2020 [https://pea4sdgs.org] to promote internal and external project communication. This website[24] is being populated with information about the Project as well as knowledge management products, news, events, etc., as provided mainly by national counterparts.

Furthermore, also recently, an inhouse Results Based Management (RBMC) network aiming at exchanging KM products and lessons learnt has been created with exchanges of PEA results and knowledge products already taking place through this internal PEA initiative. At the national level there are also processes that report and outreach to the public on several aspects of PEA in particular countries. For example, PEA Rwanda led a live television show discussing biodiversity conservation and its relationship with development, including poverty reduction. Indonesia has had media coverage (newspapers, etc) of the technical assistance project being implemented in that country.[25]

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[24] Project informs that 21 news were uploaded in 2020 (9 Bangladesh, 4 Indonesia, 1 Myanmar, 2 Malawi, 1 Nepal, 3 Rwanda, 1 BRH technical lead)

[25]
- https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1420809/kerugian-indonesia-karena-perubahan-iklim-capai-rp132-triliun-di-2050?utm_source=antaranews&utm_medium=mobile&utm_campaign=related_new
- https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1420809/kerugian-indonesia-karena-perubahan-iklim-capai-rp132-triliun-di-2050?utm_source=antaranews&utm_medium=mobile&utm_campaign=related_news
- https://today.line.me/id/pc/article/Indonesia+butuh+Rp3+461+triliun+untuk+target+penurunan+emisi+2030-wyQlNa
- https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1419741/pemerintah-jabarkan-pendanaan-pengendalian-perubahan-iklim-2016-2018
- https://swa.co.id/swa/trends/economic-issues/pemerintah-rilis-alokasi-pendanaan-pengendalian-perubahaan-iklim
- https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20200415/15/1227238/turunkan-emisi-gas-rumah-kaca-indonesia-butuh-rp3.461-triliun

Some matters regarding knowledge management, communications and visibility have been identified by this review. If attended to, KM, communications, visibility as well as sustainability can be enhanced. For instance, this review has identified that at the national level visibility is not wholly understood in some countries. When asked about visibility factors the response by key stakeholders is that they 'put all the logos' in place. Nevertheless, the institutional attribution obtained through logos or other such emblems is only a part of what visibility is implied to be for a project as this. In many cases there is no visibility at large, indicating that the project, its objectives and outputs and outcomes are not well known within institutions. Furthermore, many achievements are under reported nor engage in outreach. Therefore, PEA results not only are not fully visible, they cannot be duly mainstreamed institutionally on a broad basis if visibility is not enhanced. Additionally, the webpage presence is new and it has not fully transferred the knowledge management products and poverty – environment nexus instruments developed through PEI, hindering continuity.

Although the PEA website is linked to UNDP Global Policy Network/cooperate sites through GC-RED[26], corporate visibility of PEA is frail at this stage (i.e., within UNDP and within UNEP). For instance, there is little linkage of PEA with some areas within this agencies, vertical funds, etc. Engagement within the institutions of PEA in general and of the P – E nexus is weak vis-à-vis many broad areas of work at the global and at the corporate level. This weak engagement with many institutions and potential partners at the global level does indicate that there is ample space for dialogue and for engaging institutionally.

SUSTAINABILITY

Finding on sustainability: By imbedding within the Project's architecture the adoption and implementation of a certain level of policies and tools, PEA has built-in a series of sustainability factors with potential for their implementation and continuation once the project ends. Partnerships (actual and potential) is also a crucial factor for sustainability. The Project has leveraged a set of strong partnerships at all levels of intervention and can look at further synergies and institutional links as an additional way in which sustainability, upscaling and replication can be sought.

Sustainability rating. The rating is ML Moderately Likely since there are moderate risks to sustainability, yet there are expectations that at least several of the outcomes and/or outputs can be continued after the Project concludes.

A project's sustainability is understood to be the extent to which the net benefits of an intervention continue, or are likely to continue once an intervention has ended. PEA has a formal sustainability approach given that it intends to foster benefits through imbedding its outputs in existing national, sector and development planning, budgeting, implementation and co-ordination processes to generate and sustain change. Furthermore, PEA attempts to affix sustainability by fostering the application of tools and approaches developed for the integration of environmental sustainability objectives that supports poverty reduction across government policies, budget and investment frameworks.[27]

[26] https://www.undp.org/content/nairobi-gc-red/en/home.html

[27] Source: Project Document.

Although at midterm it is at times an ineffectual exercise to determine sustainability of a project's outputs and outcomes given to a great degree these outcomes and outputs have not been achieved, a number of factors that can add to sustainability can be examined. Furthermore, since PEA builds upon PEI, the lessons regarding sustainability from that initiative can also serve as context for PEA's potential sustainability.

It should be noted that PEA, by placing one of its two emphases[28] on deepening mainstreaming efforts to integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication into development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems and into public and private finance and investment makes it clear that its aims are to promote sustainability through the institutionalisation of these efforts. To some extent this has permeated into national – level activities and products (both for full-fledged as well as for technical assistance initiatives) to a varying degree of development so far and of success and acceptance.

In some countries, systematization of SDG/PEA budget coding/tagging by preparing national and provincial guidelines, and for generating capacity has begun (Nepal, Indonesia, *inter alia*). The budget coding/tagging work in Mozambique started some years ago. In Rwanda the Project has worked with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to include environment and climate change performance indicators integrated into sectoral plans as well as linking this work with plans budgeting. In Malawi an expenditure review on public environmental expenditure has taken place. And in Mauritania instruments to track funding related to poverty and environment investments and programs is being developed. Lao PDR has also been working on tools to focalise in several provinces, such as provincial investment profiles that consider objectives of environment and poverty eradication. There is uptake of these tools by other partners (in this case GIZ) have replicated the use of these tools in other provinces in Lao PDR, which makes a case for replication and having a catalytic role for the Project's outputs.

The above are examples of cases where, by working on concrete tools and instruments, the likelihood of sustainability is enhanced. There are, besides those examples above of concrete and potentially sustainable outputs, a series of matters to be considered that can aid sustainability or that can hinder the probability or possibility of sustaining outcomes and outputs after the Project ends, bearing in mind matters as they pertain to the Project but also to external factors.

Contributing Factors for Sustainability:

- *Outcomes and outputs are applicable within the national context.* This is related to an issue identified by this review where national stakeholders indicate that external consulting, although certainly helpful, at times is not knowledgeable of local factors and institutional capacities to implement outputs and obtain outcomes. Where the national context is best understood, then sustainability is likely.
- *Outcomes and outputs are firmly imbedded institutionally.* If outcomes and outputs are in place as a result of the PEA Project's processes, this substantiates the probability of continuance of benefits once this initiative ends.
- *National ownership.* In the countries where there is greater ownership, and where the objectives of the Project are still aligned with national priorities, the likelihood of sustainability is far greater than

[28] The other accent is on broadening dissemination and use of PEA's accumulated body of country-level experience in the application of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools through stepped-up efforts in knowledge management and sharing—including through targeted technical assistance to selected countries, South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation, and proactive engagement with key global and regional actors supporting national SDG implementation and acceleration processes.

for those countries who do not have a proactive national ownership of the issues as to mainstream poverty and environment in their policies.

- *National capacity.* An external factor that can be considered an enabling factor for mainstreaming P – E is national capacities. In countries with greater national (institutional) capacity the probabilities of implementing mainstreaming of poverty/environment policies through products and outputs fostered by PEA is a contributing factor. When true national capacity within a context of applicability of instruments developed is established, the possibility of sustainability is enhanced.
- *Partnerships.* When partnerships exist in – country such as with development banks, other UN agencies besides UNDP and UNEP, the private sector, or development partners and donors encompassing PEA and its expected outcomes, then sustainability is envisaged are more probable.

Hindering Factors for Sustainability:

- *Expectations for a second PEA phase*. For many stakeholders, sustainability is merely perceived to be that there would a new phase of PEA (a PEA – 2) and they tend to understand that sustainability is further funding to continue work at the national and global level.
- *Lack of an exit strategy*. Sustainability approach is not backed by a concrete and specific exit strategy for all countries nor for some cases for some aspects of the global Project.
- *Insufficient utilisation of already existing partnerships or insufficiently seeking partnerships in some countries.* In those countries where already existing partnerships are sub-utilised and/or new partnerships are not sought to enhance sustainability, the probability of sustaining outcomes are diminished.
- *Private sector within national context.* When the Project attends to working with the private sector, a "one recipe for all" does not function since the differences between countries is too wide. Therefore, although tools and instruments may be developed, the implementation and sustainability of these are varied vis-à-vis how adapted they are to the role, weight, and functioning of the private sector in each country. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that statements notwithstanding, agencies do not have a wealth of expertise as of yet on engaging with the private sector, and – therefore—the project could engage with the private sector through partners that do have more of this expertise, such as financial institutions, donors, etc., to enhance sustainability.
- *Lack of ownership in some countries.* Although formally it is clear that all countries involved have given their consent and indicated that country's priorities are aligned with national priorities, if these priorities have changed than ownership is diminished. Priority changes in the case of PEA have also been identified in response to nationally addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic aftermath.
- *Weak national and subnational capacities to implement outputs*. In countries with capacity gaps to implement mainstreaming of poverty/environment policies, and where institutional weaknesses to do the same are still enduring, the probability of sustaining instruments that produce change are debilitated.
- *Weak visibility*. The frail corporate visibility of PEA at this stage (i.e., within UNDP and within UNEP) and the weak linkage between PEA and other work streams within the two agencies is also a hindering factor to sustainability.

Partnerships: Actual and Potential. A leitmotif of PEA is its leveraging of partnerships. This is due to several factors. In general, PEA is not a large project given its scope (eight full-fledged country projects, five technical assistance projects thus far) and must seek partnerships to carry-out its work as well as to sustain results. Furthermore, an explicit strategy of mainstreaming is to work with different partnerships between areas of government, among developmental partners, within the UN system.

Partnerships for PEA are also key to the principle of coherence which is expressed through the compatibility of the Project with other interventions for the consistency and complimentary of PEA with other interventions to be mutually supportive and synergetic. Given the above, partnerships are not only key to carry out PEA's work but also to seek sustainability factors.

BOX 4: PARTNERSHIPS ACHIEVED

Collaborations of PEA with a number of partners and associated institutions have been identified. For instance, with ADB, GIZ, PAGE and UN Women on Technical Assistance Projects which address Blue Economy, Green Bonds and Gender in Agriculture.

Specific countries have also generated partnership bonds within PEA, bringing benefits in replication and/or sustainability, with examples are as follows:

- Malawi is partnering with UN Women and FAO for in-country work on gender and agriculture in order to generate further implementation and sustainability of the processes is achieving as well as to seek financial backing jointly from international financial institutions for further implementation and sustainability.
- PEA Africa partnered with UNEP WCMC and the Universities of Cambridge and Southampton in supporting work to integrate ENR into multi-dimensional poverty measurement – particularly in Rwanda and Malawi.
- GIZ is taking-up some of instruments and tools generated by PEA Lao PDR dealing with provincial-level policies and replicating them in regions where PEA does not work in that country.
- Indonesia is working closely with international financial institutions (such as ADB) in the implementation of the technical assistance intervention in order to increase effectiveness of the TA.

Further to the above examples, other partnerships with other partners (such as financial institutions and other developmental actors) are being explored and actively sought in several countries as well at the regional and global levels of implementation in order to underpin the capacity to implement tools and policies being developed with PEA assistance and to promote sustainability once the Project ends

Institutional collaboration is also a key factor in the focus that PEA explores as to South – South partnerships. This is the case keeping in mind that one of PEA's innovative key features is promoting an emphasis on partnerships and South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation as a means of widening the application of PE mainstreaming. Although implementation of this South - South knowledge exchange has not fully matured yet throughout PEA execution (and has been one of the matters delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic) this area of work is highly relevant and shows strong potential for the near future. Given that the Project identifies demands by many different countries to work in different aspects of P-E mainstreaming, and evidently the Project cannot attend to the majority of these demand-driven requests, partnerships are a crucial factor to explore. Furthermore, partnerships are critical for sustainability of PEA outcomes and outputs.

Although partnerships are understood by all stakeholders (including donors) to be central, and – as stated above—partnerships are sought at some levels, many stakeholders have indicated that the full potential of strengthening current partnerships and generating potential future partnerships is still strategically under explored. For instance, all donors (donors to PEA but also donors for PEI in its different phases) have development cooperation in the same or similar areas of work in the different countries involved. They indicate that the Project (at the national, regional and global levels) has not sufficiently

reached out to these interventions in order to link activities nor to communicate the outcomes/outputs that PEA is generating in order for the Project to have greater impact, generate replication, or even to upscale achievements.

There are other factors underlying sustainability prospects. For instance, integration of P-E objectives in sector policies, strategies, budgets and medium-term investment plans has to be anchored by building sector capacity. Furthermore, integrating P-E objectives and building capacity at sub national levels are also factors that can play a role in sustainability possibilities. Furthermore, with UN Reform empowering the Resident Coordinator systems, sustainability prospects are enhanced by proactively supporting integrated UNRCs and related UNCT processes to support cohesive P – E mainstreaming.

COVID – 19

The midterm review process which gives rise to this report took place within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global COVID-19 crisis is having (and will evidently continue to have in the near future) indelible impacts on PEA, not only operationally but also conceptually.

Operationally, the crisis has had a series of bearings at the different national levels as well as to at regional and global levels of the Project. First of all, due to lockdowns, work from home modalities, social distancing guidance, and restrictions on travel (internally in the countries involved as well as for international travel) have implied that strategic activities (training and capacity building, policy – oriented, etc.), meetings, products and other outputs have been postponed and/or delayed. This is supplementary to the delays that PEA had in many areas and in achieving a number of outputs and outcomes in its first year of implementation before COVID-19. It is not implied, consequently, that all delays that the Project is experiencing are due to COVID-19, but the pandemic has certainly exacerbated the situation.

This stand-still or slowdown of activities, as the case may be, has had several effects: curtailing technical assistance through international consultants due to international travel bans; restraining management and technical activities through Project team members due to overall internal travel bans; restraining subnational processes in countries where localisation or decentralisation of processes were beginning to take place; hindering training/capacity building activities; hindering policy upstream processes needed for the Project products to become policy. The adaptation to at-a-distance or remote online modes worked better in some countries where they were more adapted (technologically and culturally) to these sorts of modalities. Nevertheless, all the countries in the Project were affected.

After a brief period of uncertainty on how to act at all levels, and in reconditioning of patterns of funding and/or support for national partners, the Project as a whole implemented a series of approaches to mitigate the impact of the pandemic upon implementation thus far. These were:

- First of all, the Project has shown positive adaptive management strategies in this sense given that it sought –and obtained—donor flexibility in supporting the provision of materials, equipment, licenses, etc., to strengthen the capacity of national partners to work at a distance, online, etc. For this the Project provided equipment for those partners who needed it as well as licencing of online platforms for those who did not have it.
- Furthermore, a series of activities were reprogrammed or put on hold due to the pandemic. Throughout the process for this midterm review several stakeholders have indicated that either they have adapted to the new conditions and/or have been able to proceed with some activities which were banned at the beginning of the crisis.
- Nevertheless, engagement with stakeholders, partners, national counterparts and other actors within PEA has definitely been affected by the pandemic and it should be something to consider in current planning. This not only has affected the nature of engagement at-a-distance with all sorts of

restrictions but it also has had effect on the timing factor given that linkages and process have taken a lot longer than what –evidently—was planned.

- Due to these restrictions and the difficulty to deliver as planned due to COVID-19, annual work plans had to be revised and reviewed by all relevant partners and funds reprogrammed to 2021. Moreover, this adaptation has left also lessons learned for the future of the Project that there are also –when applicable—new and at times more efficient manners to implement at least some aspects of a project in a more cost-efficient manner, such as with the use of technology (IT), online meetings.

On a more conceptual nature, the Project has adapted to development issues at large in relation to COVID-19. There has been specific PEA Support to COVID- 19 response, much of it within the basis of the UN Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Framework. Five of the eight PEA countries have inserted their work within this framework and similar endeavours. This also demonstrates the capacity of the different countries to insert PEA in the overall fabric of UN COVID-19 response. The following box illustrates which countries PEA specifically supported these endeavours thus far.

BOX 5: COUNTRIES WHERE PEA PARTICIPATED IN UN FRAMEWORKS FOR IMMEDIATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19.

- *Myanmar:* PEA integrated in the UN Frameworks for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19.
- *Nepal*: PEA integrated in the UN Frameworks for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19 and on-going COVID 19 financing and economic recovery plan/strategy developed for sustainable development.
- *Laos PDR*: On-going discussions with Resident Coordinators office to support specific PEA related issues re UN Socio-Economic Recovery and Response Framework implementation.
- *Indonesia*: On going Assessment Impact of COVID19 to GHG emissions and Energy Use in Indonesia.
- *Mozambique*: Input was provided into the drafting of the COVID 19 socio economic impact assessment.

Besides the specific support provided to mitigate effects and further insert the Project in new national frameworks –such as those indicated above--, COVID-19 also opens a series of lessons and debates on how the Poverty – Environment connection deals with the pandemic and global issues from here onward. This is also an opportunity for the Project to insert itself into this debate and analysis, at global/regional and national levels. There is a strong acknowledgement that at this time the global main focus are the unrelenting challenges tackled by the health field. Yet, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the COVID-19 emergency is having and will continue to have profound and grave political, social and economic impacts, and the likelihood of developing countries to be more affected and less resilient to these effects. Furthermore, here are concrete impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on all 17 SDG Goals. Some issues that are emerging, and which are fitting with PEA and the Poverty – Environment nexus in developing countries, deal with increased poverty rates due to the pandemic, disease risk reduction vis-a-vis key environmental action and natural resource management, as well as an analysis on sustainable finance in support of the SDGs identified as a significant issue in the UN Socio-Economic Response Framework for COVID-19.

Nevertheless, not all are opportunities, there are many challenges and threats to the poverty – environment nexus in general and therefore –evidently—to the Project as it relates to the immediate impact of COVID-19 and the fallout in the short and medium term. First of all, as many stakeholders have indicated, at the country level, nations involved in the PEA Project are more engaged in dealing with the

health emergency and with habitual economic recovery issues and policies to deal with what are thought to be more long term or unessential issues in this juncture. The impact of the health crisis on livelihoods is a reminder that the effects of the pandemic will regrettably endure for the time being. The current projection that the COVID-19 crisis could thrust more than 200 million people world-wide into extreme poverty, bringing the total to more than 1 billion people living in poverty worldwide by 2030, is a sobering fact for all development work.

Stakeholders have pointed out also that COVID-19 and the new context originating out of this pandemic can and will certainly pose challenges to cooperation in general and within the UN system given the abovementioned shifts. Not only developing countries are shifting priorities, donors are also doing so.

This review was posed with the question as to what is the possible impact of COVID-19 on project's sustainability. Certainly, at this point it is not a straightforward task to determine this and it is beyond what can be requested as a reasonable task of a midterm review of a project. What is certain is that the Project will need to provide an extra impetus to make up for time and opportunities lost due to the pandemic and its delays and to adapt to the ensuing situations present.

CONCLUSIONS

PEA's technical support has been well received by many actors, at the national and at the regional and global levels, in order to work towards its overall aim of strengthened and more coherent policies, plans, regulations and investments to support Poverty-Environment priorities. As a Joint Project between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (Poverty-Environment Action) as a programme which constructs its development upon the experience and lessons learned of the UNDP–UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). PEA, however, not only has it built upon original approaches to mainstream the PE nexus in planning, but also has been innovative in conceptually incorporating innovative features of this nexus. These are financing aspects, work with the private sector, and promoting South – South cooperation. The planned and –eventually—leveraged budget for this global endeavour is moderately small for what are its expectations and what it pretends to achieve in eight countries and through (potentially) ten technical assistance processes. Therefore, given this limited scope, the future of PEA lies also in promoting linkages (concrete and specific) with key partners, within and without the UN System.

What did the PEA project intend to achieve during the period under review?

- The PEA Project intends to generate a basis upon which integrating and integrated approaches and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication in development planning and budgeting are fostered. The intention is to support the growing set of country-level mainstreaming experiences which governments and other stakeholders can draw on to effectively integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives into national development planning and implementation for the SDGs. Furthermore, the Project seeks to provide tools to improve the quality of private sector investments to support poverty-environment objectives. This is the explicit focus of Poverty-Environment Action: aligning finance and investment with poverty, environment, and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation. Specifically, the expectations are that the Project would engender strengthened integration of PE and climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

To what extent has the project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made at the outcome level?

- At the output/outcome level there has been low delivery. Of the total number of outputs/outcomes expected to be achieved at mid-point (170) only 56 percent of these were achieved. Therefore, using this metric there is an indication of low delivery. If proper adjustments are implemented (at several levels, such as programmatic, operational as well as conceptual) there is a potential for achieving at least a greater number of outputs and output-related outcomes. However, for this the Project would have to enhance as well as streamline delivery in the period remaining in order to achieve expectations to an acceptable degree as well as to foment sustainability of what has been accomplished.

What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?

- There are a number of contributing factors to achievements thus far, which clearly emerge as inputs for intended achievements at the output and, ultimately, at the outcome levels. Among the most salient ones is the targeted technical support the PEA Project provides to the country-level activities and outputs (both as broader support to full-fledged countries and as targeted support through the technical assistance projects). The global and regional expertise that the overall project team fulfils, in particular technical support articulated at both regional levels, is a crucial factor that

contributes to performance. A second important contributing factor, is the explicit building upon PEI achievements, tools, instruments, through the groundwork already carried out in the specific countries involved as well as at the regional/global levels, and in localising SDGs efforts. The proactive and explicit localisation of SDGs by mainstreaming P-E (that is, embedding SDGs and targets within the context of national and sub-national development plans). Although the sub national level is at times more complex to work with, it is agreed that this is innovative in many countries within the PE and climate nexus and can be a strong contributing factor for achievement.

- There are also a series of issues which are hindering factors for project's performance. Many of these have been associated to the delays the Project is experiencing, such as operational issues (such as managerial and resource planning not commensurate with project scope and expectations), delays in implementation due to the fact that design was finalised in the first half-year of project implementation, long processes for the conceptualisation and approval for both full-fledged and technical assistance activities, a weakened strategic outlook, national level problems with implementation ranging from issues entrenched on how Country Offices function and their relations with governments when these are not fluid, and issues pertaining to national shifts in development priorities. Expected funding at design that did not occur is also an unforeseen or unplanned factor that hindered fluent planning and implementation. Some of these priority shifts and operational challenges are, undeniably, associated to the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected the socio – economic architecture of developing countries.
- The factors that can contribute, eventually, to the sustainability of results are also wide-ranging as can be expected from a multi – country and multi-layered endeavour. Contributing factors recognised are the issues of applicability (technical and political) of the different outputs developed, the purposeful imbedding of outcomes and outputs institutionally, national ownership of the different processes that deal with the PE/climate nexus in the context of the SDGs as well as national (institutional mainly) capacities to sustain beyond implementation whatever is achieved thus far or to the point of Project conclusion. Lastly, other factors that have been identified as contributing to sustainability are current and potential partnerships, in country and at the regional and global levels, with other UN agencies, with other development actors (such as donors and non-UN development organisations, as well as with financial institutions).
- There are evidently, also, a number of factors that can hinder PEA's sustainability of current and potential results. The main deterring factors are a lack of specific and general exit strategies, lack of ownership or shifting national priorities in some countries, weak national and subnational capacity to implement outputs and outcomes. Also, in those countries where the national project operates in isolation, without a thorough utilisation of partnerships with other development actors, the prospect of sustainability once the Project ends is diminished.

It is undeniable that the Project is behind schedule in obtaining what it has aimed to achieve in terms of outputs and outcomes at the midpoint stage of implementation. Yet, with the proper routing of decisions to steer and improve implementation at all levels, while seeking sustainability once the project ends, it is understood by this review that expected outputs and outcomes can be achieved at moderately expected levels by project end. That is, ***if*** measures are taken as soon as possible to proactively steer the Project at this midpoint and proper adjustments are implemented, then the Project can fulfil its expected outputs at a substantial level. However, it should be made clear that these adjustments need to be implemented as soon as possible and be proactively managed. With adjustments and steering of managerial as well as strategic characteristics in the next two years, there is a suitable possibility that the outputs will be achieved fairly in line with the expected and planned levels.

LESSONS LEARNED

- A project should be fully designed when it starts implementation. This implies having in place, for instance, the appropriate metrics to measure progress and achievements (i.e., baseline and target output and outcome indicators) and the appropriate planning documents at all levels (including country – level when the project is global/regional/national and sub national in scope). This helps in avoiding delays since a project will begin running as soon as its implementation starts and will not use its start-up period in inception/design processes.
- A project should have its financial architecture properly anchored upon realistic expectations of funding or –more precisely—on actual funds that can be leveraged. Funding and budgets should be commensurate with expectations and ambitions.
- Resource mobilisation needs to be realistic in understanding that it is difficult to leverage new and additional resources for a project that is already well underway, as well as understanding shifting priorities and changing contexts [from donors and in – country]. Yet, everything should be done in order to pull resources in to fulfil what is planned. When a gap in funding resources between what is planned and what is actually attained, eventuality plans should be developed and a project should stop planning as if funding will be achieved at expected levels until further resources are found.
- Due to COVID-19 related restrictions and the difficulty to deliver as planned, it has been learnt that (where applicable) there are new and at times more resourceful manners to implement at least some aspects of a project in a more cost-efficient manner, such as using more online and at a distance modality in certain settings.
- All products and activities, outputs, etc., developed need to have sustainability factors imbedded in them, in order to underpin their continuity after project end. For instance, it should be clear to the partners and other stakeholders that achievements should be accompanied by institutional changes and that alliances as well as partnerships should be sought so that outputs are buttressed after a project concludes.
- Communications with country – level partners regarding management and financial issues, rules, restrictions, changes in oversight and what these changes respond to should be clear (even language appropriate) and constant. Communications between and among global, regional and national spheres of implementation should be fluid and open in order to avoid internal misunderstandings and foster unambiguousness, effectiveness and efficiency. An open dialog between and among all staff members is a baseline requisite for clear implementation and having an open candid flow of information about administrative procedures, required instruments, as well as open indications of which procedures are optional or non-required to benefit overall effectiveness and efficiency of a project.
- Cumbersome managerial processes should be avoided and transaction costs should be reduced in order to aid implementation, speed up delivery, and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Conceptualisation and activity development processes should be established rapidly in order to foster the swift approval and implementation of a project's components early on in a project cycle. Approval of activities and proposals, both focused such as technical assistance plans or broad like full country supports, needs also to be rationalised in order to have these processes be practical, prompt, and commensurate with the scope of the activity, output or project supported.
- A gender approach should be used to promote the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming through its systematic integration across a whole project and all its outputs/outcomes in order to reduce inequalities and exclusion based on gender. It should be made clear to partners at all levels that gender mainstreaming is not a gender targeted approach where numerical equity of women and

men is promoted, but a more substantive approach to reduce inequalities within the poverty – environment nexus. It should also be stressed to partners that gender mainstreaming is not an optional aspect of a project, but an intricate aspect of its human rights approach from the very onset of a project.

- Knowledge management and visibility processes do not happen automatically in a complex project, and visibility needs to be increased from onset and at all levels (national, regional, corporate/global). Knowledge management, properly and agilely implemented with a concrete professional strategic plan and knowledgeable staff to run it will not only extend the dissemination of tools generated by a project but can aid in the implementation of tools, in upscaling and replication, for strengthen the relation of project outputs with other agencies' wide corporate work, and for sustainability. Knowledge management can also encourage South-South cooperation through the exchange of experts, and knowledge transfer (including knowledge management products) best practices and lessons learned generated throughout a project and can highlight and communicate widely unintended processes that are achieved (such as UN Delivery as one Approach).[29]
- It is never too early to imbed sustainability factors in a project, it might even begin at design. For this, exit strategies should be developed early on based on the multidimensional aspects of a project's sustainability such as the institutionalisation of outcomes, institutional and individual capacity, financial and political dimensions, and governance factors. Partnerships should also be seen as a way to imbed or increase sustainability, and have clear aims such as: to leverage greater influence and awareness of what a project is trying to achieve or is achieving, to increase the visibility of achievements.

[29] The Project retorts to this lesson learned that Knowledge Management/Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist only came on board in June 2020 due to the request made by UNEP to put recruitment of this post on hold until Jan 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations contained in this document are linked to the findings in this report. They are directed to the users of this report (i.e., the PEA Project) to provide support for the actions to take or decisions to make regarding the concluding period of the Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals (Poverty-Environment Action- PEA) Project. All recommendations should take the COVID-19 pandemic into account given that effects will foreseeably continue affecting implementation for the time being.

- *Recommendation regarding resource mobilisation and financial contingency plans.* The Project, having had a gap between resources pledged at design and what has actually been leveraged, will need to carry – out several processes to deal with this funding shortfall. For this, the Project should implement the resource mobilisation strategy already developed in order to leverage lacking resources. Within the application of the mentioned resource mobilisation plans, attempts should be made (with the support of key actors, donors, supporters, etc.) in re assignment of funds and in-kind support to reflect original commitments in order to end the funding gap. If further funding will definitely not be available in the near future, discontinue planning as if it were, and adjust planning (M&E framework, other planning instruments, etc.) to incorporate this change, working closely and communicating diligently with countries for this, particularly those countries which will be affected by cuts in resources and those who will need to reorganise use of not utilised funds, or roll – over funds due to delays or the COVID-19 emergency.
- *Recommendation regarding operational and programmatic issues*. The Project needs to fast track implementation of the different products/processes/activities it is assumed it will carry out. A channel for this can be by streamlining managerial and financial oversight in order to avoid further delays. Furthermore, the Project should also fast track approval/decision-making processes as much as possible. It is understood that the Project, if it so chooses to increase delivery through streamlining managerial and decision – making processes, it would do so while keeping within donor and management agency's rules. This could be done by consolidating and streamlining the different reporting and monitoring templates and processes in order to avoid duplication of efforts, simplifying them as much as possible so that they are cost-efficient, discard processes that are not required by management/donor rules, and reduce the strain on country teams regarding managerial burdens while avoiding duplication in having to report to different areas of project management. This should be done continuing to work closely with the countries in training and assistance for these matters. Furthermore, approval and decision-making processes can be streamlined also by having a clear road map linked to decisions with timing clearly marked and adhering to this in order to avoid circular processes that slow down implementation of PEA programming at this stage.
- *Recommendations regarding PEA's strategic outlook and sustainability.* PEA should steer its work to be fully strategic. For this, sustained and sustainable expected outcomes need to be strengthened by re-launching leadership roles from global/regional team in order to promote effectiveness and sustainability. This could be achieved by generating strategic priorities between the products and processes the Project wants to achieving placing a greater emphasis on those that generate change, and are firmly implemented at the different levels. Given that the technical support provided by or through PEA is one of the key contributing factors to achievements, the Project should focus on this aspect to be strategic and adopt a leadership role in the P-E field. Assuming this, therefore, Project should be steered toward focusing upon effects/impacts/sustainability and less on just outputs/products (such as strategically promote concrete implementation of tools, instruments, financing--both public and private, policy, etc.-- to mainstream the Poverty – Environment nexus instruments being developed through PEA and that have been developed through PEI). PEA should

deviate from further developing supplementary studies and instruments/tools and increase its leverage of concrete results and outcomes while developing appropriate exit strategies (unless there is an absolute need for additional analysis or tools to deepen or sustain results and without which the result cannot be achieved). Focus support on strategic outlooks, for instance in providing enhanced backing for processes that are tactical (implementation of planning frameworks and policy, support the adoption of tools in government process, backing and support for the development and adoption of tools at levels where are needed the most –such as the sub national levels).

- *Recommendations for gender mainstreaming.* A gender approach should be used to promote the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming through its systematic integration across the whole Project and all its outputs/outcomes in order to reduce inequalities and exclusion based on gender. For this, partners should be made aware of all the work done previously in PEI through specific interventions, tools, analysis, etc., on mainstreaming gender and creating gender transformative results within the PE nexus.
- *Recommendations regarding adapting to COVID-19 impacts*. The Project should further implement adaptation to Covid-19 processes and document what its strategies have been. For this, online and at-a-distance training and capacity-building modalities, even consultancies, need to be designed in such a way that these are dynamic and consider the different pedagogical / strategic formats, different scripts for self – learning modalities as well as other relevant characteristics for virtual capacity activities such as cultural issues. Methodically and analytically document the initiatives regarding COVID-19 adaptation or insertion of PEA in COVID-19 recuperation being carried-out at this point regarding response to the pandemic as well as the cost savings that the Project has experienced due to the pandemic's impact.
- *Recommendations regarding partnerships.* PEA should intensify its partnerships, both with traditional development partners as well as with those that tend to be external to the customary development field. For this, the search for partnerships (from the national level to the global UN system level) should be strategic and have clear aims. Promote better synergies and partnerships particularly at the national level, between different development process within the UN in order to enhance the Delivery as One and UN coordination and Delivering as One, promoting system-wide coherence through the examples of PEA and for diminishing the work in silos that often occurs at many levels. The next stage of implementation should promote anchoring PEA tools into UNDP, UNEP, UN country teams. Furthermore, engage further with other UN-wide initiatives to promote sustainability of PEA knowledge and expertise, including the expertise and knowledge that PEA uses which took over from PEI. Strategically engage with international financial institutions and regional finance actors to integrate PEA-related knowledge into their plans, in particular given the role of private sector engagement that PEA has begun to focus on in some of the countries involved and given that financial institutions are more fitting to work with the private sector. An overt partnership strategy will also aid in speeding up delivery and implementation once partners assume their potential catalytic role.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the procurement of a Consultant for

Midterm Review of Poverty Environment Action for SDGs (PEA) Project

BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION

Location: Home based with field visits (If situation permits)
Type of Contract: Individual Contract
Assignment Type: International Consultant
Reports to: PEA Co-managers
Languages Required: English
Starting Date: August 2020
Expected Duration of Assignment: 60 working days

BACKGROUND

A. Project Title

Poverty Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals (PEA)

B. Project Description

Poverty-Environment Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (PEA) is a global project jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as strategic actors within the UN system to advance the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. PEA's emphasis on sustainable investments makes it a key UN country level intervention in support of the Addis Ababa Financing for Development agenda to mobilize and align public and private finance for the SDGs. UNDP serves as the Managing Agent (MA) for the USD 20 million project financed by the European Union (EU), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Norway and Sweden (through UNEP), as well as (in-kind) core resources from UN agencies. The project implementation period runs from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2022.

By building on Poverty Environment Initiative's (PEI) strong legacy, PEA, as a hub of expertise and knowledge on the integration of environment and poverty considerations in development policies, plans and investments, is uniquely placed to ensure that the environmental dimension is not left behind when addressing poverty and promoting development. PEA also provides opportunities to improve the quality of private sector investments to support poverty-environment objectives. This represents the new focus

of Poverty-Environment Action—aligning finance and investment with poverty, environment and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation.

PEA aims to strengthen integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems that integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication; public finance and investment frameworks that incentivize shifts in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication; and SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up the use of integrated poverty environment mainstreaming approaches and tools.

A total of eight full-fledged countries are being supported through the initiative with four in Africa (Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique and Rwanda) and four in Asia (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Nepal) with different implementation arrangement modalities. Tanzania and Indonesia are two countries that are also being supported with technical assistance but are not full-fledged countries. Projects' key stakeholders and partners, among others include local Governments, Donors, public and private institutions etc. Project implementation started in September 2018 with a four months inception period from September to December 2018. This being the second year of implementation, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) is scheduled to commence during the last quarter of 2020 to assess progress and inform any adjustments as part of adaptive management, including measures to minimize risks and the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemics on PEA implementation.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

C. Objective and Scope of Work (Key Tasks)

The main objective of the MTR is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. Field visits are expected to be undertaken by the consultant to two full-fledged countries i.e., Malawi and Myanmar, and to one technical assistance country i.e., Indonesia (countries were selected with due consideration of geographical distribution and implementation duration). In the event that field visits of the consultant is not feasible due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, alternatives will have to be proposed by the consultant for Co-Managers' approval.

The scope of the MTR includes the entirety of PEA's activities at the outcome and output levels covering from 2018 to date. The MTR covers interventions funded by all sources. By reviewing the framework indicators against progress made towards the project outputs targets, using a Results Matrix with color code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved, the MTR consultant assigns a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome and make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red). The MTR will also examine the PEA's contribution toward cross-cutting issues, e.g., human rights, gender, leaving no one behind, and capacity development. The MTR should be forward-looking by drawing lessons from the last years' project implementation and propose recommendations for the coming years.

The MTR will answer three broad questions as follows:

- What did the PEA project intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the project achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives at the output level, and what contribution has it made at the outcome level?
- What factors contributed to or hindered the project's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?

In addition to the above questions, the MTR is expected to produce answers surrounding the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Below are guiding questions and areas for review:

1. ***Relevance***

- To what extent has the project responded to the priorities and the needs of target beneficiaries as defined in the project document?
- To what extent did the project promote SSC/Triangular cooperation?
- Has the project been able to effectively adapt its areas of work to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in projects' implementation countries?
- Review the Theory of Change of the project if it is still relevant.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most appropriate route towards expected results, building on PEI's legacy and strengths.
- Review how the project addresses country priorities and if it is aligned with the national development, UNDAF and strategic plan.
- Review the functionality of project governance structure which includes but not limited to technical committees, steering committees, project board et al.
- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's framework indicators and targets, baseline data, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Review how the project is contributing to vulnerable groups, gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach

2. ***Effectiveness***

- By reviewing the results and resources framework, is the project on track to achieve intended results at the outcome and output levels? What are the key achievements and what factors contributed to the achievements or non-achievement of those results?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they or could they be overcome?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?

- Identify challenges encountered and remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.
- Has the project been effective in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic? Does it have strategies and approaches to mitigate the impact and protect stakeholders?

3. ***Efficiency***

- To what extent is the project management structure as outlined in the Project Document efficient in generating the expected results
- Review the support provided by Managing agent and Technical support and recommend areas for improvement.
- Examine how the COVID 19 pandemics has contributed/could further contribute to additional delays and the risk of not achieving the project objectives and targets and propose measures to sail through and cope with the situation.
- Assess whether the combined expertise of the project team is adequate to deliver against the project objectives and targets.
- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions. Examine possible funding shortfalls and their likely impact; assess the effectiveness of the fund mobilization strategy to fill the gap.
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?
- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? What feedback mechanisms are in place?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?) and ensuring donors' visibility.

4. Sustainability

- What outcomes and outputs have the most likelihood of sustainability and being adopted by partners and why?
- To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, in place to sustain the outcome-level results?
- To what extent are policy and regulatory frameworks in place that will support the continuation of benefits?
- To what extent have national partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?
- To what extent do partnerships exist with other national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results?
- What is the possible impact of Covid-19 on project's sustainability?

Human rights:

- To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from project's interventions in contributing to enhance fulfillment of people's economic and social right
- What barriers have been seen to the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the project's work and what can be done to improve inclusion of these groups?

Gender equity:

- To what extent has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the project?
- Is the gender marker data assigned to the project representative of reality?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?
- In what way could the project enhance gender equality in the coming years?

D. Methodology and Approaches:

The MTR methodology will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards. The MTR will be carried out by an independent consultant who will adopt an integrated approach involving a combination of data collection and analysis tools to generate concrete evidence to substantiate all findings. Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of project's support should be triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, evaluations and technical papers, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys and site visits where/when possible. It is expected that the evaluation methodology will comprise of the following elements:

- Review documents (Desk Review): the MTR consultant will conduct a desk review of all relevant sources of information i.e., the Project Document, progress reports, inception report, M&E Framework, roles and responsibilities, management arrangements, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, internal M&E data, legal documents and any other materials that the PEA team considers useful for the evidence-based review, including the PEI Final Evaluation Report

- Interview with key stakeholders including in-person and through social media platforms, skype and or zoom meetings, online surveys interview et al, ensuring close engagement with the Global PEA Project Team, UNDP and UNEP Headquarters, donors and other members of the Project Board, the UNDP Country Offices, government counterparts and other key stakeholders.
- Consultations with beneficiaries through interviews and/ or focus group discussions;
- Survey and/ or questionnaires where appropriate;
- Triangulation of information collected from different sources/methods to enhance the validity of the findings.

The evaluation is expected to use a variety of data sources, primary, secondary, qualitative, quantitative, etc. to be extracted through surveys, storytelling, focus group discussions, face to face interviews, participatory methods, desk reviews, etc. conducted with a variety of partners. A transparent and participatory multi stakeholder approach should be followed for data collection from government partners, community members, private sector, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, etc. Evidence will be provided for every claim generated by the evaluation and data will be triangulated to ensure validity. An evaluation matrix or other methods can be used to map the data and triangulate the available evidence.

In line with the UNDP's gender mainstreaming strategy, gender disaggregation of data is a key element of all UNDP's interventions and data collected for the evaluation will be disaggregated by gender, to the extent possible, and assessed against the programme outputs/outcomes.

Special note: Given the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions may require many of the in-person missions/consultations and data gathering / activities to be carried out remotely using electronic conferencing means.

E. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The MTR consultant shall prepare and submit the following:

- *Kick-off meeting*: MTR consultant will give an overall presentation about the review, including the approach, work plans and other necessary elements during the kick-off meeting. Consultant can seek further clarification and expectations of co-managers and PEA team in the kick-off meeting.
- *MTR Inception Report:* (up to 10 pages and to be submitted no later than 2 weeks after signing of the contract). The inception report, containing the proposed the theory of change, and evaluation methodology should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with Co-managers. The inception report should include an evaluation matrix presenting the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods to be used. The inception report should detail the specific timing for evaluation activities and deliverables and propose specific site visits and stakeholders to be interviewed. The inception report should be

endorsed by co-managers before the MTR starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit.

- *MTR debriefings* immediately following the review, the MTR consultant is required to present a preliminary debriefing of findings to co-managers and project board.
- *Draft evaluation report* (max 60 pages including executive summary with full report with annexes submitted two weeks after debriefings): Co-managers and other designated quality assurers and key stakeholders in the MTR, will review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the consultant within an agreed period of time, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.
- *MTR report audit trail*: comments and changes by the MTR consultant in response to the draft report should be retained by the consultant to show how they have addressed comments.
- *Final MTR report*: the revised/final report with all considerations addressed to be submitted 2 weeks after receiving comments on draft report. The report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making clear the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review leading to the findings. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant. A recommendation table should form part of the report's executive summary.
- *Presentation of final evaluation report:* to co-managers, project board and key stakeholders (this maybe done remotely)
- *Evaluation brief* (2 pages maximum) and *other knowledge products* or participation in knowledge sharing events, if relevant.

F. Institutional Arrangement

The evaluation will be jointly managed by UNDP and UNEP in close collaboration with UNDP/BPPS and joint oversight from the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office and UN Environment Evaluation Offices of the evaluation process and products, refer to as HQ's evaluation focal point. This entails use of UNDP guidelines, oversight, review and comments during the key stages of evaluation cycle- finalization of the TORs; selection of the consultant and review of the inception, draft and final evaluation reports- to ensure full independence of the evaluation process.

The Evaluation will be conducted by an Independent Consultant who will be recruited and administered through UNDP BPPS who will provide guidance and ensure satisfactory quality completion of Final Evaluation deliverables together with the PEA Co-Managers.

Furthermore, the PEA Co-Managers and PEA Board will provide insights and other inputs into evaluation deliverables and promote learning and ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations among PEA stakeholders and partners. The Independent Consultant will report to the PEA Co-Managers. The day-today management of the Independent Consultant has been delegated to the Evaluation Manager, appointed by the PEA Co-Managers who will liaise with the relevant evaluation stakeholders, project manager and joint project team as well as participate in all stages of the evaluation process.

There will be close coordination with the PEA Co-Managers, Evaluation Manager and joint project team who will assist in connecting the Independent Consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders. In addition, the joint project team will provide key documentation prior to fieldwork and assist in developing a detailed programme to facilitate consultations as necessary. Below are detailed roles and responsibilities for the institutional arrangements:

Roles	Responsibilities
Commissioner of the MTR: Co-managers	• Lead and ensure the development of comprehensive, representative, strategic and costed MTR; • Determine scope of the MTR in consultation with key partners; • Provide clear advice to the Evaluation Manager on how the findings will be used; • Respond to the MTR by preparing a management response and use the findings as appropriate; • Safeguard the independence of the exercise; • Approve TOR, inception report and final report. • Allocate adequate funding and human resources. • Ensure dissemination of the MTR report to all the stakeholders
MTR Manager: M&E Specialist	• Lead the development of the MTR TOR in consultation with stakeholders; • Manage the selection and recruitment of the consultant; • Manage the contractual arrangements, the budget and the personnel involved in the MTR; • Provide executive and coordination support; • Provide the Evaluation Team with administrative support and required data; • Liaise with and respond to the commissioners; • Connect the consultant with the wider key evaluation stakeholders and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the MTR; • Review the inception report and final report.
Project Manager	• Provide inputs/advice to the MTR on the detail and scope of the TOR and how the findings will be used; • Ensure and safeguard the independence of MTR;
	• Provide the MTR manager with all required data and documentation and contacts/stakeholders list, etc.; • Support the arrangement of interview, meetings and field missions; • Provide comments and clarification on the terms of reference, inception report and draft reports; • In consultation with relevant stakeholders, respond to MTR recommendations by providing management responses and key actions to all recommendations;

	• Ensure dissemination of the report to all the stakeholders including the project boards; • Responsible for the implementation of key actions on recommendations in partnership with Implementing partners
HQ's Evaluation Focal Points	• Support the review process and ensure compliance with corporate standards; • Provide technical support including advice on the development of terms of reference; recruitment of consultant; implementation and finalization of review, management responses and key actions • Ensure management response tracking and support M&E capacity development and knowledge-sharing; • Dispute resolution when issues arise in implementation of MTR. • Contributes to the quality assurance process of the MTR.
Key MTR Partner: Project Board	• Review of key evaluation deliverables, including terms of reference, the inception report and successive versions of the draft evaluation report; • Provide inputs/advice how the findings will be used; • Assist in collecting required data; • Review draft MTR report for accuracy and factual errors (if any);
MTR Consultant	• Fulfil the contractual arrangements under the terms of reference as appropriate; • Ensure the quality (including editorial) of the report and its findings and recommendations; • Develop the MTR inception report, including an MTR matrix, in line with the terms of reference, UNEG norms and standards and ethical guidelines; • Draft reports and brief the evaluation manager, project managers and stakeholders on the progress and key findings and recommendations; • Finalize the MTR report, taking into consideration comments and questions on the report. • Record and share feedback in the audit trail; • Support Project's efforts in knowledge-sharing and dissemination if required

G. Duration of the Contract

The MTR consultancy will be for 60 working days over a time of approximately 7 weeks and shall not exceed 3 months from when the consultant is hired. The final MTR report is expected to be completed and submitted by mid-December 2020.

The consultant will be homebased with International travel when situation permits due to COVID-19. Travel is required to Malawi, Nairobi/Kenya in Africa, Myanmar and Indonesia and Bangkok/Thailand in Asia. However, use of social platforms is encouraged for engagement with stakeholders due to current

travel restrictions in most countries. Consultant is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under https://dss.un.org/dssweb/;

Suggested working day allocation and schedule for MTR:

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and Inception report				
Meeting briefing	-	At contract signing	In-person/ remote	MTR manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with consultant	-	At contract signing	Via email	Project manager, MTR manager/commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	Within two weeks of contract signing	Home-based	MTR consultant
Kick-off meeting, submission of the inception report (10 pages maximum)	5 days	Within two weeks of contract signing	Home-based	MTR consultant
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report	Via email	MTR manager and commissioner
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews and focus groups	34 days	Within five weeks of contract signing	With field visits	Project Manager and MTR manager to arrange with relevant project partners/stakeholders etc.
Debriefing to PEA project and key stakeholders	1 day			MTR consultant
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation and submission of draft evaluation report	9 days	Within two weeks of the completion of the field mission	Home-based	MTR consultant

Share stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report	Via email	MTR manager, commissioner and HQs Evaluation focal points
Debriefing with UNDP	1 day	Within one week of receipt of comments	Remotely	UNDP, evaluation reference group,
				stakeholder and MTR consultant
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided	5 days	Within one week of final debriefing	Home-based	MTR consultant
Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP country office (60 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	Within one week of final debriefing	Home-based	MTR consultant
Estimated total days for MTR	**60**			

In the event that field visits of the consultant is not feasible due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, alternatives will have to be proposed by the consultant for Co-Managers' approval.

H. Remuneration:

UNDP will issue a lump sum contract based on the agreed fee, upon certification by the MTR commissioners/co-managers that expected services have been satisfactorily performed. The consultant payments will be made as shown in the table below.

Deliverables	**Payment**
1. Upon satisfactory delivery of Phase One: Desk review and Inception report	30%
2. Upon satisfactory delivery of Phase Two: Data-collection mission	30%
3. Upon satisfactory completion of Phase Three: Evaluation report writing and submission	40%

As per UNDP Travel guidelines, the standard for air travel authorized by UNDP for individual consultant is economy class; should the consultant choose to arrange travel by her/himself, s/he will receive the travel entitlement at full fare economy class from UNDP for each mission. Actual settlement of travel cost will be based on invoice of ticket purchased and paid up to the entitlement amount. Daily Subsistence

Allowance (DSA) will be paid per nights spent outside consultant's home town; at the place the mission takes place following UNDP DSA standard rates. Travel costs will be settled separately from the consultant fees.

I. LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED AND CONSULTED

- Poverty Environment Action for SDGs project document
- Project documents/proposals for all PEA countries
- Inception report (September-December 2018)
- 2019 donor annual reports (Narrative and Financial) ○ EU Donor report (Sept 2018-December 2019) ○ Horizons of Hope (January to December 2019)
- M&E framework
- PEA Visibility plan
- Resource mobilization strategy
- Technical assistance proposals
- Country office progress reports
- Country office Annual Work Plans
- Project organogram and ToRs
- Project multiyear budgets
- Approved global workplans
- Project Board Minutes
- Executive members meeting minutes

In addition to reviewing the documents relating to PEA project, the consultant should visit UNDP Independence Evaluation Office's website http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/index.shtml to be updated with UNDP's relevant information and documents required

*J. Evaluation **ethics***

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' which are available here: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

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The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultants must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE Qualifications and professional experience

- Minimum of a master's degree in international development, environmental sciences, development studies, relevant political or social science or closely related field
- Extensive project review experience, including of large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach
- Project review experience within United Nations system particularly UNDP supported projects
- Excellent understanding and experience of environment(-poverty) mainstreaming purpose and approaches.
- Experience in country-level project management and implementation
- Experience in applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios • Demonstrable analytical skills

Consultant Independence:

The consultant should not have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with the project's related activities.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application should contain:

- **CV** using Personal History Form (P11), indicating all relevant past experiences and the contact details of at least three (3) professional referees (Blank P11 form can be downloaded from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.d oc);
- **Financial Proposal** that indicates the daily rate/fee of the candidate in US dollars, using the **Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability**

Incomplete applications will be disqualified automatically. All applications must be submitted through the UNDP eTendering portal.

- If already registered, please go to https://etendering.partneragencies.org and sign in using your username and password, and search for the **event**: Business Unit: **UNDP1** Event ID:
- If you do not remember your password, please use the "Forgotten password" link. Do not create a new profile.
- If you have never registered in the system before, please complete a one-time registration process first by visiting https://etendering.partneragencies.org and using the below generic credentials:

Username: event.guest

Password: ***why2change***

Detailed user guide on how to register in the system and submit the proposal can be found at: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/procurement/business/procurementnotices/resources/

Email submission of applications will not be accepted. Queries about the position can be directed to bids.gpcnairobi@undp.org.

Note: Payments will be based on invoices on achievement of agreed milestones i.e. upon delivery of the deliverables specified in the TOR and certification of acceptance by the UNDP. The applicant must factor in all possible costs in his/her "All Inclusive Lump Sum Daily Fee" financial proposal including his/her consultancy and professional fee, communication cost such as telephone/internet usage, printing cost, ad-hoc costs, stationery costs, and any other foreseeable costs in this exercise. No costs other than what has been indicated in the financial proposal will be paid or reimbursed to the consultant. The lump sum is fixed regardless of changes in the cost components.

Financial evaluation - Total 30% (30 points)
The following formula will be used to evaluate financial proposal:

- p = y (μ/z), where
- p = points for the financial proposal being evaluated
- y = maximum number of points for the financial proposal
- μ = price of the lowest priced proposal
- z = price of the proposal being evaluated

Recommended Presentation of Offer

a) Completed Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability using the template provided by UNDP;

b) Personal CV or a P11 Personal History form, indicating all experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate and at least three (3) professional references;

c) Brief two-page description of approach to work/technical proposal of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment.

d) Financial Proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs. 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. See Letter of Confirmation of Interest template for financial proposal template. Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

K. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

The award of the contract will be made to the Individual Consultant who has obtained the highest Combined Score and has accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions. Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. The offers will be evaluated using the "Combined Scoring method" where:

a) The technical proposal will be weighted a max. of 70%;

b) The financial proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring.

Technical evaluation criteria (70%)

Criteria 1. Minimum of a master's degree in international development, environmental sciences, development studies, relevant political or social science or closely related field; Weight = 10%; Maximum Points: 10;

Criteria 2. Extensive project review experience, including of large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach Weight = 20 %; Maximum Points: 20;

Criteria 3. Project review/evaluation experience within United Nations system particularly UNDP supported projects Weight = 10 %; Maximum Points: 15;

Criteria 4. Excellent understanding and expertise in environment and climate change mainstreaming issues and approaches Weight = 15% Maximum Points: 15;

Criteria 5. Experience in country-level project management and implementation. Weight = 10% Maximum Points: 10.

Having reviewed applications received, UNDP will invite the top three/four shortlisted candidates, with minimum scores of 42 points (70% of 60 points) for interview. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Candidates obtaining a minimum of 70% (49 points) of the maximum obtainable points for the technical criteria (70 points) shall be considered for the financial evaluation.

Contract Award

Candidate obtaining the highest combined scores in the combined score of Technical and Financial evaluation will be considered qualified and will be offered the contract with UNDP.

ANNEX 2: GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS/GROUP DISCUSSIONS

These guiding questions operationalize the review queries (as stated in the Terms of Reference) concerning achievements and criteria. These were mainly a guide for interviews with relevant stakeholders at different institution. That is, the following question set was an overarching tool with queries that were used suitably for each stakeholder (project staff, stakeholders) and adjusted appropriately for the particular context of each interviewee. The queries as presented therefore were general guiding questions that were tailored to each relevant stakeholder interviewed and become more specific in the application of the guidance questions themselves. Thy were also the basis for the counter questions that arose out of interviews. In the introduction to the interviews a protocol was followed indicating the process, the independence of the evaluation. In all cases, the anonymity of responses were stated.

1. What have been the main achievements thus far in the implementation of the PEA Project?
2. What, in your opinion, have been the factors that contributed to the achievements?
3. What have been the problems/issues identified that have stood in the way of achievements?
4. How is the COVID 19 pandemic impacting on PEA? What are the measures being taken to reduce impact? How has the PEA Project responded to the pandemic within the environment/poverty nexus?
5. What is the likelihood of sustainability of the PEA Project outputs/outcomes? How can sustainability be reinforced at this stage of implementation?
6. To what degree does the Project take a rights approach? How has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed throughout the Project?
7. If something could have been done differently in design or implementation, what would it be (lesson learned)?
8. What would be your recommendations for improving implementation?

ANNEX 3: RATINGS SCALES

Ratings for Criteria: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness	Sustainability ratings:
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 some 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	4 = Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3 = Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks to sustainability 2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks to sustainability 1 = Unlikely (U): severe risks to sustainability Unable to Assess (U/A): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability

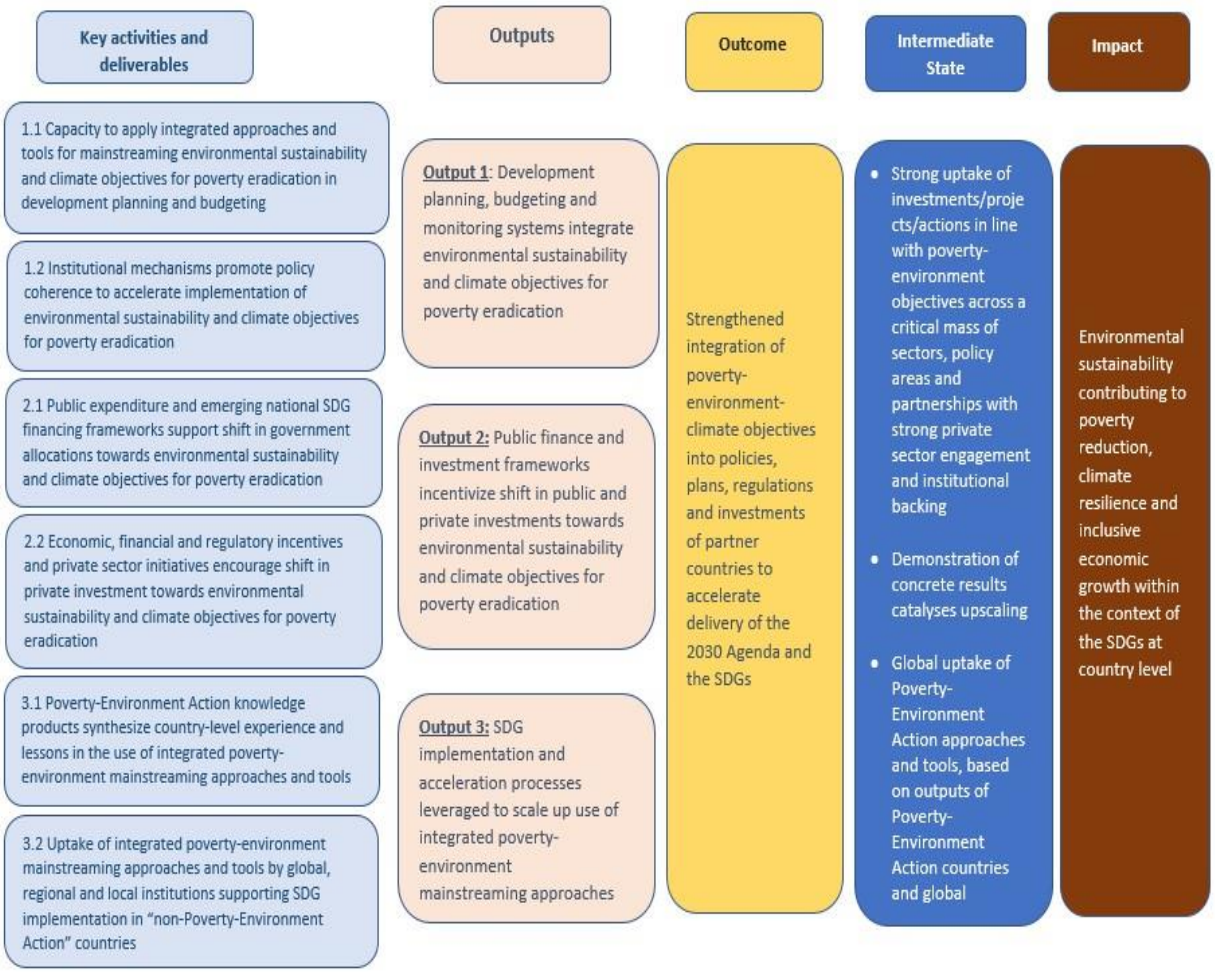
ANNEX 4: OVERVIEW OF PEI PHASES AND PEA

Phase	Key features
AFRICA PILOT 2005-2007 [1]	• UNDP and UN Environment pilot a joint approach • Ministries of Environment lead • Environmental assessments and first attempts at economic assessments • Focus on national level planning and poverty reduction strategies
SCALE UP 2008-2012 (First Phase)	• Application of lessons from Africa Pilot to a range of regional and country contexts • Focus on 'making the case' and the provision of tools to do this • P-E mainstreaming at policy and planning level • Ministries of Planning and Finance lead • Increasing focus on subnational level • Stronger on environmental issues • Building blocks for Green Economy and climate finance
PEI 2013-2018 (Second Phase)	• Focus on implementation: demonstration and communication of tangible outcomes and positive pro- poor impacts • Ministries of Planning and Finance and Local Government lead • Promotion of economic evidence and Public Environmental Expenditure Reviews (PEERs) for increased investment in the implementation of poverty environment objectives • Greater attention to political economy: governance, equity, gender mainstreaming, inclusive green growth, job creation, social protection, rights-based approach • Stronger linkages to green economy, climate change, and forms of measurement that go beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by taking into account natural wealth. • Emphasis on cross sector coordination • Improved monitoring and evaluation • Sustainability: regionalization and partnerships • Institutionalization of PEI approach and integration into global institutions, debates and policies
PEA 2018-2022	• Focus on aligning finance (including from the private sector) and investment with poverty, environment and climate objectives to accelerate SDG implementation • Emphasis on partnerships and South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation as a means of widening the application of PE mainstreaming

Source: Adapted from *PEI Final Evaluation. April 2019*.

ANNEX 5: THEORY OF CHANGE[30]

[30] Source: Project Document


Key activities and deliverables
Outputs
Outcome
Intermediate State
Impact
1.1 Capacity to apply integrated approaches and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication in development planning and budgeting
1.2 Institutional mechanisms promote policy coherence to accelerate implementation of environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
2.1 Public expenditure and emerging national SDG financing frameworks support shift in government allocations towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
2.2 Economic, financial and regulatory incentives and private sector initiatives encourage shift in private investment towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
3.1 Poverty-Environment Action knowledge products synthesize country-level experience and lessons in the use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools
3.2 Uptake of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools by global, regional and local institutions supporting SDG implementation in "non-Poverty-Environment Action" countries
Output 1: Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
Output 2: Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication
Output 3: SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches
Strengthened integration of poverty-environment-climate objectives into policies, plans, regulations and investments of partner countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
Strong uptake of investments/projects/actions in line with poverty-environment objectives across a critical mass of sectors, policy areas and partnerships with strong private sector engagement and institutional backing
Demonstration of concrete results catalyses upscaling
Global uptake of Poverty-Environment Action approaches and tools, based on outputs of Poverty-Environment Action countries and global
Environmental sustainability contributing to poverty reduction, climate resilience and inclusive economic growth within the context of the SDGs at country level

ANNEX 6: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVES

1. Tanzania: Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment-Gender-Climate Change Objectives into LED and SDGs Localization for sustainable development and poverty eradication in Tanzania. This TA focuses on increasing public and private investments with enhanced impacts on multidimensional poverty reduction, inequality, ENR sustainability, climate resilience and achievement of FYDP II, MKUZA III and SDGs objectives.

2. Indonesia Sustainable Development Finance Facility (SDFF). The TA focuses on supporting selected government offices that have mandates and responsibilities for public financial management in integrating poverty-environment-gender in the context of on-going Public Financial Management and budget reforms.

3. Poverty Environment Action for a Blue economy which aims to integrate poverty environment objectives into the blue economy planning and financing mechanisms being developed by member states and key development partners in Asia Pacific.

4. Technical Assistance (TA) on Green Bonds in South Africa building on Synergies between Low-emissions Pathways and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The TA initiative aims to strengthen existing green transformation approaches in South Africa and promote a dialogue among key actors in SDG and NDC implementation. It is being implemented in partnership with the UNEP-GIZ project on Green Economy Transformation (GET) based on the experience of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) project, and the South African and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

5. Economic empowerment of women through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices (UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Region project) The TA will support the broader UN Women project specifically on expanding the gender-agriculture and environment tools to two other countries in Africa. The aim of the tools will be to influence decision-makers to provide enhanced support to female farmers, by demonstrating that addressing the gender gap in agriculture will bring development benefits through improved food security and reduced poverty.

ANNEX 7: PROCESSES SUPPORTED FOR OUTPUT 1

The Project supported the following initiatives for **Output 1** [*Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate change objectives for poverty eradication*]:

Bangladesh

- National Planning Commission (NPC) work in order to prepare the 2020 Voluntary National Reviews titled *'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'*; to revise and publish Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the *SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective*; and to prepare the *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2020*.
- Background study on 'Leaving No One Behind in Bangladesh'.

Myanmar

- Integration of PEA in the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19.
- Revision of Organizational Capacity and Human Resources Development Strategy's Action Plan.
- Generation of Draft Environmental Master Plan, final draft Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Mainstreaming Strategy.

Nepal

- Policy costing of 15thPlan (FY 2019/20-2023/24): development of financing requirement framework of Government in the process of finalization.
- Voluntary National Review.
- Virtual meetings of SDG Implementation and Monitoring committee to endorse reports i) SDG Progress Assessment Report; ii) VNR Report PEA integrated in the UN Frameworks for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19

Lao PDR

- Draft Investment Guidebook being reviewed by government departments, consisting of information on investment approval process, investment incentives

Mozambique

- Input into the SDG Voluntary National Review incorporated**,** including the application of the environment and climate budget coding to monitor SDG implementation.
- Built capacity for the implementation of environment and climate change elements of the reformed planning and budgeting sub-system (SPO).
- Capacity built to integrate SDGs and NDC into the 2021 Economic and Social Plans.
- Led the revitalization of the Donor Environment and Climate Change working group with an objective of, *inter alia*, increasing donor support for implementing poverty-environment objectives.
- Input to the new national five-year development plan is reflected in established priorities: Strengthen the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment -Strategic Objectives, with 5 strategic objectives.

Mauritania

- Developed a report on the mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and implementing the national environmental and sustainable development plan.

Rwanda

- Consultation of all sectors by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to cross-check inclusion of environment and climate change key performance indicators into their single action plans (SAPs). The on-going integration of KPIs was at 59.5% with 20.5% of the KPIs not included in sectors plans.
- Preparation a baseline study on multidimensional poverty assessment and identified green initiative/project proposals in two districts.
- Compilation and analysis of 2020/2021 sectors' plans and budget to ensure integration of ECC indicators, reviewed and feedback provided in the Planning and budgeting consultation carried out.
- Development and final review of the National Land Use and Development Masterplan to ensure components of green growth and climate resilient actions are embedded.
- Gender-Environment and Climate Change performance indicators were developed and will be integrated into 2021/ 2022 Sectors and Districts plans.

Malawi

- Soil loss mitigation action plan underway to assist in addressing the problem of soil loss based on recommendations from the soil loss study conducted during PEI.
- Training on the use of P-E Mainstreaming tools for Directors and Deputy Directors in the various ministries and Departments.

ANNEX 8: PROCESSES SUPPORTED FOR OUTPUT 2

For **Output 2** (*Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments toward environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication*) the Project supported the following initiatives. A brief description of these, what the PEA supported in each of them are summarized as follows:

Bangladesh

- Commissioned two studies to support SDG localization (a) 'An assessment to identify the selection criteria of Upazilas for localizing the SDGs' and (b) 'Mapping of Resources Required to Localize the SDGs in Selected Upazilas'.

Myanmar

- Workshop with the Preparation Working Group on Environment Management Fund to agree on the procedures, documents to be included in the package for the Environmental Conservation Department to submit to Cabinet for the initiation of the fund.
- International consultant to develop draft concept framework of integrated environmental financing strategy is on board.
- Folio of good green pro-poor business cases from the region being developed, international consultant recruited.

Nepal

- Systematization SDG/PEA budget coding by preparing national and provincial guidelines.
- Supporting implementation of National Climate Change Financing Framework.

Lao PDR

- Five target PEA focused investment project concepts identified for 3 provinces to form the basis of provincial investment profiles (process underway in 3 other provinces).
- Baseline survey on Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Tourism Sector in Lao PDR.

Indonesia

- Ministry of Finance's Second Green sukuk allocation and impact report was published with PEA support.
- Capacity building on climate budget tagging at subnational level delivered in several provinces and districts.

ANNEX 9: PROCESSES SUPPORTED FOR OUTPUT 3

The Project supported the following initiatives for **Output 3** *[SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty environment mainstreaming approaches and tools*].

- 15 Poverty-Environment Action tools and products have so far been referenced.
- National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme, UNDP, UNEP and Global Environment Facility (GEF), National Adaptation Plans in Focus: Lessons from Mozambique (March 2020)
- UN Chief Executives Board High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) Inequality Task Team referenced Poverty-Environment Action
- Indonesia Ministry of Finance and UNDP launched the report, Public Finance for Climate Change in Indonesia 2016-2018 in April 2020
- UN DESA Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Platform, Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals
- Technical assistance project for capacity building on green bonds in South Africa in partnership with GIZ and Poverty-Environment Action launched in June 2020
- Informing key partners programming, through the following processes:
- Joint PEA/Asian Development Bank report financing a blue economy in Asia Pacific TA to guide ADB's 5 billion USD oceans portfolio;
- PEA highlighted at the regional High-Level Political Forum in Asia Pacific as a case study in context of achieving sustainable and just economies;
- PEA integrated into a 10m USD joint UN proposal for the global UN SDG joint Fund in Indonesia.
- Partnering with ADB, GIZ, PAGE & UN Women on three Technical Assistance Projects addressing Blue Economy, Green Bonds and Gender in Agriculture.
- Participation in Green Economy Coalition at country and global levels, including a call to action on COVID-19 recovery during World Environment Day 2020
- In Mozambique, the PEA/SUNRED team has incorporated lessons from the World Bank funded Mozambique Forest Investment Project, an agroforestry project implemented in the Zambezia province and managed by the National Fund for Sustainable Development and provides technical input to the UNRC Mozambique on enhancing the priority the UNCT attaches to ENR sustainability and resilience, based on PEA identification of the development benefits of increased sustainability.
- Preparation of a concept paper for the development of a coordinated Government UN Donor climate change programme for Malawi that incorporates a poverty environment approach.

ANNEX 10: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS THE REVIEW ENGAGED WITH

1	Anne Juepner	PEA UNDP Co-Manager
2	Kerstin Stendahl	PEA UNEP Co-Manager
3	Jana Hozlarova	PEA Finance Analyst
4	Tapona Manjolo	PEA Project Management Specialist
5	Jonathan Gilman	Finance & Investment Specialist- UNEP
6	David Smith	Senior Economist/PEA Africa focal point- UNEP
7	Le Lan	M&E Specialist - UNDP
8	Michael Stanley-Jones	Programme Management Officer-UNEP
9	Jacinta Okwaro	Technical Assistance Specialist- PEA
10	Asad Maken	Governance Specialist - UNDP
11	Tim Scott	Senior Policy Advisor on Environment, BPPS - UNDP
12	David Osborn	Deputy Director, Ecosystems Division- UNEP
13	Juliette Biao	Director and Regional Representative - UNEP
14	Dechen Tshering	Regional Director Bangkok - UNEP
15	Aline Brandstatter	International Aid/Cooperation Assistant- EU
16	Bernard Crabbe	Team Leader Environment and Mainstreaming -EU
17	Elisabeth Folkunger	Senior Programme Specialist-SIDA
18	Sandra Wibmer	Advisor, Environment and Climate Action -ADA
19	Fakrul Ahsan	Project Manager – PEA Bangladesh
20	Debi Nathalia	Technical Associate for Public Climate Finance – PEA Indonesia
21	Muhammad Hardiana	Program Manager- PEA Indonesia
22	Shutong Ren	Programme Analyst – PEA Lao PDR
23	Justin Shone	Team Leader (NRM, CC & DRR Unit) -PEA Lao PDR
24	Chindaphone Saignaleuthe	National Coordinator – PEA Lao PDR
25	Phanomphone Phomsouvanh	Finance Manager - PEA Lao PDR
26	Etta Mmangisa	Programme Specialist- PEA Malawi
27	Linda Chinangwa	Project Manager – PEA Malawi
28	James Mbata	Technical Advisor – PEA Malawi
29	Cherif Kane	Chief Technical Advisor- PEA Mauritania
30	Famata Kane	Project Manager – PEA Mauritania
31	Isselmou Mohamed Mbady	Technical Specialist- PEA Mauritania
32	Malene Wiinblad	Chief Technical Advisor – PEA Mozambique
33	Biplove Choudhary	Technical Advisor- PEA Myanmar
34	Khin Hnin Myint	Programme Analyst – PEA Myanmar
35	Hung Ling	DRR Specialist – PEA Myanmar
36	Ian Thompson	Interim Technical Advisor- PEA Myanmar
37	Pem Wandi	Programme Specialist- PEA Myanmar
38	Apar Paudyal	Environment Specialist – PEA Nepal
39	Janet Umugwaneza	Programme Manager- PEA Rwanda
40	Bernardin Uzayisaba	Programme Analyst – PEA Rwanda
41	Mary Rucibigango	National Technical Advisor – PEA Rwanda
42	Fred Sabiti	Environment Specialist – PEA Rwanda
43	Veronica Fubile	HR Associate- PEA Tanzania
44	Amon Manyama	Practice Specialist (Capacity Development) – PEA Tanzania
45	Angwi Mbandi	Evaluation Officer - PEA Tanzania
46	Ann Moirana	Programme Associate- PEA Tanzania

47	Ambrose Mugisha	Chief Technical Advisor – PEA Tanzania
48	Margaret Swai	Programme Finance Associate - PEA Tanzania

ANNEX 11: LIST OF CONSULTED DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation. *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use*. February 2020.

PEA. List of KM Products/News/Events Uploaded In https://pea4sdgs.org/

PEA. M&E Working Group Meeting Minutes - #2/2020, 7 September, 2020.

PEA. *Horizons of Hope Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals Annual Progress Report 2019*.

https://pea4sdgs.org/

PEI. *PEI Final Evaluation. April 2019.*

Poverty Environment Action for SDGs project document

Project documents/proposals for all PEA countries

Inception report (September-December 2018)

2019 donor annual reports (Narrative and Financial) o EU Donor report (Sept 2018-December 2019) o Horizons of Hope (January to December 2019)

M&E framework

PEA Visibility plan

Resource mobilization strategy

Technical assistance proposals

Country office progress reports

Country office Annual Work Plans

Project organogram

Project multiyear budgets

Approved global workplans

Project Board Minutes

Executive members meeting minutes

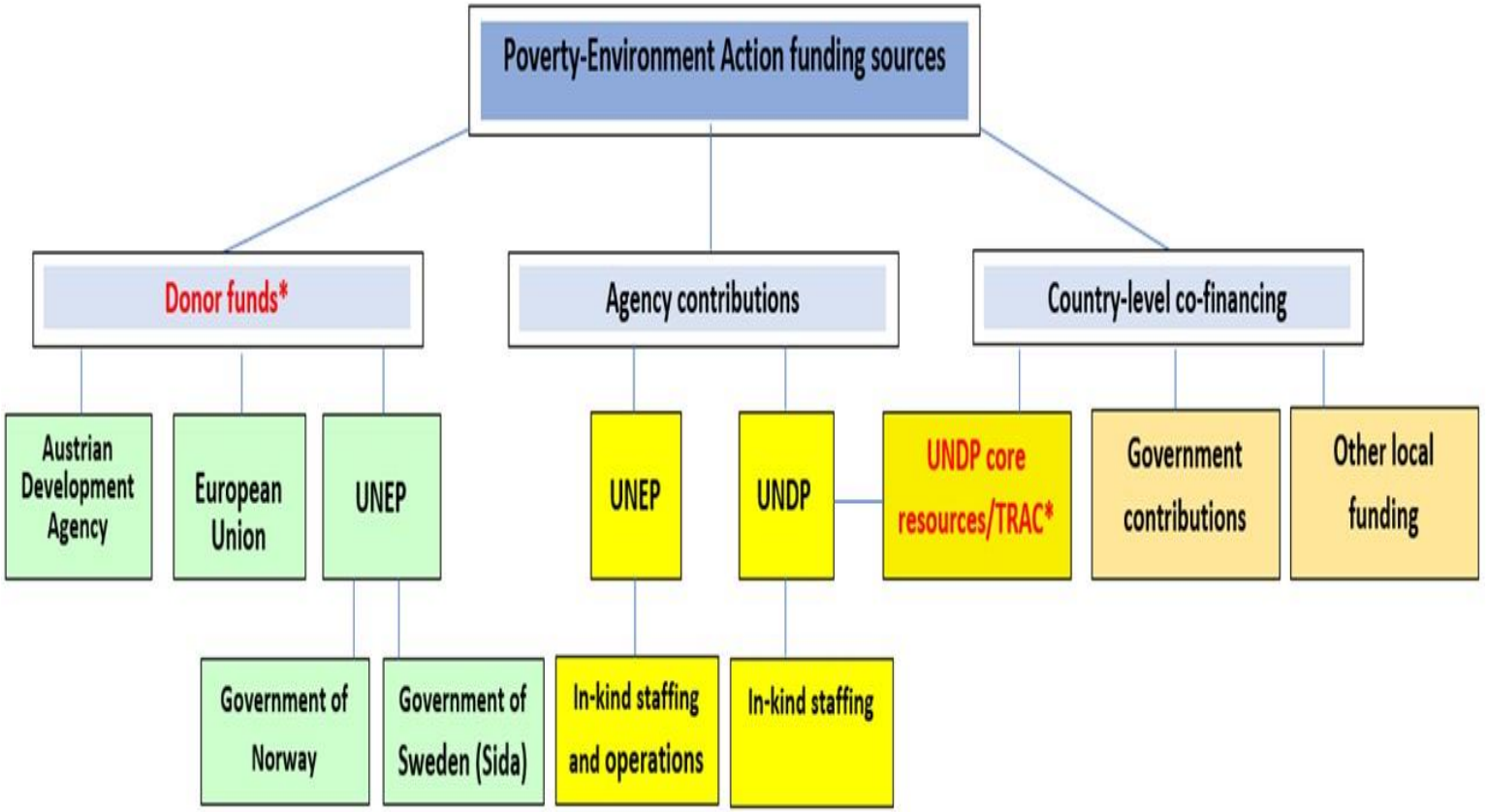
ANNEX 12: RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND SEPTEMBER 2020 TARGET INDICATORS REVIEW

Global Indicators				Global baseline	Global Targets	Yearly Targets				Achievements	September 2020 Targets Review					Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output		Indicator	Description			Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y1	Y1 Achievements		Y2 Revised Targets	Remarks	Y2 Achievements			
						2019	2020	2021	2022	2019 (as per AR)	2019	Variation	2020		2020			
1	Development planning, budgeting and monitoring systems integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	1.1	Number of planning frameworks,legislation and regulations that integrate the poverty-environment nexus (per country)	22	95	25	33	25	12	5	8 (+3 Nepal)	-2	31	2020 Lao -1 Myanmar -1 2022: Lao -4	6	56	14	Needing attention Missed 17 targets in 2019, reduced 2 in 2020 Needs to catch up in 2020 and beyond
		1.2	Policy position(s) on poverty-environment issues formulated by non-government actors	0	7	1	4	2	0	0	No change		4	No change	0	5	0	Needing attention Missed targets in 2019 Slow progress in 2020
		1.3	Number of government-led inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms that promote coherence of planning, frameworks, legislation and regulations	5	35	7	14	10	4	3	No change		14	No change	2	21	5	Needing attention Missed targets in 2019 Slow progress in 2020
		1.4	Number of countries where environmental/social/economic data are collected, analysed and reported applying a poverty-environment nexus perspective through national development	3	7	3	4	0	0	3	No change		4	2020 +1 (mathematic error, revise to 4)	4	7	7	Target already achieved

Global Indicators				Global baseline	Global Targets	Yearly Targets				Achievements	September 2020 Targets Review					Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output		Indicator	Description			Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y1	Y1 Achievements		Y2 Revised Targets	Remarks	Y2 Achievements			
						2019	2020	2021	2022	2019 (as per AR)	2019	Variation	2020		2020			
2	Public finance and investment frameworks incentivize shift in public and private investments towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication	2.1	Number of key budget policy documents (e.g. budget statements, economic surveys, budget call circulars) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate priorities for poverty eradication (per country)	91	25	13	5	4	3	3	No change	-2	3	Mozambique -2	3	16	6	Needs attention Missed 10 targets in 2019, reduced 2 in 2020 Needs to catch up in 2020 and beyond
		2.2	Number of countries with increased annual and medium-term sector budget allocations (including national and sub-national levels) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate for poverty eradication	0	6	1	2	2	1	1	No change		2	No change	0	3	1	Needs attention Needs to catch up in 2020
		2.3	No of countries with fiscal instruments (tax, incentives, user fees, etc.) adopted in policies and regulations that prioritise quality investments	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	1 (+Nepal)	-1	0	Lao -1 (shift to 2021)	0	0	1	On-track Over-achieved in 2019
		2.4	Number of guidelines and tools to manage private sector investment decisions that facilitate or prioritize quality	8	31	0	8	12	11	7	No change	0	8	Lao -1 +1	5	8	12	On-track Over-achieved in 2019

Global Indicators				Global baseline	Global Targets	Yearly Targets				Achievements	September 2020 Targets Review					Total target as of 2020 (2019 target+ 2020 revised targets)	Total achievements as of Aug 2020	Status determination
Output		Indicator	Description			Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y1	Y1 Achievements		Y2 Revised Targets	Remarks	Y2 Achievements			
						2019	2020	2021	2022	2019 (as per AR)	2019	Variation	2020		2020			
3	SDG implementation and acceleration processes leveraged to scale up use of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools	3.1	Number of Poverty-Environment Action knowledge-sharing and learning products that are referenced by regional and global networks	23	63	5	15	23	20	1	No change		15		15	20	16	On-track Missed targets in 2019; good progress in 2020
		3.2	Number of countries adopting Poverty-Environment Action tools/approaches resulting from South-South knowledge collaboration	9	18	0	5	7	6	1	No change		5		1	5	2	On-track Over-achieved in 2019
		3.3	Number of regional and global Poverty-Environment Action partner programmes and agencies that apply an integrated mainstreaming approach	13	18	0	4	7	7	0	No change		4	2020 +1 (mathematic error, revise to 4)	6	4	6	On-track Over-achieved in 2020

ANNEX 13: PEA FUNDING SOURCES



ANNEX 14: UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATION IN THE UN SYSTEM EVALUATION CONSULTANTS AGREEMENT FORM

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

Name of Consultant: Maria Onestini

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

Signed at Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 4 2020

Signature: