

Mid-Term Review of GoI-UNDP-GEF – India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

Terms of Reference for National Consultant

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for -the Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled India High Range Mountain Landscape Project (PIMS 4651) implemented by UNDP in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, which is to be undertaken in 2020. The project started on the 5 May 2014 and is in its seventh year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for the MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#)

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Background:

The Munnar landscape in India's Western Ghats is a globally significant biodiversity region. It exhibits high levels of endemism and biological diversity; it is an important bird area and has many globally threatened species of fauna and flora. It is also one of the five viable tiger breeding centres in India and harbours the largest global population of Nilgiri Tahr, as well as a significant population of Grizzled Giant Squirrels (both threatened species). It is situated at the catchment of three major river systems of peninsular India and supports important economic sectors like cardamom, tea and tourism.

At present, the Munnar landscape is a complex mosaic of land uses where conservation, economic production and livelihood requirements assume equal primacy & profoundly influence each other. These contribute to the competitive use of natural resources, affecting vital ecological processes. The rapidly changing developmental context, demographic contours and resource use configurations pose a challenge to the landscape's long-term ecological sustainability and livelihood security. The existing planning and policy framework, as well as the institutional arrangements in the Munnar landscape, are inadequate to address biodiversity conservation from a landscape perspective. The project aims to mainstream biodiversity concerns in key production sectors through landscape approach. The project covers an area of 2198 sq.km. spread over the Idukki, Ernakulam and Thrissur districts in Kerala.

Project Duration: 2014-2022

GEF Allocation: US\$ 6,275,000

Co-finance (in-kind): **Government** – US\$ 28 million; **UNDP** – US\$ 1 million; **Private sector** – US\$ 1 million

Implementation modality: Direct Implementation Modality

Project partners: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India and State Government of Kerala – Haritha Kerala Mission and Department of Forest and Wildlife

Objective: Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in production sectors through a landscape approach in conservation in Munnar region of Western Ghats in India

Project Outcomes:

The project would contribute in sustainable management of globally significant mountain biodiversity of India by mainstreaming the biodiversity conservation considerations into production sectors, while sustaining livelihoods of local communities. It would also address retrogressive factors including the anticipated impacts of climate change and other associated pressures.

Strengthening governance: An effective governance framework for multiple- use mountain landscape management to be in place

Environmental sustainability: Multiple use mountain landscape management is applied securing the ecological integrity of High Range Mountain Landscape

Community Empowerment: Strengthened community capacities for community based sustainable use and management of wild resources

Institutional arrangements:

The project is being directly implemented by UNDP in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. UNDP is responsible for all financial management, reporting, procurement and recruitment services.

A National level Project Steering Committee (NPSC) based in Delhi and a State level Project Steering Committee (SPSC) based in Thiruvananthapuram would be responsible for supervising the project activities.

National Project Steering Committee (NPSC)

The Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India and a senior official of the UNDP jointly chair the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC).

Members of NPSC include Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), Operational Focal Point of Global Environment Facility (GEF-OFP), Joint Secretary (in charge of Biodiversity), Joint Secretary (in Charge of Mountains), representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, Tourism, Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, and New and Renewable Energy, Chairman, National Bio Diversity Authority, Secretary, Local Self Government, Kerala, Secretary, Forests, Kerala, two representatives from non-governmental sector (one from private sector/ industries) nominated by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change and two representatives from the UNDP.

The chairman is authorised to invite experts and other officials to NPSC as per requirement. The responsibilities of NPSC include ensuring overall effectiveness of programme implementation, providing policy guidance and approval of budgeted Annual Work Plans (AWP) forwarded by the State. NPSC meets at least once a year. The MoEF&CC is supported by the National Project Management Unit.

State Project Steering Committee (SPSC)

The Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala and a senior official from UNDP would jointly chair the SPSC. The Forest Secretary would be the Convener and LSG Secretary would be a member of SPSC.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, and Chairman and CEO of State Forest Development Agency are the members of SPSC. Representatives of MoEFCC (that includes GEF OFP and IG-Forest), the State Planning Board, various departments (Finance, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Rural Development, Minor Irrigation, Town and Country Planning, Environment and Climate Change, Fisheries, Tourism, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Soil Survey and Soil Conservation, Ground Water), Kudumbashree, Haritha Keralam Mission, Suchitwa Mission, State Biodiversity Board, State Medicinal Plant Board, Land Use Board, Tea Board, Agency for Non-Conventional Energy and Rural Technology (ANERT), Plantation Corporation, and Kerala Forest Development Corporation would be the members. The District Collectors of Idukki, Ernakulam, and Thrissur, representatives of Hindustan Newsprint Limited, and United Planters' Association of South India (UPASI) are also be the members of the SPSC.

The SPSC meets once a year or more on approval of Chair. The State Project Steering Committee endorses and forwards the AWP to the National Project Director and UNDP for approval. The other responsibilities include approval of activities related to AWP, supervision of project activities, review and recommendations, ensuring departmental and sectoral coordination for the smooth functioning of the project, policy support and communication with NPSC. The SPSC ensures that the officials involved in the project have sufficient tenure for the smooth implementation of the project. SPSC ensures that the co-financing arrangements of the Government of Kerala and private sector are met through scheme commitments. SPSC also ensures its implementation through respective agencies are in line with the outcome and outputs of the project. All the decisions taken by SPSC will be in accordance with the standards that ensure management of development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international cooperation. This will uphold the ultimate accountability of the UNDP. The SPSC is hosted by the State LSGD, assisted by a State Project Management Unit.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in different parts of the world is a major concern. India is also FIGHTING this very tough task for controlling the virus outbreak and has managed its growth rate through some strict measures. Collective and focused efforts for containment and management of COVID-19 by the Government of India along with the States/UTs have led to the number of recovered cases among COVID-19 patients. GoI has confirmed 6,623,815 COVID-19 cases, and 102,685 deaths. India's total recovered cases have crossed 5.5 million. This takes the national Recovery Rate amongst COVID-19 to 87.4 %.

In terms of the project, several consultations and activities including the capacity gap assessments and capacity building have been put on hold due the COVID-19 pandemic. This has affected the pace of implementation of the project and the delivery of desired results as outlined in the project document. The State of Kerala in which this project operates was one of the first to be heavily impacted by COVID-19 and field activities were suspended from February to June 2020. A rapid socio-economic assessment was conducted by the project to gather information on the impacts of COVID-19, showing negative impacts on the socio-economic situations in the project landscape, especially on households that depend on the tourism sector, vegetable farming, reed product sales, tea farming, and self-help group members working in recycling and scrap network. Continued adaptation in work planning and implementation will need to continue over coming months as there are still some restrictions in place impacting the project landscape and the COVID-19 situation remains volatile.

3. MTR PURPOSE

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

MTRs will identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The results and recommendations from the MTR will be used by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to design and implement strategy and action plan for achieving desired outcomes under the project. The process will also help identify potential challenges and risks that will affect the project delivery. The MTR will also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation (TE). Though the project began in the year 2014, the MTR is taking place in the seventh year of implementation as the project was put on hold for a period of four years due to some grievance raised by a group of stakeholders. On the request of the Government of India, the concerns were addressed by UNDP through the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit. Several rounds of consultations were done with a range of stakeholders at various levels and the implementation strategy of the project was revised. The project reinitiated in the year 2018 and received one-time extension from the GEFSEC till March 2022. Considering the limited time left for the implementation of the project, the MTR will also assess the feasibility of undertaking planned interventions and expected outcomes.

The project landscape is one of the first and most affected from the on-going pandemic and hence the Several measures have been undertaken by the project to support the stakeholders especially w.r.t sustainable livelihoods. MTR will also assess the viability of the interventions *vis-à-vis* the project outcomes and expected results, identify the challenges related to the same and suggest appropriate measures.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The National Consultant will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, Revised Implementation Strategy, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The National Consultant will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR mission begins.

The National Consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews (virtual if required) with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Haritha Kerala Mission, Kerala Forest Department, Kerala Local Self Government Department, executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the National Consultant is expected to conduct field missions to the Idukki, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts in Kerala (India).

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

Considering the recent outbreak of COVID-19, virtual tools may be used for stakeholder consultations and evidence-based reporting of results.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. However, gender-responsive methodologies and tools should be used to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

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

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the MTR mission then the National Consultant should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit.

If all or part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule. Equally, qualified and independent national consultants can be hired to undertake the MTR and interviews in country as long as it is safe to do so.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

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

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- Review the impact of COVID in the landscape and on the project implementation
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits, also considering the impact of COVID.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator ³	Baseline Level ⁴	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁵	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁶	Achievement Rating ⁷	Justification for Rating
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³ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁴ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵ If available

⁶ Colour code this column only

⁷ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved

Yellow= On target to be achieved

Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, 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?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
		TOTAL			

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures’. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?

- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁸ (in the SESP).
 - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

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

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

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

⁸ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

Conclusions & Recommendations

Evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings, should be a part of the MTR report.

Additionally, the National Consultant (as a part of the MTR team) is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

There should be no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

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

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	

	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the assignment would be 35 working days over a time period of 8 weeks, and shall not exceed three months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	2 days	20 November 2020
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	10 days	10 December 2020
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 day	15 December 2020
Preparing draft report (due within 2 weeks of the MTR mission)	7 days	30 December 2020
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	15days	15 January 2020

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than two before the MTR virtual mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft MTR Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within two weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP India Country Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and all necessary arrangements for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one International Consultant(with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and National Consultant, usually from the country of the project.

The National Consultant will assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory frameworks, budget allocations, capacity building and would work with the Project Team in developing the itinerary,

The selection of the National Consultant will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Education (20% weightage)

- A Master's degree in Environment Sciences, Natural Resource Management or any other related field

Experience (40% weightage)

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;

- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity focal area
- Experience in evaluating GEF projects;
- Demonstrated understanding of UNDP social and environmental standards and framework for application to project development and implementation
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 15 years;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity, experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset;
- Good understanding of different geographies, environment and conservation issues in India.

Language (10% weightage)

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10.ETHICS

The National Consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The National Consultant 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 National Consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11.PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the Clearance Form) and delivery of completed Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%⁹:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).

⁹ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters.

- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'ruchi pant', is written over a faint, light blue rectangular background.

ruchi pant

Mid-Term Review of GoI-UNDP-GEF – India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

Terms of Reference for International Consultant

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for -the Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled India High Range Mountain Landscape Project (PIMS 4651) implemented by UNDP in close consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, which is to be undertaken in 2020. The project started on the 5 May 2014 and is in its seventh year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Background:

The Munnar landscape in India's Western Ghats is a globally significant biodiversity region. It exhibits high levels of endemism and biological diversity; it is an important bird area and has many globally threatened species of fauna and flora. It is also one of the five viable tiger breeding centres in India and harbours the largest global population of Nilgiri Tahr, as well as a significant population of Grizzled Giant Squirrels (both threatened species). It is situated at the catchment of three major river systems of peninsular India and supports important economic sectors like cardamom, tea and tourism.

At present, the Munnar landscape is a complex mosaic of land uses where conservation, economic production and livelihood requirements assume equal primacy & profoundly influence each other. These contribute to the competitive use of natural resources, affecting vital ecological processes. The rapidly changing developmental context, demographic contours and resource use configurations pose a challenge to the landscape's long-term ecological sustainability and livelihood security. The existing planning and policy framework, as well as the institutional arrangements in the Munnar landscape, are inadequate to address biodiversity conservation from a landscape perspective. The project aims to mainstream biodiversity concerns in key production sectors through landscape approach. The project covers an area of 2198 sq.km. spread over the Idukki, Ernakulam and Thrissur districts in Kerala.

Project Duration: 2014-2022

GEF Allocation: US\$ 6,275,000

Co-finance (in-kind): Government – US\$ 28 million; **UNDP** – US\$ 1 million; **Private sector** – US\$ 1 million

Implementation modality: Direct Implementation Modality

Project partners: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India and State Government of Kerala – Haritha Kerala Mission and Department of Forest and Wildlife

Objective: Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in production sectors through a landscape approach in conservation in Munnar region of Western Ghats in India

Project Outcomes:

The project would contribute in sustainable management of globally significant mountain biodiversity of India by mainstreaming the biodiversity conservation considerations into production sectors, while sustaining livelihoods of local communities. It would also address retrogressive factors including the anticipated impacts of climate change and other associated pressures.

Strengthening governance: An effective governance framework for multiple- use mountain landscape management to be in place

Environmental sustainability: Multiple use mountain landscape management is applied securing the ecological integrity of High Range Mountain Landscape

Community Empowerment: Strengthened community capacities for community based sustainable use and management of wild resources

Institutional arrangements:

The project is being directly implemented by UNDP in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. UNDP is responsible for all financial management, reporting, procurement and recruitment services.

A National level Project Steering Committee (NPSC) based in Delhi and a State level Project Steering Committee (SPSC) based in Thiruvananthapuram would be responsible for supervising the project activities.

National Project Steering Committee (NPSC)

The Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Govt. of India and a senior official of the UNDP jointly chair the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC).

Members of NPSC include Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), Operational Focal Point of Global Environment Facility (GEF-OFP), Joint Secretary (in charge of Biodiversity), Joint Secretary (in Charge of Mountains), representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, Tourism, Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, and New and Renewable Energy, Chairman, National Bio Diversity Authority, Secretary, Local Self Government, Kerala, Secretary, Forests, Kerala, two representatives from non-governmental sector (one from private sector/ industries) nominated by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change and two representatives from the UNDP.

The chairman is authorised to invite experts and other officials to NPSC as per requirement. The responsibilities of NPSC include ensuring overall effectiveness of programme implementation, providing policy guidance and approval of budgeted Annual Work Plans (AWP) forwarded by the State. NPSC meets at least once a year. The MoEF&CC is supported by the National Project Management Unit.

State Project Steering Committee (SPSC)

The Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala and a senior official from UNDP would jointly chair the SPSC. The Forest Secretary would be the Convener and LSG Secretary would be a member of SPSC.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, and Chairman and CEO of State Forest Development Agency are the members of SPSC. Representatives of MoEFCC (that includes GEF OFP and IG-Forest), the State Planning Board, various departments (Finance, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Rural Development, Minor Irrigation, Town and Country Planning, Environment and Climate Change, Fisheries, Tourism, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Soil Survey and Soil Conservation, Ground Water), Kudumbashree, Haritha Keralam Mission, Suchitwa Mission, State Biodiversity Board, State Medicinal Plant Board, Land Use Board, Tea Board, Agency for Non-Conventional Energy and Rural Technology (ANERT), Plantation Corporation, and Kerala Forest Development Corporation would be the members. The District Collectors of Idukki, Ernakulam, and Thrissur, representatives of Hindustan Newsprint Limited, and United Planters' Association of South India (UPASI) are also be the members of the SPSC.

The SPSC meets once a year or more on approval of Chair. The State Project Steering Committee endorses and forwards the AWP to the National Project Director and UNDP for approval. The other responsibilities include approval of activities related to AWP, supervision of project activities, review and recommendations, ensuring departmental and sectoral coordination for the smooth functioning of the project, policy support and communication with NPSC. The SPSC ensures that the officials involved in the project have sufficient tenure for the smooth implementation of the project. SPSC ensures that the co-financing arrangements of the Government of Kerala and private sector are met through scheme commitments. SPSC also ensures its implementation through respective agencies are in line with the outcome and outputs of the project. All the decisions taken by SPSC will be in accordance with the standards that ensure management of development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international cooperation. This will uphold the ultimate accountability of the UNDP. The SPSC is hosted by the State LSGD, assisted by a State Project Management Unit.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in different parts of the world is a major concern. India is also FIGHTIN this very tough task for controlling the virus outbreak and has managed its growth rate through some strict measures. Collective and focused efforts for containment and management of COVID-19 by the Government of India along with the States/UTs have led to the number of recovered cases among COVID-19 patients. GoI has confirmed 6,623,815 COVID-19 cases, and 102,685 deaths. India's total recovered cases have crossed 5.5 million. This takes the national Recovery Rate amongst COVID-19 to 87.4 %.

In terms of the project, several consultations and activities including the capacity gap assessments and capacity building have been put on hold due the COVID-19 pandemic. This has affected the pace of implementation of the project and the delivery of desired results as outlined in the project document. The State of Kerala in which this project operates was one of the first to be heavily impacted by COVID-19 and field activities were suspended from February to June 2020. A rapid socio-economic assessment was conducted by the project to gather information on the impacts of COVID-19, showing negative impacts on the socio-economic situations in the project landscape, especially on households that depend on the tourism sector, vegetable farming, reed product sales, tea farming, and self-help group members working in recycling and scrap network. Continued adaptation in work planning and implementation will need to continue over coming months as there are still some restrictions in place impacting the project landscape and the COVID-19 situation remains volatile.

3. MTR PURPOSE

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

MTRs will identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The results and recommendations from the MTR will be used by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to design and implement strategy and action plan for achieving desired outcomes under the project. The process will also help identify potential challenges and risks that will affect the project delivery. The MTR will also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation (TE). Though the project began in the year 2014, the MTR is taking place in the seventh year of implementation as the project was put on hold for a period of four years due to some grievance raised by a group of stakeholders. On the request of the Government of India, the concerns were addressed by UNDP through the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit. Several rounds of consultations were done with a range of stakeholders at various levels and the implementation strategy of the project was revised. The project reinitiated in the year 2018 and received one-time extension from the GEFSEC till March 2022. Considering the limited time left for the implementation of the project, the MTR will also assess the feasibility of undertaking planned interventions and expected outcomes.

The project landscape is one of the first and most affected from the on-going pandemic and hence the Several measures have been undertaken by the project to support the stakeholders especially w.r.t sustainable livelihoods. MTR will also assess the viability of the interventions *vis-à-vis* the project outcomes and expected results, identify the challenges related to the same and suggest appropriate measures.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, Revised Implementation Strategy, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR mission begins.

The International Consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews (virtual if required) with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Haritha Kerala Mission, Kerala Forest Department, Kerala Local Self Government Department, executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Considering the recent outbreak of COVID-19, virtual tools may be used for stakeholder consultations and evidence-based reporting of results.

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. Use of gender-responsive methodologies and tools should be done to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

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

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the MTR mission then the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit.

If all or part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultant may work remotely with support of the national consultant in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

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

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.

- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- Review the impact of COVID in the landscape and on the project implementation
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Log-frame:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log-frame indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits, also considering the impact of COVID.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator ³	Baseline Level ⁴	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁵	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁶	Achievement Rating ⁷	Justification for Rating
Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							

³ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁴ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵ If available

⁶ Colour code this column only

⁷ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved

Yellow= On target to be achieved

Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, 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?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
		TOTAL			

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures’. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁸ (in the SESP).

⁸ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land

- The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

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

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

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

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of

the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR report will include a section for evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

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

There should be no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

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

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

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

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 35 working days over a time period of 8 weeks and shall not exceed three months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	2 days	1 December 2020
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, virtual missions	10 days	15 December 2020
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 day	22 December 2020
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	7 days	10 January 2020
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	15days	25 January 2020

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than two before the MTR virtual mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft MTR Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within two weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP India Country Office.

The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the International Consultant to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

The International Consultant will be responsible for the overall development of the Mid Term Review Report. The consultant cannot 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 project's related activities.

The selection of International Consultant will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Education (20% weightage)

- A Master's degree in Environment Sciences, Natural Resource Management or any other related field

Experience (40% weightage)

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity focal area
- Experience in evaluating GEF projects in Asia;
- Demonstrated understanding of UNDP social and environmental standards and framework for application to project development and implementation
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity, experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

Language (10% weightage)

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10. ETHICS

The International Consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The International Consultant 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 International Consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process

must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%⁹:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.



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⁹ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters.

Mid-Term Review of the India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

Purpose

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

MTRs will identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that the project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The results and recommendations from the MTR will be used by UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to design and implement strategy and action plan for achieving desired outcomes under the project. The process will also help identify potential challenges and risks that will affect the project delivery. The MTR will also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation (TE). Though the project began in the year 2014, the MTR is taking place in the seventh year of implementation as the project was put on hold for a period of four years due to some grievance raised by a group of stakeholders. On the request of the Government of India, the concerns were addressed by UNDP through the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit. Several rounds of consultations were done with a range of stakeholders at various levels and the implementation strategy of the project was revised. The project reinitiated in the year 2018 and received one-time extension from the GEFSEC till March 2022. Considering the limited time left for the implementation of the project, the MTR will also assess the feasibility of undertaking planned interventions and expected outcomes.

The project landscape is one of the first and most affected from the on-going pandemic and hence several measures have been undertaken by the project to support the stakeholders especially w.r.t sustainable livelihoods. MTR will also assess the viability of the interventions *vis-à-vis* the project outcomes and expected results, identify the challenges related to the same and suggest appropriate measures.

MTR Approach & Methodology

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, Revised Implementation Strategy, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews (virtual if required) with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Haritha Kerala Mission, Kerala Forest Department, Kerala Local Self Government Department, executing agencies, senior officials and task

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to the Idukki, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts in Kerala (India). Considering the recent outbreak of COVID-19, virtual tools may be used for stakeholder consultations and evidence-based reporting of results.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. However, gender-responsive methodologies and tools should be used to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

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

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the MTR mission then the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit.

If all or part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule. Equally, qualified and independent national consultants can be hired to undertake the MTR and interviews in country as long as it is safe to do so.

5. Detailed Scope of the MTR

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

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- Review the impact of COVID in the landscape and on the project implementation
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits, also considering the impact of COVID.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator ³	Baseline Level ⁴	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁵	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁶	Achievement Rating ⁷	Justification for Rating
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³ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁴ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵ If available

⁶ Colour code this column only

⁷ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, 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?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
		TOTAL			

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures’. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁸ (in the SESP).
 - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

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

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and

⁸ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

Conclusions & Recommendations

Evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings, should be a part of the MTR report.

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

There should be no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

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

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for India High Range Mountain Landscape Project

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	

	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

6. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP India Country Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and all necessary arrangements for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

6. ETHICS

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The MTR team 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 MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

ToR ANNEX B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team

(The Commissioning Unit is responsible for compiling these documents prior to the recruitment of the MTR team so that they are available to the team immediately after contract signature.)

1. PIF
2. UNDP Initiation Plan
3. UNDP Project Document
4. Revised Implementation Strategy
5. UNDP SECU Report
6. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)
7. Project Inception Report
8. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
9. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
10. Audit reports
11. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm
12. Oversight mission reports
13. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
14. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team

The following documents will also be available:

15. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
16. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
17. Minutes of the Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
18. Project site location maps
19. Any additional documents, as relevant.

ToR ANNEX C: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report¹

- i. Basic Report Information
 - Title of IHRML UNDP supported GEF financed project
 - UNDP PIMS# and GEF project ID#
 - MTR time frame and date of MTR report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program
 - Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - MTR team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii. Table of Contents
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations
1. Executive Summary (3-5 pages)
 - Project Information Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Project Progress Summary (between 200-500 words)
 - MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table
 - Concise summary of conclusions
 - Recommendation Summary Table
2. Introduction (2-3 pages)
 - Purpose of the MTR and objectives
 - Scope & Methodology: principles of design and execution of the MTR, MTR approach and data collection methods, limitations to the MTR

¹ The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

- Structure of the MTR report
- 3. Project Description and Background Context (3-5 pages)
 - Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope
 - Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted
 - Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites (if any)
 - Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.
 - Project timing and milestones
 - Main stakeholders: summary list
- 4. Findings (12-14 pages)
 - 4.1 Project Strategy
 - Project Design
 - Results Framework/Logframe
 - 4.2 Progress Towards Results
 - Progress towards outcomes analysis
 - Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective
 - 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
 - Management Arrangements
 - Work planning
 - Finance and co-finance
 - Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
 - Reporting
 - Communications & Knowledge Management
 - 4.4 Sustainability
 - Financial risks to sustainability
 - Socio-economic to sustainability
 - Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
 - Environmental risks to sustainability
- 5. Conclusions and Recommendations (4-6 pages)
 - 5.1 Conclusions
 - Comprehensive and balanced statements (that are evidence-based and connected to the MTR's findings) which highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project
 - 5.2 Recommendations
 - Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
- 6. Annexes
 - MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
 - MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)
 - Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection
 - Ratings Scales
 - MTR mission itinerary
 - List of persons interviewed
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Co-financing table (if not previously included in the body of the report)
 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form
 - Signed MTR final report clearance form
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
 - *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.*) or Core Indicators

- *Annexed in a separate file: GEF Co-financing template (categorizing co-financing amounts by source as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditure')*

ToR ANNEX D: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template

This Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix must be fully completed/amended by the consultant and included in the MTR inception report and as an Annex to the MTR report.

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
(include evaluative question(s))	(i.e. relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc.)	(i.e. project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.)	(i.e. document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.)
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			

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ToR ANNEX E: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants²

Evaluators/Consultants:

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

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

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

Signed at _____ (Place) on _____ (Date)

Signature: _____

² <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

ToR ANNEX F: MTR Ratings

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

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

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

ToR ANNEX G: MTR Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by the Commissioning Unit and RTA and included in the final document)

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By: Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point) Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____ Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy) Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	
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ToR ANNEX H: Audit Trail Template

Note: The following is a template for the MTR Team to show how the received comments on the draft MTR report have (or have not) been incorporated into the final MTR report. This audit trail should be included as an annex in the final MTR report.

To the comments to be received from the Midterm Review of India High Range Mountain Landscape project (UNDP Project ID-4651)

The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Midterm Review report; they are referenced by institution (“Author” column) and not by the person’s name, and track change comment number (“#” column):

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft MTR report	MTR team response and actions taken