



Project "Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the framework of Sustainable Development Priorities - RIO Project", funded by UNDP and GEF

Mid-term Evaluation Final Report

UNDP/Madagascar, January/March 2021

GEF operational intervention/strategic program:

Fulfillment of obligations under the three Rio conventions

Executing agency / implementing partner and other partners related to the project:

GEF, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP / Madagascar) and implemented by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), GIZ

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1 SUMMARY

1.1 Project information table

Project title: Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the framework of Sustainable Development Priorities		
Country: Madagascar	Executing partner: Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests (MEEF)	Management modalities: National Implementation Modality (NIM)
UNDAF/Country Program Result: 1) Vulnerable populations in intervention areas have access to income and employment opportunities, can improve their resilience and contribute to inclusive and fair access to sustainable development; 2) Public institutions, civil society and the media, at central and decentralized level, effectively assume their roles and are responsible for peaceful governance that protects human rights; 3) The populations in the intervention areas, particularly the vulnerable groups, have access to and use basic and quality social services.		
UNDP Strategic Plan Output: 1: Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create jobs and livelihoods for the poor and excluded people.		
UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Category: Low risk	UNDP Gender Equality Indicator: 2	
Atlas Project Identification / Grant Identification Number: 00104056	Atlas Product Identification / Project Identification Number: 00105788	
UNDP-GEF PIMS Identification Number: 5582	GEF Identification Number: 9300	
Expected start date: July 2017	Expected end date: July 2022	
LPAC date: 06/23/2017		

Brief Description of the Project:

The purpose of this project is to help Madagascar to respect and uphold its obligations under the three Rio conventions. As a contribution to the achievement of this goal, the immediate objective of this project is to build a targeted set of national capacities to deliver and sustain global environmental outcomes within the framework of sustainable development priorities. This will be achieved by five components that will develop systemic, institutional and individual capacities in Madagascar. Key project activities include the early establishment of an environmental management information system and the building of institutional structures and mechanisms for an integrated and enforced compliance with the Rio Conventions. The project strategy emphasizes a long-term approach for institutionalizing capacity to meet MEA obligations through a set of learning-by-doing activities that lay the foundation for effective decision-making in global environmental benefits. Active participation of stakeholder representatives in the entire project life cycle facilitates the strategic adaptation of project activities in line with the project objectives. In addition, the inclusion of non-governmental players contributes to the adaptive collaborative management of project implementation and promotes the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

FINANCING PLAN	
GEF Trust Fund or LDCF or SCCF or other vertical funds	USD 1,950,000

UNDP TRAC Resources	USD 200,000	
Co-financing amount to be administered by UNDP	USD 0	
(1) Total Budget administered by UNDP	USD 2,150,000	
CO-FINANCING		
Government	USD 1,800,000	
GIZ	USD eq. 9,200,000	
(2) Total co-financing	USD 11,000,000	
(3) Grand Total for Project Funding (1)+(2)	USD 13,150,000	
Signatures		
Signature:	Approved by the Government:	Day/Month/Year: 8 November 2017
Signature: Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests	Approved by the Executing Partner	Day/Month/Year: 21 November 2017
Signature: UNDP Resident Representative	Approved by the UNDP	Day/Month/Year: 27 November 2017

1.2 Project description

The “CCCD-Rio Conventions” project which has been underway since October 2017 by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) with funding from the GEF and the UNDP amounting to USD 2 150 000, is planned for a period of 5 years.

The objective of the project is to help Madagascar meet its obligations under the three Rio conventions; including building the fundamental systemic, institutional and individual capacities that will help the country achieve global environmental outcomes that contribute to both sustainable development and environmental protection goals.

It should be pointed out that most of these obligations under the Rio conventions relate to political and institutional obligations, as well as the rights and duties of populations or communities.

Tangible results are expected from this project, namely: (1) production of a national development strategy / plan fully integrating the obligations of the Rio Convention; (2) mobilization of funding resources for activities to build capacities developed under the project, for the achievement and sustainability of the GEF Cop Program CCCD-4 Objectives; (3) establishment of an Environmental Management Information System to improve monitoring and evaluation of global environmental impacts and trends at national level; (4) establishment of strengthened institutional structures and mechanisms for the application of obligations taken under the Rio Conventions and in sectoral and regional development planning frameworks; (5) public awareness and sensitization on the application of the Rio Conventions.

1.3 Summary of the project progress

It is an ambitious project in terms of expected results; however, its implementation is severely delayed for various reasons including the slow and complex decision-making and approval processes, which involve different stakeholders, and the health environment following Covid. Therefore, the project has a low rate of achievement estimated below the average achievement of activities and expected results, at 47%.

The context analysis phase by component should have been completed in the first two years in order to begin the effective implementation of activities and the experimental implementation of tools and mechanisms, and to assess their relevance, effectiveness and sustainability in view of the final evaluation and closure of the project. However, analyzes at component and regional level as well as the consolidation and validation of recommendations are to date continuing, except for the second component on financing systems analysis.

This delay, among other reasons, would be due to the project's administrative and financial assistant being temporarily unavailable following her illness, the slow recruitment process for the new coordinator, and to a lesser extent, swapping of government official positions from ministries due to the change in government as well as the health situation associated with Covid-19. Indeed, despite the appointment of an interim coordinator with the assistance of a consultant to support project coordination, the long period taken for replacing the former coordinator pushed the project further behind and limited the conduct of activities to be carried out in the regions.

In addition to aforementioned reasons for the delay, the project have been faced with various constraints including the mobilization of the required and specialized expertise given the technicality of analysis and subsequent reforms on legal frameworks and environmental policies, in particular the complex analysis of legal, institutional and policy mechanisms relating to compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its additional protocols, the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as well as the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Developing a single project for cross-cutting integration of three Rio conventions each having specific objectives, drafting and adopting proposals to amend legal texts in force or drafting and adopting new texts, supporting the government in preparing the national development strategy, regional and sectoral development plans in accordance with the Rio conventions obligations and formulating adequate activities will all require appropriate expertise.

Based on the foregoing, the progress of the project to achieving the expected results detailed by component is as follows:

1. Developing a transformative but realistic national strategy or plan for Madagascar aimed at pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development, formulated within a highly consultative process.

This ^{first} outcome aims to develop a national strategy for sustainable development including the provisions to meet the obligations of the Rio Convention. This strategy will be reinforced by updating some sectoral policies and by drawing up a roadmap to integrate the Rio Conventions into sectoral development plans.

Moreover, the legal, institutional and political frameworks in force cannot apparently guarantee the conservation, rational exploitation, access to, and sharing of the advantages from environmental resources in general and the biodiversity resources and other ecosystems in particular. Reforms or changes need to be brought to these frameworks. And, these legal, institutional and policy reforms are both a lever and a major stake for the application of the provisions of the Rio conventions.

To date, however, apart from preliminary analyzes of legal and institutional frameworks and resource management policies in force, the expected on the reforms is far from being achieved, and requires appropriate remedial measures to make up for delays.

Indeed, the start of progress to achieving the expected result has so far consisted only in identifying avenues for legal, institutional and sectoral policy reform which are key prerequisites for relevant legal texts to comply the Rio convention provisions, and for setting up a legal text database on environment. This activity - a preliminary analysis of legal texts relating to extractive mining activities - prompted the need to integrate the provisions of the Rio conventions into the Malagasy Mining Law, for example. This concern is yet to be translated by drafting the new legal texts themselves.

Likewise, aligning the regional and sectoral development plans in harmony with the Rio conventions obligations is not yet effective. Although planned in the 2021 AWP, it must be accelerated.

Preliminary studies of the policy framework necessary for integrating and enforcing each of the conventions' clauses have indeed been carried out. However, as planned in the 2021 AWP, a strategy and an advocacy implementation plan for the necessary reforms still need to be outlined from consolidated recommendations.

2. Setting up *financial resource mobilization* mechanism to carry out and sustain actions aimed at meeting the common obligations and priorities of the Rio Conventions and sustainable development.

This second outcome is to demonstrate best practices and innovative approaches to finance activities that produce global environmental benefits, in particular sectoral development plans that integrate global environmental priorities. It also includes the monitoring and tracing of financial resources which is a key institutional capacity helping to ensure the legitimacy, validity, predictability and relevance of the financial resources mobilized. Integrating lessons learned and best practices in the financial sustainability of environmental management information systems will enable the development and testing of an improved system for Madagascar.

It is worth noting at this stage that the project validated the conclusions of the inventory analysis and has a draft of the strategy document for mobilizing environmental financing resources, in partnership with national, regional and international public and private financial partners, but its validation process has not yet been completed following COVID impact.

3. Setting up the Environmental Management Information System (EMIS) is not far enough advanced, insofar as the analysis of existing information systems and regional dimensions have not been sufficiently taken into account. To fill this gap, data collection efforts at regional level led by the Directorate of Communication and Information System (DCSI) and the Directorate of Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPSE) were undertaken in October 2020; nevertheless, the results of these additional analyzes have not been validated yet.

This ^{third} outcome consists of integrating global environmental needs into management and monitoring information systems. In fact, the qualitative nature of global environmental performance determines the success of activities leading to sustainable development, given that an integrated or networked environmental management information system is a cost-effective approach to create and make the necessary data and information available and to create new knowledge on environmentally friendly development actions. Thus, the outcome comprises a set of activities, including learning-by-doing exercises on how to better understand data and information as well as environmental trends. The expected results of these activities are planning and decision-making that demonstrate better integration of global environmental concerns.

Important steps must be taken to achieve the expected results thereupon in - (i) the collection, analysis, updating of monitoring indicators for environmental protection and progress into developing the Planning

and Environmental Monitoring & Evaluation System (PEMS), and the introduction of new indicators for new themes such as green and blue economy, green diplomacy, green development, green industrialization, green agriculture, etc.; (ii) improvement of existing information systems by harmonizing data collection methods, EMIS tools development and implementation with pre-defined client-server programming language; - (iii) defining needs in equipment - to complement the one already available - such as servers and computers according to technical specifications from the MEDD relative to the application and database as well as professional capacity building. These equipment elements, taken into account in the 2021 action plan, need to be operational to proceed with the functionality test in 2022.

With regard to the objective to directly assign 15% of civil servant positions to the monitoring and implementation of the Rio conventions for the national, regional and sectoral strategies, it is important to specify accurate indications on the progress to achieving the target, with a monitoring-evaluation mechanism to provide information on this indicator.

Assigning staff to monitor the enforcement of Government obligations from the Rio conventions could not be sufficient for an optimal enforcement of the Rio conventions clauses. This is because disseminating environmental information also requires the use of new communication and information technologies (ICTs) beyond the coordination of environmental management and integration into development plans and policies.

So far, accurate indications are still lacking to equip this staff with new information and communication technologies. (see Prodoc p.102)

In addition, this indicator only targets government officials. However, ideally the “green” jobs to be created should also target the private sector, and should include young people and women particularly.

4. Setting up an institutional framework for environmental governance as the ^{fourth} expected outcome is behind schedule.

The fourth outcome is building institutional capacities to achieve and maintain global environmental goals by strengthening consultation and management structures and mechanisms. Although large-scale institutional reform is beyond the project scope, this component focuses on strengthening inter-ministry and inter-directorate coordination to improve monitoring and compliance with environmental policies and best practices for delivering and sustaining global environmental performance. A second institutional analysis should enable the evaluation and assessment of lessons learned in improving institutional arrangements to integrate the Rio Convention.

In fact, achieving this fourth outcome is subject to several steps to yet be taken, including: - consolidation and validation of results from the analysis of environmental governance institutional framework, particularly the results of the analysis conducted on MEDD's roles and missions, the national coordination and consultation mechanisms such as the Sectoral Environmental Units (CES), the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Environment (CIME), and Technical Working Group for the Rio-(GDTT) conventions etc.; - collection of best regional integration experiences in operating institutions for the management of REDD activities, Regional Environmental Units (REC) and actors likely involved in the regional integration; - organization of a survey to assess the level of understanding of the Rio Convention integration; - development of training programs with a view to integrating the Rio Conventions, encompassing education and training programs for civil servants, public and secondary schools, as well as an implementing guide to the national policy on environmental education for sustainable development (PErEDD) at regional level; - and conducting public awareness campaigns, etc.

The objective to integrate 15% of national and territorial development plans to the Rio conventions for sustainable development have not yet been achieved and there are no accurate progress indicators on its achievement.

Similarly, apart from identifying capacity building needs for Madagascar to observe its international commitments to the Rio conventions, and especially in integrated management of water resources, human health protection, reproduction, and marine and ocean ecosystems survival, the actual capacity building activities are now at the preparatory level.

5. The ^{fifth} outcome focuses on the set of individual capacities needed to ensure long-term sustainability of the project results, including raising awareness among stakeholders and building their technical capacities so that they can fulfill their roles and their responsibilities: civil society, media, private sector, NGO representatives and the public.

Overall, this component is intended to set up tools that can support the country's efforts to sufficiently reach critical mass through awareness raising and training activities.

On achieving this fifth outcome, the project conducted some awareness-raising or training activities by taking advantage of associations and local NGOs' mobilization capacities, and with a view to integrating the Rio conventions into training sessions. However, the partnership frameworks with the federation of Itasy women's associations and with the University of Toamasina on creating sustainable development lessons as well as developing some tools and the draft information and awareness-raising strategy document produced in this purpose but not yet validated, are limited and need to be accelerated.

Likewise, the 2020 activity report depicts the unachieved objective of targeting 150 people disaggregated by gender and age group to benefit from income-generating activities (IGA) and the number of green jobs created for vulnerable populations through the sustainable management of natural resources, renewable energies, agriculture, ecotourism, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste treatment, despite the identification of more than 600 people, potential beneficiaries of access to IGAs such as reforestation, agriculture, watershed management, protection of water sources from around sixty women's associations in Itasy Federation, and youth employment, 80% of which are women.

Nevertheless, it is reported that the capacities of women leaders from 22 regions of Madagascar have been strengthened through training sessions for disseminating the Rio conventions obligations for members of their organizations. The mechanism for monitoring the impacts and best practices of their actions is however being designed.

In this regard, the Steering Committee has decided that the project will only tackle the strategic and non-operational aspect, assuming that setting up coordination mechanisms for environmental management and integration into development plans and policies will promote the dissemination of environmental information.

If there is no consensus on this activity, it is important to redefine it in terms of granting equipment allowing potential beneficiaries to allocate them to income-generating activities rather than granting them direct funding, for example.

In total, the project is at less than half of the level of preparatory activities for advancement towards the five expected end results.

Here below is the summary table presenting the assessment and achievements in the mid-term review of the Project "Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the framework of Sustainable Development Priorities":

Evaluation	Mid-term review	Project Description
Project strategy	N/A	
Progress in the achievement of results	Assessment of goal achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
	Component 1 Assessment of achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
	Component 2 Assessment of achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
	Component 3 Assessment of achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
	Component 4 Assessment of achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
	Component 5 Assessment of achievement (on a 6-point scale)	3
Project implementation and responsive management	(On a 6-point scale)	3
Sustainability	(On a 4-point scale)	2

Project strategies	Indicators ¹	Reference level ²	Level during the first PIR (self-declared)	Mid-term target ³	Target by the end of the project	Level and mid-term assessment ⁴	Assessment obtained ⁵	Reasons for the evaluation
Achievement 1 Setting up five thematic working groups made up of different ministerial delegates, including the likely future partnership with the University of Toamasina and the Vakinankaratra region.	Indicator 1 An inter-agency committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) which fully integrates the Rio Conventions (and other MEAs) is officially adopted at the Cabinet.	Number of new partnership mechanisms with funding for solutions for the sustainable management of natural resources, ecological services, chemicals and waste at national and / or sub-national level.	Setting up five thematic working groups made up of different ministerial delegates, including the likely future partnership with the University of Toamasina and the Vakinankaratra region.	Same	Effectiveness of new partnership mechanisms with funding for solutions for the sustainable management of natural resources, ecological services, chemicals and waste at national and / or sub-national level.		(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.	The five thematic working groups made up of different ministerial delegates are certainly in place, including the like future partnership with the University of Toamasina and the Vakinankaratra region, which are ad hoc structures that will support the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Environment, who will be responsible for integrating and enforcing the obligations from the Rio conventions. However, the finalization and implementation of the strategy for reform and revitalization of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Environment, which is anchored at the Prime Minister's Office, and the sectoral environmental units (CES) and regional ones (CER) need be accelerated.
	Indicator 2 (a) Number of additional people benefiting from enhanced livelihoods through solutions for the management of natural resources,	• Partnerships to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals and Rio Convention obligations are almost exclusively based on externally funded projects and / or as needed	Filling 15% of civil servant positions that are directly related to the monitoring and implementation of the Rio Conventions	a) Regarding the number of additional people benefiting from livelihoods: It is noted that the main project activities are to diagnose and develop	150 People 15% of positions			(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.

¹Complete using data from the logical framework and results sheets

²Complete using data from the Project Document

³If applicable

⁴Indicate by color code only

⁵Use the 6-level progress assessment scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

	<p>ecological services, chemicals and waste;</p> <p>(b) Number of new jobs created by solutions for the management of natural resources, ecological services, chemicals and waste.</p>	<p>during their implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries of sustainable livelihoods through improved natural resource management options are covered largely through project-based interventions. The baseline for this project is set at zero, to be compared with the number of unique stakeholders benefiting from the project's small grant activities. Policy interventions on natural resource management are mainly undertaken by consultants contracted by externally funded projects which are overseen by smaller staff of the relevant government agencies. <p>Different policy and legislative</p>		<p>development strategies. Consequently, the Steering Committee have decided that the project activities are only of a strategic nature in terms of capacity building for actors involved in the enforcement of the Rio conventions obligations, and not operational ones.</p> <p>(b) With regard to the number of new jobs created by solutions for the management of natural resources, ecological services, chemicals and waste:</p> <p>Same as above.</p>			<p>projects of co-financing (Kobaby by AFD and PAGE by GIZ) and other related projects from other partners (USAID, EU, etc.)</p> <p>In this context, as part of the cascading sensitization process, the project trained associations of women and young people from the 22 regions of Madagascar and initiated the process of formulating a partnership framework with associations with high potential (Itasy Women's Associations), which provides for local eco-responsible initiatives favorable to improving sustainable IGA such as reforestation, organic agriculture, watershed management, protection of water sources. With these approaches, this result can even be exceeded. The situation did not allow negotiations to advance with the PAGE and Kobaby projects. Although planned in the AWP 2021, it should be noted that this process is very overdue and needs to be accelerated.</p> <p>The same is true on the increase in the number of new jobs; even if the expected effects can be hopefully obtained from establishing coordination and integration mechanisms (EMIS, resource mobilization system, etc.) of the environmental dimensions in development plans and policies, such as access to information in the environmental sector; It is reported that government institutions suffer from insufficient staff in general and qualified, specialized staff in particular; and those responsible for monitoring and evaluation have</p>
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		instruments are in place, but many are not sufficiently understood and enforced, nor is there sufficient documentation and awareness to better interpret and enforce the policies and legislative instruments for implementing the Rio Convention						changed this position this year following changes in government.
	Indicator 3 Measurement to which legal or policy or institutional frameworks are in place for the sustainable conservation, use, access and sharing of benefits from natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems.	-At least three sets of legal texts, e.g. administrative regulations, have been formulated and approved to catalyze the implementation of the Rio Convention under the NSDS - Awareness-raising activities have been carried out with at least 250 unique participants, of which at least half are regional or local actors	Analysis of legal texts applicable to mining, petroleum and extractive activities with regard to the Rio conventions; while the collection of other legal texts was underway at the time of the evaluation.	At least three sets of legal texts	To be determined		(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.	The analysis of legal texts on the extractive sectors and of community environmental governance constitutes admittedly an important step; however, other legal texts that may contribute more or less directly to the expected results applicable to other natural resources, which could ensure sustainable conservation, use, access to and sharing of benefits from natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems still need analysis, amendment or development. The process of developing new or amending old texts has not yet started. However, this operation is decisive for enforcing the Rio obligations. And it requires a participatory process, expertise and time. It is a process that could lead to legal, institutional and public policy reforms. This will undoubtedly be one of the sustainable results on which the project should focus.

<p>Achievement 1</p> <p>Identification of stakeholder capacity building needs, the capacity building plan and modules were not available at the time of assessment.</p>	<p>Indicator 4</p> <p>Measurement to which capacities to implement national or local plans for integrated water resources management or to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems have improved.</p>	<p>At least 90% of government technical staff actively participated in technical trainings on innovative approaches to implement Rio Convention obligations under the NSDS</p>	<p>Capacity building needs of identified stakeholders; pending the validation of the plan and the development of modules, the recruitment of trainers has not yet been completed.</p>				<p>(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p>	<p>The identification of the capacity building needs of identified stakeholders is one of the important steps. On the other hand, developing training or capacity building plan, possible recruitment of trainers, developing training modules, possible validation of training modules are steps to be taken to have any hope of achieving the result.</p> <p>The exchange process for developing the strategy with the DGDD has been initiated. This process includes the organization of consultation actions at all levels and capacity building involving all components of the project.</p>
	<p>Indicator 5: Number of direct beneficiaries of the project.</p>	<p>At least 150 stakeholders have directly benefited from the small grant activities funded under the project (same as indicator 2)</p>	xx	150 beneficiaries				<p>(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p>
<p>Achievement</p> <p>Identifying the weaknesses</p>	<p>Indicator 6: Increase in the number of policy</p>	<p>Strengthening the Environmental Management</p>	<p>Identification of weaknesses and strengths for the</p>	<p>At least one plan</p>	<p>At least one sector plan includes these indicators</p>		<p>(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-</p>	<p>The identification of the weaknesses and strengths of the environmental information system and the political</p>

<p>and strengths of the environmental information system and political analysis</p>	<p>interventions that specifically address the fulfillment of the Rio Convention obligations.</p>	<p>Information System includes indicators and methodologies associated with national sector plans to be included in their respective monitoring and evaluation plans. The NSDS will include a full set of these indicators. At least one sector plan includes these indicators.</p>	<p>environmental information system and the political analysis to be accompanied by recommendations</p>	<p>includes these indicators</p>			<p>of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p>	<p>analysis to be accompanied by recommendations have started; but their conclusions should give a way to progress towards the result; for example, the increase in political actions to enforcing the Rio conventions had not yet been carried out at the time of the evaluation. In addition, the direct link between the increase in the number of political interventions on the fulfillment of the Rio conventions obligations and the setting-up of the Environmental Information System must be clear. There are many delays in achieving this result and strict measures are taken to ensure that the EMIS implementation is completed in 2021, as planned in the AWP.</p>
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<p>Component 1</p>	<p>Indicator 7: A national sustainable development plan that fully integrates the Rio Convention obligations is developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete political and legislative analysis of environmental governance completed by month 7 - Updated legislative texts finalized by month 24 -Integration of the Rio conventions into regional and sectoral development policies and plans is piloted by month 42 -15% of local development plans revised to integrate environmental concerns - Stakeholders (at least 40% women) receive training on how to apply planning methods that reflect the global environment -NSDS and the operational roadmap are integrated, 	<p>Unencrypted</p>	<p>Not planned</p>	<p>Not encrypted / indicated</p>		<p>(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p>	<p>Raising the awareness of the Technical Committee members on compliance with the Rio conventions is far from appropriate or even sufficient to achieve the expected result, particularly given its highly strategic nature and the fact that it also involves other key ministries (Ministry of Economy and Finance, etc.).</p> <p>Despite all that, if the link between the establishment of a national sustainable development plan that fully integrates the Rio Convention obligations and simple awareness raising is closely established, much work is yet to be conducted: complete political and legislative analysis of environmental governance, updating the legal texts, integrating the Rio conventions into regional and sectoral development policies and plans, 15% revision of local development plans to integrate environmental concerns, training at least 40% of women on how to apply planning methods that protect the global environment, and adoption, approval, aligning the NSDS and the road map.</p> <p>Achieving this result is therefore quite challenging and requires a good strategy with a clear and consensual implementation plan.</p>

		approved and adopted by all stakeholders						
Component 2	Indicator 8: Resource mobilization strategy is developed to provide long-term funding for EMIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies responsible for the Rio Conventions have limited budget funds The monitoring of financial resources is currently considered as unsatisfactory and insufficient to meet the three Rio Conventions requirements Inadequate long-term funding is available to ensure institutional sustainability of the existing information systems. Government bodies responsible for the Rio Conventions have limited budget funds operational per month X EMIS revenue stream tested by month 54 At least 10% of the financing needs in 	Inventory of financing mechanisms and analysis of financing needs; the draft resource mobilization strategies not yet validated,	Not planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no conflict of interest between adopting new alternative and practices and alternatives to integrate global environmental obligations into sector development plans with practices that are already institutionalized within major planning agencies Organizational efficiency and effective planning and decision-making processes enable timely decision-making Analyzes are seen as legitimate, relevant and valid among all key stakeholder representatives and project champions. Any political or institutional obstacle to mobilize the necessary resources is 		(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.	Obviously, the inventory of financing mechanisms and the analysis of financing needs, the draft resource mobilization strategies are far from any hope to achieving the result, because several stages and activities are yet to be accomplished, especially: adoption by the main stakeholders of the resource mobilization strategy; setting-up the monitoring and surveillance system; testing the EMIS revenue stream; mobilizing 10% of financing needs in the RMS; making available medium-term investments to ensure the stability of central and local structures and decision-making mechanisms and financial resources in favor of technical support structures;

		<p>the RMS will have been mobilized by month 55</p> <p>-50 stakeholder representatives participated in resource mobilization workshops</p> <p>-A set of clear operational guidelines and innovative financing tools build the systemic capacities needed to ensure legitimacy, resilience and long-term sustainability of the Global Environmental Governance Fund;</p> <p>- Mid-term investments to ensure the stability of central and local structures and decision-making mechanisms;</p> <p>-Technical support structures have sufficient financial and human resources</p>			<p>indeed negotiated and resolved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes are seen as legitimate, relevant and valid among all key stakeholder representatives and project champions. The strategy and plan developed by the project are politically, technically and financially feasible. Political commitment of key organizations and stakeholders remains high Consensus can be reached on measures that need to be standardized as well as protocols for data sharing. 			
Component 3:	Indicator 9: An Environmental Management	-There is an inadequate system for information and		Not planned	- Initial assessment of current databases		(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-	Inventory of databases at national and regional level has been carried out and establishment of the environmental

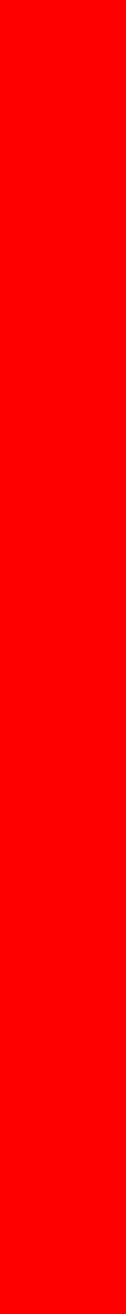
	<p>Information System is developed</p>	<p>knowledge management and insufficient information exchange between or within sectors despite the existence of various environmental committees and units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madagascar's environmental governance framework is weak in terms of financial sustainability and institutional memory. • The capacity of key actors to translate environmental information into decision-making is weak and scattered in many organizations. • The collection and use of up-to-date environmental management information is poorly coordinated. • There is a limited exchange of information and communication between different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		<p>and management information systems completed by month 6</p> <p>Environmental and Sustainable Development Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection and monitoring methods standardized by month 24 - Best practices for performing environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments identified and demonstrated by month 51 - The integrated EMIS is fully implemented by month 53 - EMIS will meet the Rio Convention objectives, including recommendations to streamline and harmonize data and information 		<p>of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p>	<p>information management system is scheduled for 2021</p>
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		administrative levels			management systems; - A clearinghouse within EMIS for data collection on the three Rio Conventions is established - Evaluation of needs in users' information for the indicators;		
		Indicator 10: The mechanisms for integrating the Rio Convention are developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little inter-ministerial coordination on the implementation of natural resources and environmental policies. • The data collected is not done in a standardized way, making it difficult to compile data for a country-wide report. • There is a poor harmonization of legislation and ambiguity regarding the enforcement scope and responsibility. • There is considerable confusion over 	Not planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth institutional analysis of environmental governance completed by month 6 • The inter-ministerial Committee on MEAs was strengthened by month 10 and meetings were held twice a year • Cross-government coordination of technical committees established by month 10 and meet twice a year • Monitoring and compliance arrangements are fully operational by month 48 		<p>(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is expected to partially achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with significant shortcomings. Project results might be fully achieved by project closure if adaptive management is undertaken immediately.</p> <p>At this stage, the project carried out diagnostics and an upgrade. However, several steps are yet to be taken to make progress into achieving the expected result, including inter-ministerial coordination on the implementation of natural resources and environmental policies, data standardization, legal reforms on responsibilities and mandates, optimal integration of the Rio Conventions requirements in the planning for the sector development;</p> <p>And even though the approach adopted in the 2021 AWP provides interesting elements to move the project forward to achieving this result, it is important to ensure that it is carried out on time.</p>

responsibilities and mandates

- The requirements of the Rio Conventions are not adequately integrated into sector development planning.

- The Rio Convention's integration mechanisms are developed from month 25, used by learning-by-doing exercises, and fully institutionalized by month 48
- Environmental mandates are updated and simplified by month 24
- An assessment of good practices, manuals and regional guidelines for environmental integration in EMIS is prepared.
- Government and other stakeholders align mandates and operational plans of key bodies and committees (at national and regional levels)
- Key stakeholders report improved coordination, collaboration and delegation of responsibilities
- Three successful and internationally recognized demonstration



					exercises are conducted in targeted communities		
		Indicator 11: skills and awareness on global environmental values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public generally remains unaware or not worried about the contribution of the Rio Conventions to meeting local and national socio-economic priorities. Awareness on the integration of the Rio Convention is limited, with stakeholders not fully appreciating the value of the global environment conservation. 	Not planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Launch and Results Conference held in months 5 and 56 A statistical analysis of baseline and end-of-project knowledge indicates that stakeholder knowledge and the link between global environmental conservation and sustainable socioeconomic development has improved by at least 15%. Review of training needs to operationalize the Rio conventions completed in month 9, 35 and 51 The training program on Rio Convention integration, study modules, materials and training modules are finalized by month 48 		<p>(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.</p> <p>To date, the project has been able to produce the communication plan; messages on the Rio conventions would have been broadcasted on TV and radio stations for men and women; two films would have been produced and intended for use by decision-makers and the public; train-the-trainer session conducted, etc.</p> <p>However, many activities must be carried out before hoping to achieve the expected result, including statistical knowledge analysis, training to operationalize the Rio Conventions, integrating the Rio Convention into training program, study modules, training materials and modules, training courses on analytical methodologies and skills, cooperation agreement between training facilities, 8 workshops, improving regional access to best practices and knowledge, etc.</p>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training course on analytical methodologies and best practice skills for measuring global environmental impacts and trends, finalized by month 52 • Cooperation agreement between training facilities • Public awareness campaign, implementation plan and materials • Public dialogues and workshops for local stakeholders • At least 8 workshops held by month 29 with at least 50 local / regional representatives. • Visibility on the Internet of good practices for the integration of the Rio Convention obligations • Training and awareness workshops, dialogues and other similar events are implemented in month 52 		
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public dialogue with at least 50 stakeholder representatives takes place • Improved regional access to best practices and best available knowledge reported 			
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The results framework did not foresee the results to be achieved at mid-term; it was not possible to objectively assess it.

1.4 Progress Matrix for the achievement of results

1.5 Concise summary of findings

The implementation of activities is clearly behind schedule as shown by the various reports and annual work plans, and this for various reasons detailed below.

With regards to the progress made to date, the project analyzed the institutional, legal and sectoral policy frameworks by identifying the areas of concrete interventions in terms of reforms required for the integration and optimal application of the provisions of the Rio conventions.

However, several results of the preparatory activities still need to be consolidated and validated.

Considering the low level of project results in general three years after its launch, the following is recommended:

1.6 Summary of recommendations

The summary of the evaluation recommendations in order to accelerate / redirect the implementation of the project results from the strategic analysis of the performance of the project to date, as follows:

1.6.1 Recommendations in relation to the degree of the project implementation and in relation to the expected results and the results achieved

- ✓ Strengthen the project team with qualified staff: Environmental Policy / Legal Specialist, Public Administration Specialist, Information and Communication Technology Specialist, Environmental Education Specialist, Environmental Sociologist, Biological Diversity Specialist, Climate Change Specialist, etc.
- ✓ Strengthen the project team with a national and international monitoring expert in order to assist, advise and redirect the project on the quality and relevance of the activities to be carried out; provide necessary technical services on the implementation of key project activities, especially on reviewing recommendations to integrate and institutionalize the Rio Convention obligations into EMIS, among other substantive activities, as appropriate;
- ✓ Focus on legal, policy and institutional reforms to ensure sustainable conservation and use of natural resources (land, forests, water and income-generating activities, agriculture, reforestation, livestock), sharing the benefits generated from rational exploitation of (marine, coastal) natural resources and ecosystems, in accordance with international environmental conventions and national legislation; ensure sustainable conservation, use, access and benefit-sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, in accordance with international conventions and national legislation, as provided in the UNDP Strategic Plan;
- ✓ Identify relevant concrete activities with visible impact, which correspond to national priorities and expected results; and accelerate their achievement within the time limits, such as micro-irrigation, development, reforestation, forest restoration activities, etc., which could create concrete and green jobs, to better meet the objectives of the Rio conventions, through sensitization and cascade animation and strengthening of synergies and complementarity with related projects;
- ✓ Focus on activities making it possible to both contribute to improving the level of public information on the Rio conventions provisions and the access of project activity beneficiaries to environmental, economic and social benefits compensating for the efforts made for compliance with the Rio conventions;

1.6.2 Recommendations in relation to the progress achieved on the objectives

- ✓ If the 2014 self-assessment is not updated; plan rapid diagnosis in the by-component analyzes in order to identify (new/real) needs in specific technical and professional capacity building for the institutional and individual actors involved in the Project implementation, for compliance with the Rio conventions;
- ✓ Extend the project duration to October 30, 2023 to fill the gaps in carrying out activities, depending on available budget resources;

- ✓ Establish an AWP with a specific strategy for developing a national sustainable development plan that fully integrates the obligations of the Rio Convention (Indicator 7) with a clear and consensual action plan
- ✓ Identify and implement priority activities for the government and the populations, such as activities for adaptation to, and mitigation of the climate change effects, and which could be income-generating opportunities in order to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, population rights protection to a reliable environment and sustainable human development.
- ✓ Develop activities in the regions and activities likely to enable vulnerable populations living in the project intervention areas to effectively improve the possibilities of access to income-generating activities and jobs, improve their resilience and thus contribute to inclusive and equitable growth for sustainable development by strengthening synergies and complementarities with related projects;
- ✓ Quantify the objectives to be achieved in order to facilitate an objective assessment of the effectiveness or even the sustainability of the results obtained at the end of the project.

1.6.3 Recommendations in relation to the relevance of project actions

- ✓ Through independent expertise, update the December 2014 national self-assessment of institutional capacities, if the budget allows it, with a view to enforcing the Rio conventions in general and contributing to the emissions reduction in particular by planning, carrying out activities to adapt to and mitigate the adverse climate change effects, and complying with the other two Rio conventions; insofar as the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting on August 29, 2019 indicate "that no descent to the community level has been made to assess regional institutional capacities". Ideally, the project should have been designed after a diagnosis of the legal, institutional and independent environmental framework in order to carefully measure and identify the capacity building needs necessary for implementing environmental commitments; and updating the 2014 self-assessment would have made it possible to integrate subsequent government policies, initiatives, decisions and actions; under specific execution of its international commitments relating to the rational exploitation of biodiversity resources and other ecosystems, to the fight against the climate change effects and desertification; as well as the integration of Madagascar's relevant initiatives under its National Determined Contributions to the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere;
- ✓ In addition, updating the said report would have made it possible to identify the real needs in terms of professional technical capacity building for swapped or not-on-duty staff; the skills of the agents must be involved in the enforcement of the government's international commitments in the fields of natural biodiversity resource conservation, and in the fight against the climate change effects - adaptation / mitigation - and against the effects of desertification.
- ✓ Prioritize activities such as development of a transformative national strategy or plan aimed at pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development; adoption and materialization of a plan to mobilize financial resources necessary to carry out and perpetuate actions aimed at meeting the common obligations and priorities of the Rio conventions and sustainable development; training of government personnel on the Rio conventions themes and objectives;

1.6.4 Recommendations in relation to satisfaction of project stakeholders and beneficiaries with regard to the expected results

- ✓ Combine the strategic and operational approach to the implementation of activities for building the technical and professional capacities of the actors so as to enable them to later carry out activities with visible impact in order to convince the populations of the importance of enforcing Rio conventions obligations on the rights and duties of populations or communities.
- ✓ Diversify participation in setting up the environmental information system by involving all public and private stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations.
- ✓ Speed up the payment process for consultant services and participants in activities, given that the slow and delayed payments for delivered services discourage partnership and undermine enthusiasm and even attendance;

1.6.5 Recommendations in relation to good practices and lessons from successes and challenges encountered in the project implementation.

- ✓ By accelerating awareness process and cascade animation, carry out relevant and priority activities closely linked to the ultimate objectives of the Rio conventions and to the results, particularly the contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, the fight against land degradation and the loss of natural fauna and flora resources; accelerate their completion within time limits;
- ✓ Carry out quick-impact activities that directly affect the lives of populations such as the conservation of forest resources, biodiversity, diversification of agricultural activities, reforestation, forest restoration... in order to convince the public of the importance of application of the obligations of the Rio conventions;

1.6.6 Recommendations in relation to the effectiveness of the implementation of the project.

- ✓ Strengthen the professional capacities of stakeholders, including the project team, on the process of integrating multilateral environmental agreements in general and the Rio conventions in particular;
- ✓ Focus on results having added value to the activities of other partners working on the same theme;
- ✓ Promote the expertise of the national focal points of three Rio conventions;

2 INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference of this mid-term evaluation mission shows that it is in response to the systemic, institutional and individual obstacles identified during the 2014 institutional capacity self-assessment that the Malagasy Government has, through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD), benefited from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) financial support to implement the project entitled "Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the framework of Sustainable Development Priorities", known as "Rio" Project.

This project was launched in October 2017 and is being carried out by the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) with funding from GEF and with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), for a period of 5 years. The Rio project is in its third year of implementation, and is expected to close in October 2022. The budget stands at USD 2,150,000, including USD 1,950,000 from GEF and USD 200,000 from UNDP.

The project is set up with the main objective of helping Madagascar to meet its obligations under the three Rio conventions, by building the fundamental systemic, institutional and individual capacities that will help the country achieve environmental sustainability.

To achieve this objective, the project pursues five results through five components each comprising specific products and activities, namely:

- The production of a *transformative* but *realistic* national strategy or plan for Madagascar aimed at pursuing ecologically rational and sustainable development, to be formulated following a highly consultative process;
- The *mobilization of the financial resources* necessary to carry out and perpetuate actions aimed at meeting the common obligations and priorities of the Rio Conventions and sustainable development will be considerably strengthened;
- The setting-up of an Environmental Management Information System to improve the monitoring and evaluation of global environmental impacts;
- Strengthening of targeted institutional structures and mechanisms to comply with sectoral and regional development frameworks and the Rio conventions;
- Training and awareness raising to facilitate understanding of good practices for achieving global environmental results within the framework of sustainable development;

For this purpose:

This first outcome aims to develop a *national strategy for sustainable development including the provisions to meet the obligations of the Rio Convention. This strategy will be reinforced by updating some sectoral policies and by drawing up a roadmap to integrate the Rio Conventions into sectoral development plans.*

This second outcome is to demonstrate best practices and innovative approaches to *finance activities that produce global environmental benefits, in particular sectoral development plans that integrate global environmental priorities.* It also includes the monitoring and tracing of financial resources which is a key institutional capacity helping to ensure the legitimacy, validity, predictability and relevance of the financial resources mobilized. Integrating lessons learned and best practices in the financial sustainability of environmental management information systems will enable the development and testing of an improved system for Madagascar.

This third outcome consists of integrating global environmental needs into management and monitoring information systems. In fact, the qualitative nature of global environmental performance determines the success of activities leading to sustainable development, given that an integrated or networked environmental management information system is a cost-effective approach to create and make the necessary data and information available and to create new knowledge on environmentally friendly development actions. Thus, the outcome comprises a set of activities, including learning-by-doing exercises on how to better understand data and information as well as environmental trends. *The expected outcome of these activities is planning and decision making which demonstrate better integration of global environmental concerns.*

The *fourth outcome* is building institutional capacities to achieve and maintain global environmental goals by strengthening consultation and management structures and mechanisms. Although large-scale institutional

reform is beyond the project scope, *this component focuses on strengthening inter-ministry and inter-directorate coordination to improve monitoring and compliance with environmental policies and best practices for delivering and sustaining global environmental performance. A second institutional analysis should enable the evaluation and assessment of lessons learned in improving institutional arrangements to integrate the Rio Convention.*

5. The fifth outcome focuses on the set of individual capacities needed to ensure long-term sustainability of the project results, including *raising awareness among stakeholders and building their technical capacities so that they can fulfill their roles and their responsibilities: civil society, media, private sector, NGO representatives and the public.* Overall, the expected results of this component should make it possible to achieve a sufficient level of critical mass, in terms of awareness and training.

All these results are pursued in accordance with a strategy focused on implementation modalities and a partnership defined as follows:

2.1 Project implementation strategy

From a strategic point of view, the project is expected to focus on a long-term approach of institutionalizing the capacities to meet the obligations of Multilateral Environmental Agreements through a set of learning-by-doing activities that lay the foundation of effective decision-making on global environmental benefits.

Active participation of stakeholder representatives in the entire project life cycle facilitates the strategic adaptation of project activities in line with the project objectives. In addition, the inclusion of non-governmental players contributes to the adaptive collaborative management of project implementation and promotes the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

Partnership for the project

The project is carried out in close partnership with the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the United Nations Development Program, the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD); and all the technical ministries with an environmental unit as well as their respective regional representation, GIZ, as a co-financing partner which is also supposed to be involved in the implementation of some activities in the field.

2.2 The purpose and objectives of the mid-term review

The evaluation focused on the evaluation of the mid-term results and the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives and expected results, as set out in the project document. The exercise consisted in measuring the first signs of success or failure of the project, in order to define changes to be brought to put the project back on the path to achieving the expected results within the set deadlines. In addition, the evaluation also focused on the project strategy and the risks regarding its sustainability.

The evaluation consisted of the analysis of the project management, the achievement degree of the activities of each of the five components, partnership strategy, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, project management; since its inception to date, and including an analysis among various beneficiaries, in order to derive credible opinions as to the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, effects (beginnings of change) and sustainability of the project.

The project strategy was analyzed through the project design, the results framework / Logical framework, whereas progress towards achievement of results was analyzed using the Table 'Matrix of progress towards achievement of results' containing (Achievements made in light of end-of-project targets) and filling in the result achievement degree with regard to each indicator, by filling in the indicator evaluation grid.

Then, project implementation and adaptive management were examined through the management mechanism, activity planning, financing and co-financing, the monitoring and evaluation system set up at the project, stakeholder engagement, various reports, communications and knowledge management.

Finally, the sustainability of the project's mid-term results was examined through financial risks, socio-economic risks for sustainability, risks related to the institutional framework and governance for sustainability, environmental risks for sustainability.

In all cases, the evaluation process followed the guidelines contained in the document "Guidelines for Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-Supported and GEF-Funded Projects".

Noting that the implementation of project activities is delayed, especially in the regions due to changes in its management, the evaluation team suggested recommendations on new directions, improvements to ensure the achievement of expected results and on time in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the assessment detailed above.

Obviously, the analysis took into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the proposed solutions.

2.3 Scope and Methodology: Principles of Design and Delivery of the Mid-Term Review, its Approach and Methods of Data Collection, and Limitations of the Mid-Term Review

With respect to the principles of design and execution of the mid-term evaluation, its approach and data collection methods, and limitations of the mid-term review; recourse to the following three complementary approaches was recommended: literature review, participatory approach and remote consultations, integration of “gender” needs.

2.3.1 Literature review

In this regard, the team collected and analyzed the sources of relevant and available literature information, including documents developed during the preparatory phase of the project (for example, the project identity sheet (FIP), the UNDP environmental and social safeguards, the Project Document, annual project / PIR reports, project budget reviews, lessons learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other material useful to support the assessment; the GEF intervention area reference monitoring tool presented to GEF with the approval of the manager, and the GEF intervention area mid-term monitoring tool for the mid-term review.

In addition, the team proceeded through a collaborative and participatory approach to involve the project team, government officials.

2.3.2 Participatory and collaborative approach

The participatory approach particularly consisted of interviews, face-to-face, telephone and e-mail contacts with stakeholders including members of the management team such as: the UNDP Poverty and Environment Component team, Steering Committee members, Project Management Unit team (PMU) at the central level, the team of the respective Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) and of other relevant key ministries involved in implementing specific project activities, NGO representatives and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) involved in the project.

2.3.3 Remote Consultations

It was previously understood that no stakeholder, no consultant, UNDP staff or project's implementing partners should be endangered, as safety is the top priority.

However, remote collaboration with a few natural or legal persons present in the field has been established.

To this end, the evaluation mission team drew up a list of stakeholders with whom it had interviews, and annexed below. These interviews were conducted either face-to-face or remotely and in all cases, using an indicative questionnaire that the team members designed. Following the evolution of the health situation due to Covid-19, the interviews took place in face-to-face format by small groups of interviewees and by individual, and sometimes remotely.

This methodology was obviously detailed in the inception report and agreed with the evaluation manager.

Physical movements to the field, including in the Boeny, Atsinanana and Vakinankaratra regions, could not be carried out due to Coronavirus restrictions.

As some evaluation activities had to take place remotely, arrangements were made to ensure the availability and capacity of stakeholders to be interviewed remotely. Nevertheless, the interview schedule was often disrupted due to the unexpected occasional unavailability of the people to be interviewed, hence disrupting the schedule and program of the assessment mission.

Obviously, the team did not escape the difficulties inherent in this type of mission taking place in a very risky health environment. This was particularly the disruption of the schedule of data collection interviews with different parties following environmental constraints related to administrative and health measures to fight against Covid-19. It was more trying to collect information by means of a questionnaire administered to the project actors located in the regions, which were confronted with various challenges including accessibility to the Internet or availability of IT media as with computers, telephone or online (Skype, zoom, etc.).

In addition to the follow-up and schedule harmonization meetings taken place between the project evaluation team and the daily project management team, the latter provided the decisive and appreciable support for carrying out this assessment, particularly access to project management documents and the provision of a reception desk where data collection interviews took place.

2.3.4 “Gender” integration approach

Finally, tools sensitive to gender, gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs were used for this mid-term evaluation, including the active participation of women in Project activities.

Particularly, the gender equality mainstreaming principles were integrated in the evaluation process through the participation of women in the data collection process for the evaluation; as women were questioned and/or interviewed on their participation in the project activities.

2.3.5 Limits of the mid-term review

Due to Covid-19 health risks, the team responsible for the mid-term evaluation was unable to conduct field missions in the Boeny, Atsinanana and Vakinankaratra regions, notwithstanding the fact that activities at the regional level had not yet started when the evaluation was launched.

2.4 Structure of the mid-term review report

The report includes project description and its implementation background; the problems that the project seeks to resolve: threats and obstacles targeted, the description and strategy of the project through its objectives, outputs and expected results, as well as description of the field sites.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 The development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional and political factors relevant to the project objective and scope

Madagascar is one of the top five countries most exposed to adverse effects of climate change, as shown in the 2013 World Bank report.

The adverse effects of feared climate change in Madagascar would include disruption of rainfall patterns negatively impacting vital sectors of social and economic life, especially tourism, fishing, agriculture and tropical forests as well as on the different species they shelter, the sea level rise with its corollaries such as, the acidification and the warming of the oceans which can accelerate the hurricanes, increasingly violent ocean winds that have profound impacts on Madagascar's unique coral reef ecosystems, and threaten human lives or populations, the survival of biodiversity resources such as fish, turtles and whales etc.

Thus, the government authorities are putting in place various initiatives for mechanisms to combat the climate change effects, namely by preparing various programs, policies, plans and strategies, as well as by ratifying numerous Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the three Rio conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (March 4, 1996), the Convention to Combat Desertification (June 5, 1997) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (June 2, 1998). In addition, the government participates in various relevant UN programs such as REDD + and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

In this perspective, the populations of Madagascar expect that the results of the effective implementation of these commitments will significantly contribute to the achievement of sustainable human development objectives by deriving maximal benefit from a rational exploitation of these natural resources.

However, the national capacity self-assessment (NCSA), carried out in 2014 had identified three types of obstacles which the country faces in order to be able to fulfill its obligations to various international legal mechanisms known as "Rio".

These obstacles are systemic, institutional and individual. In addition to institutional and individual capacity deficits, particularly systemic deficits are linked to underlying causes of global environmental degradation, such as lack of awareness on socio-economic value of environmental protection.

Specifically, the obstacles identified at the end of the 2014 National Capacity Self-Assessment which explain the difficulties encountered by the country in fulfilling its obligations under the Rio conventions, are of a systemic, institutional and individual nature.

Systemic barriers and constraints include: - an outdated policy and legal framework, which has not been revised to take into account changing needs in the country; - inadequate integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies of other institutions concerned with sustainable management of the environment; - competitive institutional relations at central and regional level and limited collaborative or consultative decision-making; - degraded and limited infrastructure

Institutional barriers and constraints include: - the limited internal resources available to institutions to ensure national ownership of environmental decision-making; - an inadequate information and knowledge management system and a lack of information sharing between sectors; - insufficient up-to-date and reliable information;

Individual barriers and constraints include: - Low awareness on environmental issues, especially the links between poverty, pollution and people's attitudes and behaviors regarding their immediate environment; - Limited number of specialists in many critical areas for sustainable environment management; Weak technical capacity at the national level to formulate and implement large-scale national sustainable production projects;

A number of these barriers were confirmed in subsequent reports, such as the 2015 NBSAP which identified the need to improve awareness, policies, and data and information management. Lack of capacity was also reaffirmed in the 2015 PCNUAD as well as in the 2015 UNICEF Country Program.

In addition, the latest studies carried out by the United Nations indicate that Madagascar is exposed to the consequences of Covid-19 through three main routes, namely: (i) its dependence on the global economy, (ii) the direct and indirect internal impacts of the disease on individuals and households, on productive

activities and on public policies and services, and (iii) on the effects of measures adopted by the Government to contain the spread of the virus (blocking international flights, limitation of public transport, lockdown for people and blocking non-essential activities, curfews, etc.).

It is in this perspective and context that the project "Building National Capacities to Meet Global Environmental Obligations within the framework of Sustainable Development Priorities, known as the "RIO" Project was concocted, as the beginning of a response to these challenges.

3.2 The problems the project seeks to address: threats and obstacles targeted

The barriers to achieving global environmental goals largely reflect the challenges Madagascar faces in pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development. In recent years, some results have been achieved. However, the momentum was interrupted and even some setbacks occurred due to the political crisis from 2009 to 2013.

3.3 Project description and strategy: objectives, outputs and expected results, description of field sites

3.3.1 Objectives

This project aims to catalyze changes in capacity deficit which limit the country's efforts to meet the obligations from the three Rio conventions and other MEAs by improving the capacity deficit identified in the 2014 NCSA in order to catalyze participation and more effective decision-making for environmentally sound and sustainable development so as to also produce benefits for the global environment. Complementing the activities currently underway in Madagascar to meet these priorities, this project is dedicated to mitigating obstacles in order to facilitate the integration of global environmental obligations into national and regional legal, institutional, political and information systems, in development policies and planning frameworks and improve environmental management and governance, by focusing on topics such as climate change, wildlife conservation and land degradation.

Thus, and in medium term, the immediate objective of this project is to build national capacities to deliver and sustain global environmental outcomes under sustainable development priorities.

3.3.2 Achievements and expected results

The achievements aim to help sustain these results and achieve long-term change.

From a strategic point of view, it is expected that in the long term, the capacities of the actors will be strengthened through training sessions and the stakeholders and the population will be able to enjoy the results in the long term, including the impact of good environmental governance.

According to the designers, the project's theory of change is based on the assumption that if national capacities for meeting global environmental obligations under sustainable development priorities are strengthened, on its systemic, institutional and individual aspects (i) the government can make improved decisions for the global environment coupled with effective development, (ii) sustainability of results and the achievement of long-term changes are evident (iii) mobilization of efforts and resources in favor of implementation of the Rio Conventions is increasing, and the sense of environmental commitment is developing.

For the purpose of verifying this hypothesis, the Expected Results by priority consist of:

- A national sustainable development strategy / plan fully integrating the obligations of the Rio Convention
- A financial resource mobilization plan
- An Environmental Management Information System to improve monitoring and evaluation of global environmental impacts and trends at national level;
- The establishment of strengthened institutional structures and mechanisms for the integration and application of the obligations taken under the Rio Conventions and sectoral and regional development planning
- Awareness and sensitization on the integration of the obligations taken by the Government under Rio Conventions;

3.3.3 Description of sites in the field

Although it was initially planned that the mid-term evaluation team will conduct field missions in the Boeny, Atsinanana and Vakinankaratra regions, it was not possible to travel to these sites due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Moreover, visits to the regions would have turned out to be inopportune in the absence of a map indicating the places and due to delay in carrying out activities in the regions.

Nevertheless, with a view to resuming activities in the regions initially targeted; e-mail interviews were conducted with stakeholders in these regions.

3.4 Agreements relating to the project implementation: brief description of the Project Steering Committee, main agreements concluded with implementing partners, etc.

Partnerships have been forged and maintained through a Steering Committee made up of delegates from participating institutions including the Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests (MEEF), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), the UNDP, the Ministry of Justice, bilateral international cooperation agencies such as GIZ, the Ministry of Mining and Petroleum, civil society and the media, technical and financial partners such as GIZ and through the participation of civil society organizations including non-governmental organizations or associations (NGOs), universities, local communities on the one hand and private sector structures in project activities, etc., on the other hand.

3.5 Implementation and management provision

The project is implemented according to the 'National Implementation' Modality (NIM).

3.6 Planning and financial management

The Project plans to consume USD 489,743.00 to finalize all the preliminary and preparatory studies, and validation of the results / recommendations and the start of concrete activity implementation for the mechanisms and other initiatives of integrating Rio conventions, the collection of good practices, with the capacity building system.

The establishment of these mechanisms, including in some pilot regions, the continuation of capacity building and awareness-raising / communication actions, the monitoring and the start of the mechanism operationality and relevance evaluation are scheduled for 2022.

The project plans to assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms for applying the Rio conventions, to communicate on any good practices, to consolidate the exit strategy and the sustainability of the results during the year 2023.

3.7 The main stakeholders: checklist

The Prodoc of the project informs that the main stakeholders are: The Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests, The National Office of the Environment (under the MEEF) Ministry of Agriculture, the Minister of State for Presidential Projects, Spatial Planning and Equipment (METAPE), Ministry of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Home Affairs and Decentralization, Ministry of Energy and Oi, Ministry of Communication, Information and Institutional Relations, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Ministry to the President's Office in charge of Territorial Development-MPATE, local communities, NGOs such as WWF Madagascar and Conservation International, OSCs, universities and centers research, Private Sector,

4 RESULTS

4.1 Project strategy

4.1.1 Project development

The Prodoc shows that the main results assigned to the project more or less correspond to the report conclusions of a National Capacity Self-Assessment - Final Report and Action Plan, dated December 2014; and from which 3 main barriers to the enforcement of the obligations of the Rio conventions and others were identified: systemic barriers, institutional barriers and individual barriers; and which were the subject of the project results framework / logical framework.

4.2 Progress made in the achievement of results

According to the “2020 *Project Implementation Review (PIR)*” report, the project was progressing towards the achievement of results had it not been for the slow recruitment procedures for the new Coordinator and consultants, and the occurrence of Covid-19 in the country from mid-March 2020.

Indeed, the first coordinator left the project at the end of December 2019, and the new coordinator was recruited six months later, in June 2020. In total, the project is experiencing an approximate eleven-month delay in the implementation of activities; including the six months corresponding to the duration of the recruitment process for the new coordinator and approximately five months of administrative and logistical activities for preparing the launch of the activities themselves, i.e. from July to December 2017, including the slowdown in implementation following Covid-19 restrictions.

From the above, the analysis of the progress towards the achievements is carried out with regard to the obstacles still hampering the achievement of the project objective, the arrangements made for the continued implementation of the project and the reactive management, relating to management, planning of activities, financing and co-financing, to the monitoring and evaluation system at the project level; and this, as follows:

4.2.1 Analysis of progress towards achievements

The project seems to pursue ambitious results focused on the themes of three Rio conventions: biodiversity, climate change and land desertification / degradation.

However, the implementation of activities is significantly behind schedule and the same for progress to achieving the expected results. Hence the necessary extension of the implementation period from 10 to 12 months to allow reorientation and acceleration of activities.

Progress towards reaching the targets at the end of the project is very slow, for various reasons; as follows:

RESULT 1

Regarding the adoption of legal or policy or institutional frameworks to guarantee the sustainable conservation, use, access and sharing of benefits from natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, it is reported that:

- The mining legislation revealed analysis that certain legal rules are not adequate for the sustainable exploitation of natural resources and require legal reforms to facilitate the enforcement of the Rio convention obligations;
- Three administrative regulations were formulated and approved to catalyze the implementation of the Rio Conventions under the NSDS.
- The collection and analysis of national sectoral policies and strategies with a view to the execution of the commitments made by the Government as a result of the ratification of the Rio conventions and in terms of economic, social and cultural opportunities were carried out. This activity was carried out in accordance with some environmental law principles, in particular environmental information access principle, the principle of participation in the environmental decision-making process, the principle of peaceful resolution and access to justice. Legal, institutional and policy analysis has particularly affected the mining and petroleum resource extraction sector;

Regarding capacity building for implementing national or local plans for integrated management of water resources, health protection, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems;

The project has now only identified capacity building needs and an implementation plan for this activity, but which are not yet validated.

As for the increase in the number of political actions specifically aimed at meeting the Rio conventions obligations, the project only has to analyze these policies, the conclusions of which have not yet been validated.

Regarding the adoption of the Sustainable Development Plan which incorporates the Rio conventions obligations, the project could only sensitize the members of the Working Group so that they support the Rio obligations integration during the development of the Madagascar Emergence Plan called the 'Madagascar triennial development strategy and plan' document.

As for the (x) number of new partnership mechanisms with funding for sustainable management solutions to natural resources, ecological services, chemicals and waste at the national and / or sub-national level, the only process underway to date is setting up the multi-sectoral / inter-institutional committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) which would integrate the Rio conventions and other MEAs. However, on the other hand, if the strategy document itself has been adopted at the Cabinet, the draft strategy document for reactivating the multi-sectoral / inter-institutional committee has not yet been prepared. (Prodoc version)

Similarly, partnerships are being established with the University of Toamasina, in the Antsinanana region, to integrate provisions of the Rio conventions into training programs.

RESULT 2

Regarding the establishment of financing mechanisms for the Rio conventions objectives, the project has begun the inventory of potential financial partners, identification of financial needs, analysis of the mobilization and absorption capacities of possible financial resources; and this in order to deepen reflections on the resource mobilization strategy.

These analyzes show that the resource mobilization strategy should include priority action lines, the monitoring and evaluation strategy mechanisms, the institutional arrangements for an integrated financing mechanism, and the analysis of policies and strategies and procedures for the fund traceability, and that the resource mobilization strategy should be based on strategic and operational approaches.

The strategy was not yet validated at the time of the project mid-term evaluation.

RESULT 3

As for the environmental information management system. the project is still only at the stage of defining a strategy for setting up such a system in collaboration with the technical commission, identifying necessary equipment needs and finalizing the inventory of databases or information systems national and regional level.

Progress to setting up the EMIS is slow insofar as to date the Project has only been able to carry out additional studies of the existing information systems at regional level. This poor progress is mainly due to the slow recruitment procedure for a consultant in charge of this result.

There should now be a link between participation in international day celebration events and the expected results of the project.

RESULT 4

As for the production of a mechanism for institutional integration, coordination or harmonization of the Rio conventions, the project has now only reactivated the strategy for the Inter-Ministerial Environment Commission for each province as agreed with the Environment and Sustainable Development Managing Board, with the participation of 24 men and 21 women. It is understood that this mechanism to be put in place is take into account at strategic level in the interventions of partners from various sectors and at operational level, and be accompanied by a practical guide or an implementation plan. The conclusions of this analysis had not yet been validated at the time of the mid-term evaluation.

Regarding the benefits of project activities, such as reforestation, zero (0) people out of targeted 150 have benefited, even indirectly.

Indeed, the only attempt to make progress towards achieving this result is to identify around 600 potential beneficiaries of Itasy federations, from around sixty women's associations which were identified in an exchange workshop on forging possible partnerships. It is in this perspective that local initiatives integrating the three conventions and sustainable development will begin in 2021.

It is worth noting that the 2020 annual report and probably the Minutes of the Steering Committee dated August 29, 2019, recommended that the project intervene rather at the strategic level for building the capacities of actors on enforcing the Rio conventions and not at the operational level, despite the nuance made in this resolution; and that capacity building can “come in many different forms and is not just limited to training”.

However, interviewees believe that the project should intervene at a more operational level, in particular with grassroots communities in order to perceive the impacts of the RIO conventions enforcement, the local socio-economic development and the links between these two concepts.

Similarly, the result is almost nil as regards the job creation by assigning ministry officials to the monitoring and implementation tasks of the Rio conventions within national institutions; even in the event of the environmental information management system (EMIS) being set up.

Likewise, no new jobs have been created, neither civil servant positions out of targeted 15% have been assigned, which are to be directly associated with the monitoring and implementation of the Rio Conventions under the National Sustainable Development System (NSDS) resulting from the implementation of national, local and sectoral strategies and policies.

Nevertheless, the analyzes made on allocation of human resources for setting up the EMIS reveal that the strategic support consists of establishing coordination and integration mechanisms within the EMIS and the resource mobilization system in particular, concerns on rational exploitation of environmental resources in development plans and policies, and that integrating concerns on natural resources exploitation would nevertheless produce the expected effects in this area and promote information in the environmental sector environment. But that's only a hypothesis at the moment.

Nevertheless, achieving this result in a context where public institutions suffer from a quantitative and qualitative deficit in human resources is still possible. For example, the Regional Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development-DREDD has RPSE at regional level with a deficit of staff in terms of forest cantonments in the districts, who lack the means of transport, especially in regions with a large territory. In the meantime, some of the RPSEs have been transferred. This would be an obstacle for monitoring and periodic data collection.

And with a view to the final evaluation of the project; ensuring that there is a close link between the rational exploitation of natural resources and the fight against the effects of climate change will be fundamental, the effects of desertification on the one hand; and on the other hand the creation of these new jobs. Ensuring that access to these jobs is disaggregated by sex is fundamental, also public officials be specially assigned to the effective monitoring of the implementation of the Rio Conventions rather than assigning them only to tasks of a political nature of coordination and planning, and these monitoring plans are effectively operational, additionally the terms and conditions for granting the means of subsistence to the 150 beneficiaries be defined and the disaggregation by sex of these beneficiaries would be perceptible.

The integration in the Plan d'Emergence de Madagascar (PEM) and in the 15% of the territorial development plans integrating the implementation of the Rio Conventions for Sustainable Development of the Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs, in particular those related to conflict prevention, disasters and risks related to climate change, environmental governance, equitable development has not yet been achieved, as shown in the last activity report for 2020.

However, the 2020 annual report indicates that the National Development Plan (PND) which ended in 2019 had been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including its sectoral variation.

In this case, it is desirable to first assess the positive impact of the application of this plan regarding compliance with national obligations taken under the Rio conventions in order to capitalize on any lessons learned. In case of negative or lack of impact, it would be desirable to reorient this result or to redefine it regarding the “Support for the integration of state commitments resulting from the Rio conventions and its effective implementation”.

The support provided for revising the Regional Development Plan for the Vakinankaratra region with a view to integrating the obligations of the Rio Conventions should be clearly worded in terms of "support for integrating and implementing national obligations arising from the Rio conventions."

RESULT 5:

In the area of public awareness, 239 people out of (x) objective from regions were reached by the project activities, at least half of which was made up of regional or local actors.

On this subject, one interviewed person believes that "even if the Government undertakes to respect the Rio conventions, nothing will change if the public is not sensitized. More actions than workshops and studies are required. 6

As for the acquisition of skills and awareness of global environmental values, the project produced a draft capacity building and communication plan, accompanied by broadcasting media through 11 radio and television channels in favor of 10 women's and 14 youth associations. In addition, the "project" has facilitated the dissemination of two awareness-raising and sensitization films on the Rio conventions, one intended for the general public and the other for decision-makers; trained trainers including 19 members 9 of whom are women in order to establish synergies for the Rio conventions' application; strengthened the capacities of journalists, young people and women leaders, using online discussions, allowing young people to establish a 'Rio Facebook' network.

However, the capacity building and communication plan had not yet been validated at the time of the mid-term evaluation.

Optimal achievement of the objectives for gender equality and young people's promotion remains possible, in particular because of the participation of women in the various decision-making processes and the training of women leaders and young people related to the enforcement of the Rio conventions.

In addition, 50% of the Rio project staff are women; and 47% of women actively participate in the work of 5 Technical Support Groups for the Project.

4.2.2 Obstacles still hindering the achievement of the project objective

The challenges facing the continuation of the project are, and could be, confronted among others public agents' functional instability involved in the achievement of the project's objective and questioning of certain activities, as shown in the 2019 Annual Report.

In fact, unforeseen changes in ministerial officials, particularly following a change in government following an electoral cycle, could still lead to changes in the government team; also, the subsequent rotation of public officials involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of the project could negatively impact the activities' continuation; in particular the validation of documents such as the reference's terms for the recruitment of consultants, the contextual analyzes' conclusions, etc.

As an alternative to this obstacle, the project can always establish collaboration with the technical agents at the level of the administrative services.

In addition to the instability of public officials, some project activities were called into question also required prior and relatively slow validation by the Steering Committee.

Finally, the outbreak of Covid-19 prevented the carrying out of activities requiring physical contact with stakeholders, such as members' meetings of the technical working group for the Rio conventions, results validation meetings, workshops with participants, capacity building workshops etc.

The project experienced failure to carry out activities resulting in dates' postponement, planning modification, etc.

Potentially, the lack of expertise required to better understand the complex themes also the specific and complex objectives of each of the Rio conventions through a single project could, among other things, justify the trial and error in defining the products to be produced and thus the delay. in achieving results.

⁶Dimbisoa RATEFIARISON

4.3 Project implementation and responsive management

The project's implementation and reactive management are characterized by the adoption of provisions relating to the management proper; planning of activities, financing and co-financing, monitoring and evaluation systems at the project level, stakeholder participation, data reporting and communication.

The preparatory measures put in place during the 2019-2020 financial year would have likely made it possible to reduce the delay in carrying out the activities observed between 2017 and 2019; but the process' slowness of recruiting the new Project Coordinator, which began in 2019 and which could not be completed until the second half of 2020, contributed to the delay in the implementation of the activities that this project suffers from.

This delay in achieving the project's results was aggravated by the outbreak of the Covid in mid-March 2020; which prevented, among other things, the holding of physical meetings to validate the contexts results analyses to all the project' components as well as the holding of the Steering Committee' meetings.

The reactive management arrangements put in place through the PTA 2021 result in the accelerated realization of the activities financed to the USD 489,743.00 tune, equivalent to approximately half of the project' total budget balance of USD 1,320,876, 75 as it emerges from the ASL on February 2021. These are achievable forecasts as more than half of the budgetary resources are still available.

In addition, the activities planned in the regions which could not be carried out for the above reasons may be carried out during the coming years, especially in the Analamanga region.

To bypass the communication constraints linked to the Covid's risky health environment, the "project" would envisage the holding of online meetings and the access possibilities reinforcement of the Internet for the project 'actors.

4.3.1 Management arrangements

The provisions relating to management are absolutely justified by the delay in carrying out activities of approximately one year. Indeed, the Consultants having to carry out the policies' analysis in force being already recruited; will continue their tasks by focusing on the policies' evaluation relating to the application of the Rio conventions and their recommendations will make it possible to draw up the roadmap for the Rio conventions' integration.

However, the 5 components put in place within the project to facilitate the implementation of activities were each coordinated by a full-time Consultant; but whose capacities would require reinforcement with regard to the technicality of the materials in order to be able to curb the project' current underperformance.

In 2021, the project management team plans to recruit only part-time consultants to accelerate progress towards achieving results. But this approach risks aggravating the difficulties for the aforementioned reason and the drawbacks inherent in the practice of seasonal contracts.

In addition, it emerges from the interview with the National Project Director that his decision-making power is relatively limited at the technical level despite being the first person in charge of the project; and that there would be directives / instructions given directly to the Coordinator by UNDP, and sometimes, without him knowing. As a result, the Director is sometimes embarrassed by certain decisions on certain activities' performance. This practice would be justified by the intention of UNDP to speed up the implementation of activities in order to reduce the accumulated delay.

In addition, it emerges from the interviews that, contrary to the project' announcement of the team to the stakeholders that it would not support sectoral actions, except activities aimed at establishing synergy between the 3 conventions, some stakeholders say they are surprised to note that the project is still supporting certain ministerial departments with logistics equipment, computer equipment which has already been acquired and only awaits the official handover. This situation would reveal a lack of communication between the technical committees of the different components, which should be reinforced; insofar as the

members of the technical committee of component 3 believe that these are indeed materials intended for EMIS management structures at both central and regional levels.

Then, although two workshops were carried out specifically with the National Focal Points (at Ampefy in 2018 and at Ambatomirahavavy in 2019) in order to better understand their project' expectations and their concrete support for the 3 conventions' synergy, and that the PFN are project' ex officio members COPIL and recipients of the Terms of Reference corresponding to their mandates; many of the stakeholders interviewed state that they do not understand the RIO project' exact expectations, their contribution and vice versa. Even the National Focal Points of the Rio conventions would not sufficiently understand the results pursued by the project; although some of them would not be aware of the activities reference' terms carried out under the 2018, 2019, 2020 PTAs, which should detail the purpose and the expected results, of the members' contribution of each component during the project duration. This slackening would probably be due to the long latency period, due to the absence of a coordinator during the first half of 2020 and to the health crisis.

Overall, several participants in the 5 components interviewed declare that they are not aware of the RIO project activities level achievement to date. It is also due to a certain extent to this slack period. Under these conditions, national ownership and thus the project' sustainability results risk being compromised, in the good sensitization strategy' absence.

Interviewees lament the fact that consultant deliverables took months to validate. Indeed, the deliverables validation could not be done before the new coordinator' recruitment, only six months after the departure of the old one.

In terms of social relationship, partnership, people; the interviewees state that they have attended numerous meetings / workshops without being reimbursed for the required expenses for almost 6 months; and deplore the project's lack of communication on this subject and there is a lack of procedure monitoring for reimbursing costs by the technical and administrative team of the project. This fact demotivates those concerned to participate actively in the initiatives of the project.

The administrative and financial assistant of the RIO project, who came in November 2020, reportedly confirmed that one of the causes of the delay in expenses reimbursement is the cumbersome procedures for the release of UNDP funds. For the coordinator, it is linked to the disruption caused by the Administrative and Financial Assistant and the project coordinator absence.

Despite everything, the project still provides for the capacity building of the Ministry of the Environment at central and regional level also of the Inter-Ministerial Committee, particularly in terms of (1) the Committee' role of the in the process of integrating the Rio conventions and the restructuring of this Committee with a view to entrusting the leadership to the Ministry of the Environment for the inter-ministerial coordination of the activities' implementation.

4.3.2 Activity planning

From a strategic planning perspective, the Project would consider catching up on the implementation delay by:

- Broadening the framework for consultation through technical commissions and Rio conventions technical working groups in order to promote a common understanding of the project challenges;
- Developing tools and mechanisms for integrating RIO convention clauses, taking into account the consolidated recommendations, resulting from the contextual analyzes of each component;
- Strengthening partnerships in the implementation of these mechanisms; in particular, by supporting the MEDD institutional leadership at central and regional level with institutional support for inter-sector and territorial coordination; in order to facilitate the integration and the Rio Conventions synergistic implementation at the sectoral and territorial level;
- Accelerating the effective strategy establishment for mobilizing funding resources for the Rio conventions integration activities as well as the effective Information System for Environmental Management;
- Improving inter-sectoral coordination and synergies between the different actors' interventions, in particular through the involvement of different actors in the Rio conventions' implementation for Sustainable Development;

Ideally, reactive or corrective arrangements at managerial and operational levels should be carefully identified, discussed and validated among stakeholders.

4.3.3 Financing and co-financing

At the time of this Mid-term evaluation, the project activities are mainly financed from the GEF and UNDP funds, which are responsible for their administration; the other pledges have not yet been fulfilled. In this circumstances, every financial controls allowing the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, and allowing for the timely flow of funds and the payment of satisfactory project deliverables are made by UNDP CO. The recurrent expenditures are performed by the Project team.

So, no variances between planned and actual expenditures, and the reasons for the variances nor any changes made to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions were stated; and no 'investment mobilized.' One annual audit was accomplished.

4.3.4 The monitoring and evaluation system at the project level

From a strategic point of view, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms provided by Prodoc operate so that the Ministry of the Environment, Ecology and Forests - MEEF assumes overall responsibility for the project' implementation and of the project' success. Responsibility for project inputs planning and management, supervision, activities and results rests with the Ministry of the Environment. And it is the Department of Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation of this ministry which ensures the project monitoring and evaluation.

To make it effective, follow-up initiatives must be the total and joint responsibility of both parties; and should be applied jointly by exchanging information and taking consensual actions (pages 27,48,49 Prodoc- word version).

In addition, the possibility of setting up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism internal to the project should have been considered in order to ensure the project daily monitoring and evaluation.

From an operational point of view, it is understood that: - the results of the project should be subject to annual monitoring (see Annex 1) and would be periodically evaluated (see Annex 2) during the implementation of the project in order to ensure the effective achievement of results; - project-level monitoring and evaluation should be undertaken in accordance with UNDP requirements set out in the: Policies, Procedures Governing UNDP Programs, Operations and the UNDP Evaluation Policy; and mandatory M&E⁷requirements specific to the GEF; -The UNDP Country Office would collaborate with stakeholders affected by the project to ensure that UNDP M&E requirements meet high quality standards in a timely manner.

From the point of view of individual management responsibilities for monitoring and overseeing M&E, it is stipulated that: -the Project Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management as well as regular monitoring of project results and risks, including social and environmental risks; -that it draws up annual work plans based on the multi-year work plan included in Annex 3; including annual production targets to support effective project implementation; -ensures that standard UNDP.GEF and M&E requirements are fully met; in particular that the framework of results indicators be monitored annually and on time in order to produce an Annual Project Progress Report based on verified facts, and that the monitoring of risks and the various plans / strategies developed to support the implementation project implementation (e.g. gender strategy or knowledge management strategy) are carried out on a regular basis; that it be the responsibility of the UNDP Country Office to initiate and organize the main GEF M&E activities, including the annual progress report and the final independent evaluation; and also ensure that UNDP and GEF M&E standards are fully followed; including (a) the UNDP Quality Assurance Assessment; b) the ATLAS risk register; c) UNDP gender indicators; and d) the development, monitoring and preparation of reports on annual objectives as well as their support by the UNDP Country Office also the Project Manager; and - the project monitoring and evaluation plan would also facilitate learning and ensure that knowledge is shared and widely disseminated to foster the scaling up and replication of project results.

However, there is no internal project monitoring and evaluation focal point. However, corrective action would have been taken to overcome project difficulties and advocate for corrective action.

⁷See https://www.thegef.org/gef/policies_guidelines

4.3.5 Stakeholder participation

According to the Prodoc and in theory, governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, local communities as well as the private sector participate in the Project.

The government institutions participating in the Project activities implementation are the MEEF, through its Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Evaluation Department, of the National Office for the Environment; the Ministry of Agriculture, the Minister of State for Presidential Projects, Spatial Planning and Machines, the Ministry of Economy and Planning, Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, the Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons, Ministry of Communication, Information and Institutional Relations, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry to the Presidency in charge of Territorial Development, Universities and research centers.

The participating local communities in general and in particular are those most affected by the negative effects of climate change.

The participating non-governmental organizations are among others WWF Madagascar and Conservation International-CI

The Private Sector could be involved in project activities through promoters of development projects and investors whose operations may impact on the environment.

However, the effective involvement level of these institutions in the project activities implementation is not perceptible in the various Project activity reports; which corroborates the opinion of the majority of those interviewed who state that they did not participate in the project design / approval process and do not know the level of progress towards the achievement of results. Could this explain the hesitations of the Steering Committee on the nature - strategic or operational - of certain project activities? see below

In addition, it should be noted that several interviewees confirmed that they were only involved in the activities during the implementation phase between 2018-2019, that the majority of the participants in the project would come from Ministers other than that of the environment; which ignores the self-assessment of institutional capacities of 2014 existence and the results of which nevertheless justified this project implementation. and that coordination would be essentially limited to the simple ideas' consultation; decision-making power being exercised by the project management team made up of the National Director and the Project Coordinator, they say in substance.

According to the National Project Director, these observations may come from the fact that consultation, design and validation meetings and workshops were carried out during this period. For last year, before October 2020, most of them were only product validation meetings; and it was not until November and December 2020 that there were regional workshops on components 3 and C.

Regarding the ANCR, the interviewees are not supposed to be among the participants of the ANCR process if they have not represented their institution during the various consultations. The DNP also underlined in relation to the project decision-making power of the management team, that it is rather to the Steering Committee that this power belongs both at the strategic and operational level, insofar as the project team works on the basis of the PTA validated by this committee.

4.3.6 Data communication

Admittedly, a financial audit was conducted in 2019, and the conclusions of which were rather reassuring; but there is no indication of subsequent audits.

Likewise, at this time, there is no precise indication of the arrangements made to communicate data relating to data relating to financial controls.

4.3.7 Communication

GEF and UNDP communication and visibility guidelines are followed; in particular, through the use of the respective logos on the various products of the project.

However, the people interviewed denounce the insufficient communication on the RIO conventions' stakes knowledge; between the project and its key partners within the ministries and that this would be the cause of misunderstanding between the stakeholders and the project team in terms of the Project expected results. Is it the fault of the old project team which did not sufficiently involve the national focal points of the Rio conventions in the design and implementation of the activities? What the team in place is trying to improve.

4.4 Sustainability

In theory, the sustainability of the results is guaranteed by the achievements of which (1) the appropriation of the project by the institutional delegates, in particular through their active participation in the Thematic and Technical Working Group which actively contributes to the project' activities realization, and the adoption of the collaborative and adaptive management approach which consists in jointly putting together the project management mechanisms and tools, (2) the collaborative implementation of activities with the Ministerial departments concerned by their prior appropriations.

4.4.1 Financial risks for sustainability

The financial risk which, moreover, was not identified as such when the project was designed; is obvious; given that the application and / or integration of international environmental legal obligations is a sustainable-, medium- and long-term process; and which consequently requires available and sufficient financial resources; and that developing States in general and in particular the host country of the project still do not have.

In addition, there is no precise additional financial indication of contributions outside of the resources provided by GEF and UNDP; even if we affirm that it is the only project with a budget to cover the five years of activities and for satisfactory results, that the Kobaby projects co-financing. AFD and PAGE of GIZ, will enter into partnership for the activities in the field implementation. taking into account good practices and lessons learned from these projects.

4.4.2 Socio-economic risks for sustainability

In the absence of a risk assessment report that could have a negative impact on the development priorities as they define it, the eventuality of this category of risks occurring is probable to the extent that the heads of national and local institutions and structures still do not have sufficient technical and professional capacities to optimally fulfill their obligations, which (risk) was already identified as such in the table of social and environmental risks of the project.

4.4.3 The institutional framework and governance risks for sustainability

The involvement of administrative structures such as the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Environmental Questions-CIME, environmental units-CE, regional environmental units-CER and their anchoring at the level of public institutions should guarantee the post-project achievements sustainability.

But the institutional framework instability characterized by the change of Project' interlocutors within the ministries after the change of government, since directors and technicians already involved in project activities can be rotated.

In addition, it is risky that the legal reform projects intended to improve environmental governance in the long term are not adopted in time by the competent parliamentary, political and administrative authorities.

4.4.4 Environmental risks for sustainability

This risk should be monitored *despite* :- the absence of a report providing objective information on the existence or not of sustainable activities requiring significant consumption of energy and / or water, and specific, realistic indications that activities such as reforestation would not affect traditional livelihoods, physical and cultural survival of local populations; *-the objective and nature of the project that is the "strengthening of the institutional capacities"; And despite the fact that the Project document itself states that the project activities doesn't bear effective environmental risks.*

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In total, the project could only carry out a few preparatory activities at the central level, but no activities carried out in the regions yet. But even the preparatory analysis phase is not complete at all, including the validation of the recommendations in order to start the actual implementation in 2021. Preparatory activities in the regions were not carried out in almost all of the components, except in the 2nd component relating to the analysis of financing systems.

To achieve this, the following is recommended:

5.1 General recommendations

The *Project coordinator* should ensure the relevance and viability of the products; which must be closely linked to the expected results;

1.1. Recruit a monitoring specialist;

1.3. Reformulate results 1 in terms of "strategy and implementation of the transformative but realistic national plan for Madagascar aimed at pursuing ecologically rational and sustainable development

5.2 Specific recommendations to speed up the implementation

The *project manager* should:

2.1. Establish and maintain an effective partnership with the parliamentary chambers and specifically with the parliamentary committees - environment and legal, political and administrative and if possible, to involve them, upstream in the process of legal, institutional and policy reforms required for compliance with obligations of the Rio conventions.

2.2. Strengthen the project team, including by appointing a consultant for the project provided for in Annex 7 of the Prodoc;

5.3 Recommendations to reorient the implementation of the project;

3.1. The process of achieving result 5 "targeted training and awareness raising" can be strengthened by carrying out activities of prevention and repression, repair, sanctions for damage caused to the environment, to health and to well-being of people by acts taken by anyone in clauses violation of the Rio conventions and / or acts likely to compromise the government's efforts to respect its commitments made by ratifying the Rio conventions; and not to be limited to the dissemination of legal texts to the OPJs and Magistrates; but also to equip them in terms of training, information, computer equipment, documentation etc., to the extent of the project possibilities, so that they take charge of the Rio conventions' judicial application of the Rio conventions. This is should be done under the responsibility of the *Project manager*.

3.2. The *UNDP senior management* would extend without cost the duration of the Project until October 30, 2023 and subject to the outcome of subsequent budget revisions, which (extension) must be accompanied / conditioned by the strengthening of the monitoring, surveillance and advice mechanism, of the quality assurance of activities provided for in Annex 7 of the Prodoc, in order to contribute to the expected results' optimal achievement.

5.4 Conclusions

Broad and balanced statements (evidence-based and linked to the mid-term review results) highlighting the project' strengths, weaknesses and results.

The objective of helping Madagascar to meet and maintain its obligations under the three Rio conventions, by strengthening a targeted set of fundamental institutional and individual capacities that will help the country achieve environmental sustainability. The project is implemented through five strategically linked components, each of which includes a set of products with their respective activities.

However, the main and specific objectives of each of the Rio conventions are:

The CBD is designed to *conserve biological diversity*, ensure the sustainable use of this diversity and share the benefits generated by the genetic resources' use, in particular through appropriate access to genetic resources and appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and through adequate funding.

For the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement*: stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents any dangerous anthropogenic disturbance of the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

For the *convention of fight against desertification*: fight against desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries severely affected by drought and / or desertification, especially in Africa, through effective measures at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements, as part of an integrated approach compatible with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the establishment of sustainable development in the affected areas. 2. Achieving this objective will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously, in affected areas, on improved productivity of land, the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at the community level.

In any case, the three conventions aim to protect the rights of populations to a reliable environment and sustainable human development.

Under these conditions, the obligations' application of these three Rio conventions with a view to the country's contribution to the progressive achievement of the objectives of each of these conventions requires the more or less exhaustive identification of indicators such as the rate of deforestation, soil erosion and degradation, land scarcity in view of population growth, variation in ocean water temperatures, coastlines and ocean currents, the state of watersheds in the fight perspective against natural disasters, the habitat state for the conservation of biodiversity-fauna and flora resources and other micro-organisms, the impact of hurricanes evolution, air pollution, air quality and human health, the populations interest for the environment protection, and which are linked to the specific objectives of each of these conventions – CCNUCC, CBD, CLD.

Compliance with these obligations requires deep and preliminary legal, institutional and policy reforms for the development of national strategies and plans, taking into account the reference scenarios (see Prodoc, p.10 or Para.25) as well as synergy actions of the 3 conventions; which are not clearly perceptible in the context of this project.

It is therefore an ambitious project in terms of the expected results; but whose low completion rate at this stage is barely below the average, i.e. 47%.

For example, the ambition to put in place an institutional framework for compliance with the obligations of the Rio conventions requires several prerequisites, including the adoption of laws and regulations, administrative structures, national and regional sectoral plans, instruments economic incentives (incentive taxes, pollution taxes, environmental taxes, certifications, permits and authorizations for the exploitation of certain environmental resources of biodiversity, fauna and flora), the focal points designation, the policies coordination and institutions, access to justice and environmental information, etc.

Fortunately, the project was able to identify avenues for integrating the provisions of the RIO conventions; and avenues for legal and institutional reform of the policies necessary for the integration and / or application of the clauses of the international environmental conventions signed in Rio. The challenges to be overcome are to identify and carry out concrete activities likely to guarantee the expected results achievement.

But the direct beneficiaries of the project are waiting for tangible results to the extent that up to this day, some preparatory activities allowing progress towards the achievement of concrete results were carried out such as the analysis of the political, legal and institutional contexts; although the results of these analyzes have not yet been validated.

To optimally achieve the expected results, Project managers proceed by analyzing the contexts specific to each component in order to identify avenues for reforms or recommendations for improvement, (ii) the development of tools and mechanisms recommended (iii) the experimental implementation of tools and mechanisms, (iii) evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of these tools and mechanisms, (iv) gradual review / readjustment of tools and mechanisms etc.

However, the link between the project activities that should contribute to the ultimate objective's achievement of each of the Rio conventions, which are ultimately the protection of the rights of populations to a reliable environment and to sustainable human development, is not perceptible.

Compliance with the Rio conventions is supposed to be achieved by contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, among other things by the fight against deforestation and forest degradation (UNFCCC), the fight against desertification and the forests degradation, land (Convention on Desertification), the fight against the biodiversity resources loss (Convention on Biodiversity) is not clear; while this is stipulated in the Prodoc.

The project' contribution of the results / activities of the vulnerability to the climate change effects in Madagascar, on tropical forests and on different species, sea level rise, tourism, agriculture and fishing, energy yet spelled out in the Prodoc is not perceptible, while this project claims to contribute to the following Sustainable Development Objective (s): SDG 13 and 15: by strengthening the resilience of communities to climate change as well as capacity building to combat desertification and reducing biodiversity loss and which the UNDP claims, in its own UNDP Gender Strategy 2014-2017, to encourage income-generating activities based on biodiversity (See Prodoc, p.32);

Neither, at this stage, it is not clear to read how the results of the project contribute to the achievement of the National Action Plan for the fight against Desertification and Drought, the National Land Management Policy (2005), the National Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change in Madagascar (2006) as well as the implementation of policies on biodiversity, knowing that land degradation poses serious ecological challenges for Madagascar because it threatens the rich country's biodiversity as well as its population.

Even in the event that the activities of this project would only complement those of the initiatives underway in the country, Project activities need to demonstrate how to fill any gaps.

Thus, it is recommended to advocated corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities, measures to monitor or strengthen the initial benefits of the project where applicable, proposals for future directions highlighting the main project's objectives, as follows:

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Corrective measures for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

Certainly, the 2014 Madagascar AENC and various national reports on the application of the Rio conventions have provided assessments of the capacity challenges to meet environmental objectives and have helped to identify the problem and potential solutions. The main factors that have influenced the envisaged strategies include: limited technical capacity, weak policies, insufficient financial resources and inadequate information and knowledge management systems.

- But it is necessary to have it updated, by an independent expert, institutional and policy self-assessment with a view to the application of the Rio conventions in general and in particular to reducing emissions by adapting to, and mitigating, the adverse effects of climate change; the national capacity self-assessment report of December 2014 could prove to be unsuited to the current evolution of the context, as far as the budget allows;
- Focus on the reforms of legal frameworks, policies and institutions to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, access and sharing of the benefits generated from the rational exploitation of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, in accordance with international conventions and national legislation;
- Set up a team of experts to draft legal reform texts and monitor the parliamentary adoption process or the drafting and publication of regulatory acts;
- Implement in partnership with related projects, if possible, priority activities for the government and the populations; such as activities of adaptation to, and mitigation of, the changes effects and which could be income opportunities for populations in order to achieve the SDGs.
- Develop the partnership with related projects to carry out activities likely to enable vulnerable populations living in the project intervention areas to effectively improve the possibilities of access to income-generating activities and jobs, to improve their resilience and thus contribute to inclusive and equitable growth for sustainable development;
- Resubmit for discussion the option of limiting project interventions to the strategic vs. operational to better understand the objective reasons, because it is possible that the only strategic results (results of

analyzes and reforms) are not enough to convince the populations on the rational exploitation' importance of natural resources in accordance with the international environmental commitments made by the Government within the framework conventions from Rio;

- Mobilize resources and issue a PTA accompanied by an accelerated strategy for carrying out activities;
- Prioritize activities for the development of a transformative but realistic national strategy or plan for Madagascar aimed at pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development and those for the adoption and materialization of a plan to mobilize the financial resources necessary to carry out and perpetuate actions aimed at meeting the common obligations and priorities of the Rio Conventions and sustainable development
- Set up a daily and internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the project, in addition to the external monitoring mechanism.

6.2 Measures to monitor or enhance the initial benefits of the project

These measures should be advocated as soon as the initial benefits are perceptible, in the meantime, it is recommended that the project:

- Strengthen some non-governmental organizations to monitor compliance with the clauses of the Rio conventions.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with each of the Secretariats of the conventions to which Madagascar is a party in order to obtain possible technical and financial assistance, capacity building, transfer of available technologies;

6.3 Proposals for future directions highlighting the main objectives

It's important that:

- activities - strategic and operational - are closely linked to the main objective of the CCCD which is to support countries in achieving and sustaining global environmental outcomes by building key capacities to meet challenges also overcome common obstacles to agreements multilateral organizations on the environment, and integrate the global environment into decision-making and make sure that progress is made towards achieving the goals of sustainable human development.
- a more or less exhaustive and updated assessment of the legal, institutional and public policy framework is carried out, that required reforms, implementation strategies and plans be advocated, that the mobilization of resources is effective and allows the design and implementation of projects and / or programs, etc. (see Prodoc, p.16 or Para.53) It is not enough for state authorities to make plans, but that these plans be effective, without limiting themselves to setting objectives that are not accompanied by concrete actions.

7 ANNEXES

7.1 A. Assessment matrix for the mid-term review (assessment criteria containing key questions, indicators, data sources and methodology)

Project strategy: To what extent is the project strategy adapted to the country's priorities, national ownership and the best way to achieve the expected results?

1. Is the project strategy aligned with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the country's objectives under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the PAN LCD measures concerning the creation of resilience livelihoods within agricultural communities and the protection of natural resources, the national objectives relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and those of other related international conventions to the environment ratified by Madagascar?

R / It turns out that the project's strategy is aligned with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the country's objectives under the United Nations Convention on the Fight against Climate Change. Desertification (UNCCD), PAN LCD measures relating to the creation of resilience livelihoods within farming communities and the natural resources' protection, national objectives relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and those of others international environmental conventions ratified by Madagascar; but the challenge is to integrate these objectives into the country's public policies and sustainable human development. This integration requires substantial legal, institutional and policy reforms, as well as activities that should have direct impacts on the populations survival.

To what extent is the project strategy aligned with government priorities defined in the General State Policy (PGE) and the 2015-2019 National Development Plan (PND)?

R / The 2020 annual report shows that the National Development Plan (PND) which ended in 2019 had been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); but does not indicate whether the project strategy was really aligned with the government priorities defined in the General State Policy (PGE) and the National Development Plan 2015-19 (PND).

It should be said that the process of achieving the project results being judged globally insufficient in 2020 as it emerges from the PIR-2020; and in the report's absence of the implementation impact assessment of the PND; it is not possible to answer in the affirmative.

To what extent has the "national ownership" dimension been taken into account?

R / Insofar as several stakeholders interviewed state that they are not aware of the level of achievement of RIO project activities to date; and others say they were not involved in the very design of the project; the risk of non-appropriation of the results of the project are possible.

Is the adopted strategy the best way to achieve the expected results of the project? If not, why and what are the corrections to be made?

R / The strategy adopted can visibly make it possible to achieve the expected results; but it requires far-reaching reforms of legal and institutional frameworks and sectoral policies (agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, climate change, desertification, soil, water, etc.). After these reforms, it will also be important to redefine the products by clearly linking them to the objectives of each of the Rio conventions; and by ensuring the direct positive impact of these initiatives on the survival of populations

To what extent does the project strategy integrate the needs of beneficiaries at regional and local (community) level?

R / Admittedly, the project has planned activities in favor of the populations at the regional level through the process of sensitization and cascade animation; as emerges from interviews and project management documents; but noting that the project has not yet made sufficient progress in the implementation of activities and that according to decision-makers, the project should be limited to developing only strategic and non-operational activities; the satisfaction of the needs foreseen in favor of the beneficiaries at the regional level may be compromised; failing the establishment and maintenance of partnerships with ancillary projects, as provided for in the 2021 PTA.

Does the project have internal consistency in terms of its design?

R / If we can read a limited cohesion between results 1, 3, 4, and 5; however, the project comes up against the definition of concrete activities that reflect the country's will to fulfill the obligations taken in the Rio

conventions framework and thus contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives of each of the Rio conventions.

And the indicators of these activities should be related to sectors such as the rate of deforestation, soil erosion and degradation, land scarcity in the perspective of population growth, variation in ocean water temperatures, coastline and ocean currents, the watersheds state in the perspective of the fight against natural disasters, the state of the habitat for the conservation of biodiversity-fauna and flora resources and other micro-organisms, the evolution of the impact hurricanes, atmospheric pollution, air quality and human health, people's interest in environmental protection; and which are linked to the specific objectives of each of these conventions -CCNUCC CBD CLD.

Progress towards results: To what extent have the expected outputs and objectives of the project been achieved so far?

To what extent has the project achieved the expected mid-term products?

R / Notwithstanding the fact that the products expected at mid-term have not been indicated; it appears from the PIR that the level of achievement of these products is low.

Do the products of the project contribute to the UNDAFs effects? to the effect of CPAPs? to the priorities of the UNDP 2015-2019 Strategic Plan?

A / Yes, subject to the application of the appropriate recommendations, the project products should contribute to the UNDAFs effects, the CPAPs effect and the priorities of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and following.

What were the key success factors?

R / Not applicable, it will be necessary to wait for the continuation of the implementation of the corrective measures.

What were the constraints?

R / Obviously, the constraints are both managerial (recruitment process for the new coordinator), procedural (length and complexity of validation processes and administrative burden) and environmental related to COVID.

What are the unexpected results of the project, if any?

R / Unexpected results are not possible at the current stage of project implementation.

What are the lessons learned on the effectiveness of the project?

R / Not applicable to this level of project implementation.

Project implementation and responsive management: was the project implemented efficiently and cost effectively? Was the project able to adapt to new circumstances, if necessary?

To what extent do project monitoring and evaluation systems, data reporting and project communication support project implementation?

Could the results obtained from the implementation be obtained at a lower cost? If yes, how?

R / Corrective measures in terms of follow-up are suggested. No, getting results at a lower cost is doubtful. How well has the monitoring and evaluation system worked?

R / The monitoring and evaluation system needs to be strengthened

To what extent has the monitoring and evaluation system contributed to the decision-making process?

R / The monitoring and evaluation system needs to be strengthened in order to effectively contribute to the decision-making process.

Have the data generated by the monitoring and evaluation mechanism been disseminated to stakeholders?

R / Not applicable, because corrective recommendations are recommended

To what extent has the project adapted to the changing context?

R / Not applicable, because the health context has on the contrary contributed to the view already collected.

Was the support provided to the project provided in an effective manner?

A / Not applicable, as the nature of such support is not indicated.

How effective are partnership agreements?

R / Minimum

How effectively have national, regional and local capacities been used?

R / The use of national, regional and local capacities is not yet perceptible at this level of the project, notwithstanding the existence in each component of the project, of a department within the MEDD which ensures the lead.

What are the lessons to be learned from the implementation of the project?

R / Not applicable at this level.

Sustainability: to what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic and / or environmental risks to the sustainability of the long-term results of the project?

Have sustainability issues been sufficiently integrated into the project design?

R / At a minimum, insofar as the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment needs to be strengthened, the legal and institutional mechanisms are not yet in place

To what extent are the results of the project sustainable or can they be sustained?

R / Not applicable, at this level of the project

Have beneficiaries at national, regional and local level taken ownership of the project initiatives?

R / Not applicable, at this level of the project

What about financial and institutional sustainability?

R / Not applicable, at this level of the project

7.2 B. Questionnaire or interview guide for data collection

I. Programmatic questions to the project team, UNDP program manager, national director, members of the steering committee, members of the inter-institutional committee, as the case may be.

1. What is in your opinion, the level of achievement of the activities and expected results of this project to date?

2. Are you satisfied with the results of the project?

3. Considering the delay experienced by the Project, what arrangements should be made to **accelerate** / **redirect** the implementation of activities and to achieve the expected results?

- Management arrangements
- Business Planning
- Financing and co-financing
- Project level monitoring and evaluation systems
- Involvement of the stakeholders
- Business reporting

4. What, in your opinion, are the obstacles which still hinder the achievement of the project objective?

5. Why the frequent changes of personnel at the level of the various ministries, the recruitment procedures of the UNDP had not been identified as potential risks; and how to manage these risks in the future?

6. How do you establish the link between the theory of change and the 5 results sought?

7. What are the tasks assigned to the Inter-Institutional Committee, and how the execution of these tasks could contribute to the Project' results achievement?

8. What activities will be carried out in partnership with the University of Toamasina and the Region of Vakinankaratra?

9. How the project intends to reconcile the Inter-Institutional Committee point of view on the agents' capacity building subject to be assigned to specific implementation tasks of the Rio Conventions provisions; according to which the project should only act at the strategic and non-operational level?

II. Questions to the actors of component 1

1. How will the clauses of the Rio conventions be practically integrated into the legal, institutional and development policies of Madagascar?

2. Do you think that the results of the 2014 AENC are sufficient to identify the capacity building needs for the optimal application of Madagascar's international commitments within the framework of the Rio conventions? If not, what would be the alternative within the framework of this project?

3. What have been the assets that can be capitalized on the one hand, as well as the risks, threats and multidimensional constraints to be managed on the other hand in order to achieve the objectives assigned by the project by October 2022? (Explain each point while giving more or less detailed information)

III. Questions to the actors of component 2

1. How do you judge the approach developed by the Project for the establishment of an innovative and sustainable financing mechanism?

2. What are the strengths, risks and constraints that you have identified in relation to the strategies adopted for the establishment of an innovative and sustainable financing mechanism? Justify Alternatively, propose avenues for objective solutions

IV. Questions to the actors of component 3

1. What has been done since the Consultant in charge of setting up the EMIS is there???
2. What is the added value of the additional studies carried out and the report on existing information systems at regional level on this subject?
4. How will these studies contribute to the achievement of the result, the EMIS?
5. How do you assess the work progress of setting up the EMIS in Madagascar by the Project team and the other actors involved?

V. Questions to the actors of component 4

1. What is the link between the access of beneficiaries to the project activities to Income-generating Activities-IGA contributes to the application of Madagascar's international commitments within the Rio conventions' framework?
2. What is the link between taking into account "gender" perspectives in project activities and compliance with state obligations arising from RIO conventions?

VI. Questions to the actors of component 5

1. Is the implementation of component 5 an appropriate strategic choice in the results view of the AENC in 2014 and national priorities (according to PND)? (To justify) Alternatively, what recommendations could you make?
2. What link do you make between public awareness and respect for the State's commitments made within the Rio conventions' framework? If not, what else should be done?

VII. Protocol:

1. The questions are used to collect secondary data and complementary to the documentary information, and this, through interviews with the actors of each component of the project as well as the management team;
2. These questions can be used to conduct individual and group interviews of people; depending on logistics and health arrangements related to Covid-19, and in all cases, health protection measures against Covid-19 must be taken during the interviews;
3. Interviews can take place either remotely or face-to-face, depending on the logistical conditions and the sanitary restrictions in force;
4. The questions can, depending on the constraints mentioned above, be submitted to the interviewees in writing, in the form of a form to be completed and returned within three days of sending, and accompanied by regular monitoring for collection;

7.3 C. List of documents consulted

1. Project Identification Form (PIF)
2. UNDP project document
3. Results of the UNDP environmental and social impact study
4. 2020 Project Implementation Report (PIR)
5. Activity reports and quarterly work plans of the different work teams
6. Financial and administrative guidelines applied by the project team
7. UNDP Country Program Documents
8. Minutes of PACARC Project Steering Committee meetings and other meetings)

7.4 D. Form of agreement with the Consultant responsible for the mid-term review

Agreement to comply with the United Nations System Code of Conduct for Evaluation:

Name of Consultant: KALASI NGAY Guy

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

on 04/02/2021 (Date)

Signature:



7.5 E. Evaluation of the mid-term review

Assessment of progress towards achievement of results: (one assessment for each achievement and for each objective)		
6	Very satisfactory (HS)	The objective/output should meet or exceed all end-of-project targets, without showing any major shortcomings. Progress towards the goal/achievement can be an example of "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective / output is expected to meet most end-of-project targets, and has only minor shortcomings.
4	Fairly satisfactory (MS)	The objective / output is expected to meet most of the end-of-project targets but has significant shortcomings.
3	Fairly unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective / output is expected to meet most of the end-of-project targets but has significant shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The goal / outcome is not expected to meet most end-of-project targets.
1	Very unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective / output did not meet the mid-term targets, and is not expected to meet any end-of-project targets.

Assessment of project implementation and reactive management: (one overall assessment)		
6	Very satisfactory (HS)	The implementation of the seven components - management arrangements, activity planning, financing and co-financing, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder participation, data reporting and communication - enables implementation effective, efficient project and responsive management. The project can be an example of "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The implementation of most of the seven components enables the effective and efficient implementation of the project and reactive management, with the exception of a few components which are the subject of corrective measures.
4	Fairly satisfactory (MS)	The implementation of some of the seven components allows for the effective and efficient implementation of the project and reactive management, but some components require corrective action.
3	Fairly unsatisfactory (MU)	The implementation of some of the seven components allows for the effective and efficient implementation of the project and reactive management, but most of the components require corrective action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The implementation of most of the seven components does not allow the effective and efficient implementation of the project and reactive management.
1	Very unsatisfactory (HU)	The implementation of none of the seven components allows for the effective and efficient implementation of the project and reactive management.

Sustainability assessment: (one overall assessment)		
4	Probable (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, the main achievements are on the verge of being achieved at the project' closure and should be maintained for the foreseeable future

3	Quite likely (ML)	Moderate risks, at least some achievements should be maintained, given the progress towards the results of the achievements observed during the mid-term review
2	Quite unlikely (MU)	Significant risks that the main outputs will not be sustained after project closure, with the exception of certain products and activities
1	Improbable (U)	Strong risks that the project outputs and the main products will not be maintained

7.6 F. List of Persons Interviewed

No.	Surname and first name	Role/Position	Contact number	Email address
1	RANAIVOARIVELO Maharavo	Public sector / Ministry of Justice	034 05 528 14	maharavo.randry@gmail.com
2	RAFIDISON Manase	Public sector / PAGE / DGRNE / MEDD	034 05 626 38	rafidi.manase@gmail.com
3	RANDRIANASOLOMANANA Gildas	Public sector / Head of Partnership Development Directorate DGDD / MEDD	034 05 620 16	gildas.mada@gmail.com
4	RAKOTO Claude	Public sector / Director of DPRIDD / MEDD	034 05 620 33	clauderakoto@yahoo.fr
5	Moise Sarah	Public sector / MEF equipment department manager	034 61 960 38	sarah.malala@gmail.com
6	RATOVO Olitina	Public Sector/Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Department DPPSE MEDD	034 44 317 33	ratovolitina@yahoo.fr
7	RANDRIANJAFISON Haniela	PTF / CC Advisor USAID Hay Tao	034 11 521 14	rhandrianjafison@pactworld.org
8	GILBERTE Annie Ravakiniaina Sonia	PTF / Technical Advisor in Environmental Education, Communication and Gender / GIZ	032 03 425 25	annie-gilberte@giz.de
9	NOASILALAONOMENJANAHARY Ambinintsoa Lucie	IECEDD Projects Research Officer	034 05 620 05	noasilalao912@gmail.com
10	RANDRIANAHARINOSY Mireille Natacha	Public sector / Head CEEE MAHTP	034 15 002 94	c3e@mathp.gov.mg
11	RAMBEL Andrianisa Tsiry	Director of Communication and Information System	034 22 282 99	nisarambel@gmail.com
12	Dama	National Focal Point of the Cartagena Protocol		- New PFN: Raharimalala Agnès- 034 05 623 77
13	RAKOTOMAVO Nathalie Rosette	Head of MEDD Legislation and Legal Affairs Department	034 05 623 85	nathalierosette@yahoo.fr
14	RABESISOA Lalaina Fenomanana	Study Officer, DIDDD / MEDD Database	034 05 810 39	lalaina_rabe@yahoo.fr
15	RANDRIAMAHALEO Sahoby	- National Focal Point Alternate CDB	034 05 620 49	sahobyivyrandriamahaleo@yahoo.fr
16	RAZANAKOLONA Harivao Fenosoa	Director of General and Safety Regulations / MMP	- 034 15 000 31- 033 12 083 70	fenosoarazanacolona@gmail.com

17	ANDRIAMORAVELO Antsa Naritiana	CS / DSEP / MEP, Head of Service	034 63 627 30	antsanaritiana@gmail.com
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