1. Executive Summary
   1. Project Description

The Government of Uganda’s (GoU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported, Green Climate Fund (GCF) financed project “Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems and Associated Catchments in Uganda Project (PIMS 5711)” is implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA). The project is supported by GoU, GCF, and UNDP. Some NGOs like IUCN, Environmental Alert and private sector (e.g., FIT Uganda) are involved for implementation of particular project activities. The project is supported by GCF, UNDP and Government of Uganda (GoU). The total project budget is US$ 44,262,160, including GCF Grant – US$ 24,140,160, UNDP co-financing – US $2,000,000, and the Government of Uganda (GoU) co-financing – US$ 18, 122,000. The project implementation period is September 2017 – September 2025 (8 years). The project is implemented in two regions of Uganda – South-West and East – and includes 24 districts.

The project Objective is - to restore and sustainably manage wetlands and associated catchments, and support target communities in wetland areas of Uganda to reduce the risks of climate change posed to agricultural-based livelihoods. The Objective is going to be achieved through delivery of three project Outputs:

* **Output 1.** Restoration and management of wetland hydrology and associated catchments;
* **Output 2.** Improved agricultural practices and alternative livelihood options in the wetland catchment;
* **Output 3.** Strengthening access to climate and early warning information to farmers and other target communities to support wetland management.

The project was started on 30th June 2017, though full implementation commenced in November 2017, and is currently in its fourth year of implementation.

* 1. IE Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

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| **IE Criteria** | **IE Rating** | **Comments** |
| **Project Strategy** | **MS** | The project is designed to address a set of specific climate and non-climate threats for Uganda wetlands and communities, with the most important threat being *Conversion of wetlands to agriculture, settlements, and other developments,* as the rate of wetland conversion in Uganda is very high. During the project development at least 277 stakeholders were consulted at national and local levels, plus the project was also based on the previous consultations completed in the frameworks of COBWEB and JICA projects in the same districts. The project wetlands/catchments restoration and beneficiaries targets look very ambitious in comparison with area of wetlands restored in Uganda in 2014-2018. There are no specific budgets developed for each project Activity and budget notes do not explain what Activities are associated with each budget line. The PRF Indicators are not completely SMART and redundant. |
| **Relevance** | **HS** | The project is highly relevant to Uganda’s national priorities in wetland conservation and adaptation to climate change, and fully consistent with GCF and UNDP priorities and the Ramsar Convention global goals. Project strategies are fully relevant to address climate and non-climate threats to Uganda’s wetlands and communities. However, in some cases, they do not fully address low monetary value of wetland raw materials for local communities compared to high value agricultural crops produced in the wetlands. |
| **Effectiveness** | **MU** | The project implementation effectiveness is not sufficient yet and full achievement of the project Outcomes[[1]](#footnote-1) as stated in the PRF is unlikely if the project implementation does not change considerably. Thus, Outcome 1 is likely to be achieved by 70% for wetlands and 20% of catchments by 2025; Outcome 2 - by 10% for climate-resilient households and 0.5% for area of climate-smart agriculture; Outcome 3 - by 2%. Given the rate of wetland conversion in Uganda of 294-805 km²/year[[2]](#footnote-2)(1994-2015) the project efforts are currently unlikely to influence the conversion rate significantly[[3]](#footnote-3), without overcoming the project current implementation issues. |
| **Efficiency** | **MU** | The project Output delivery is only 33% of planned by the Mid-Term, So, all Outputs, except Output 3 (that is also behind the planned delivery value) are currently not on the target to be achieved. Actual expenses to deliver the project Outputs are significantly lower than the amount that was planned in AWPs 2017-2021 and consistent with the Output delivery: 36% - for Output 1, 27% - for Output 2, and 27% - for Output 3 If the project continues without significant management changes it is projected to be completed only in 2033. |
| **Progress towards Results** | **MU** | The project had relatively long preparation period: the years of 2017, 2018, and partially 2019 were mainly used for some preparatory activities to deliver the project Outputs. In 2020-2021 the project implementation was significantly slowed down by COVID-19 pandemic and related restriction. The key barriers for the project implementation have been identified as the following: (1) regular delays in release of the project funds; (2) lack of strong coordination between UNDP, MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA to deliver the project Outputs; (3) insufficient understanding of and trust to the project by local communities; (4) insufficient efforts for restoration of wetland catchments; (5) COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in 2020-2021; and (6) Extreme Climate Events (e.g., floods). |
| Output 1 Delivery | **MU** | Output 1 delivery is only 27% of planned by the Mid-Term |
| Output 2 Delivery | **MU** | Output 2 delivery is only 16% of planned by the Mid-Term |
| Output 3 Delivery | **MU** | Output 3 delivery is only 57% of planned by the Mid-Term |
| **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management** | **MS** | The project has a relatively strong project management arrangements with highly representative PSC (17 members), well-developed PMU (12 employees), and TWG (52 members), and three Responsible Parties – WMD/MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA. LDGs and some NGOs are involved in implementation of the project activities as partners. However, collaboration between the PMU, RPs and UNDP is not yet effective and that leads to regular prolonged approval of the project AWPs and disbursement of funds to the PMU and RPs for implementation. The project multi-year plan and AWPs are not detailed enough to allow effective implementation of project activities in the project districts and do not address all UNDP requirements. That results in long AWP approval process by UNDP and regular loss of Q1, Q2 (and sometimes Q4) for the project implementation. Total project expenses of GCF funds for 2017-2021(Q1&Q2) so far are only 31% of the amount planned for the same period in the AWPs. Difference between the date the funds are requested by the RPs and the date the funds are received from UNDP is sometimes as much as 55-77 days (2019 and 2020). Additionally, MAAIF and UNMA receive funding 3-4 months later than MWE, and that does not allow simultaneous delivery of Outputs 1-3 (2018, 2019, 2020). In 2020 the RPs received from UNDP only 50% of requested funding. Overall community engagement in the project activities is only ~25% of total planned community members involvement in 2017-2020. |
| **Sustainability** | **ML** | Financial sustainability is ML; Socio-economic sustainability – MU; Institutional and governance sustainability – L; and Environmental Sustainability – ML. There are some socio-economic risks for sustainability of Output 1 and 2: the probability is still high that local people come back to restored wetlands and convert them to agriculture again in absence of sufficient alternative livelihood options, strong law enforcement and direct compensation from the GoU. |
| **Country Ownership** | **S** | The ownership of the project is high at the level of national government (including the President), but the ownership decreases to LDG and community level, especially in Eastern Uganda due to lack of sustainbale and sufficient benefits. Involvement of LDGs, NGOs, and private sector in the project activities is not yet sufficient. Given regular delays in disbursement of the project funds and long (5-6 months) periods of the project inactivity, involvement of key partners, including local communiies, in the project activities is negatively affected. |
| **Gender Equity** | **S** | The project has a regularly updated Gender Mainstreaming Plan. In 2017-2018 total sums of women and men involved in different project activities are 16,216 (39%) and 25,886 (61%) respectively. However, in 2018-2020 percentage of women participated in the project activities increased from 36% to 39%. The project management bodies – PMU and PSC - are strongly dominated by males with percentage of females of 27% and 18% respectively. The project budget does not have allocation for specific gender mainstreaming activities. |
| **Innovativeness** | **S** | Climate Change Early Warning System that is under development under Output 3 is innovative for Uganda approach to generate weather forecasts and broadcast them among stakeholders through different communication channels. Additionally, new climate-smart agriculture and sustainable livelihood options provided by the project to local communities (e.g., irrigation farming, upland rice farming, fish ponds and bee hives) can be called innovative at local level. |
| **Unexpected Results** | **MS** | In 2017-2021 the project had a number of “positive” and “negative” unexpected results. Some “negative” results have never been reported by the PMU and were discovered by the IE team during the field trip. |
| **Replication and Scalability** | **S** | Lessons generated by the project are mainly managerial, but not technical. Nevertheless, some of the project successful practices were replicated by local communities without the project support. Additionally, one of the project best practices (Limoto wetland sustainable management) was selected by GoU to prioritize and scale up in its third National Development Plan. Potential applicability and scalability of the project lessons and best practices in Uganda and abroad are high, however, they need to be formulated with more details to ensure their successful application. |

* 1. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

This section contains a brief summary of the IE conclusions and recommendations (see all details in the section “Conclusions and Recommendations”[[4]](#footnote-4))

**Conclusion 4.1.** **The project PRF Indicators are not fully SMART, repetitive, and sometimes have very ambitious targets, that makes project planning, reporting, implementation and M&E complicated.**

**Recommendation 4.1**.**1**. The IE Team recommend to make recommended edits to the project indicators and targets in the PRF in accordance with updated project ToC (Annex 2), if GCF approves the changes. Additionally, it is recommended to develop a set of indicators for each project Activity (2-4 indicators for each Activity) and define their end of the project values consistent with updated project Outputs values. In this way the PMU will have clear understanding how each project Activity contributes to the project Outputs. It is recommended to the PMU to discuss the suggested changes with UNDP and GCF and make all the changes in October 2021.

**Conclusion 4.2. Delivery of the project Outputs to achieve the expected Outcomes is delayed and need to be improved. The project can be put on track to deliver the Output targets with some suggested adjustments**

**Recommendation 4.2.1**. The PMU and UNDP should submit a request to the GCF for the project extension for **2 additional years** (until 2027) without increasing the project budget due to COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, and dramatic flooding in 2020-2021.

**Recommendation 4.2.2**. The PMU, MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA should update the multi-year project plan until 2025 (or until 2027 if the project extension is granted) and downscale it to the project districts, which will strengthen achievement of coordinated project implementation by the districts sharing same wetlands.

**Recommendation 4.2.3**. By September 20 2021 and each following year UNDP CO should provide clear requirements/check-list to the PMU, MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA on annual planning and reporting based on analysis of previous issues in the APRs and AWPs.

**Recommendation 4.2.4**. By October 30 2021 and each following year the PMU should produce an AWP for next year based on UNDP CO requirements. Each AWP should be downscaled to the district level similar to the multi-year project plan, so that each district will have a plan for delivery of the project Activities and clear annual budget for the project implementation.

**Recommendation 4.2.5**. By November 15 2021 and each following year the PMU and UNDP CO should have a technical in-person meeting (3-4 days) with all necessary staff present to review and if necessary correct the AWP and complete clearance process of AWP by UNDP CO, before the AWP is submitted to PSC for approval. By November 30 2021 and each following year the PMU should organize a PSC meeting and approve AWP cleared by UNDP CO. By December 5 2021 and each following year UNDP CO should submit the AWP to UNDP GSSU for review and clearance with expectation to receive funds form GSSU by January 15 2020 and each following year. By February 1 2022 and each following year UNDP CO should provides the funds to MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA or directly to the project partners for implementation of the Activities.

**Recommendation 4.2.6**. To fast track delivery of the project activities in 2021-2025 (or 2027 if the extension is approved) the PMU should fully involve working potential of NGOs and LDGs.

**Recommendation 4.2.7**. For effective delivery and sustainability of the Output 1 the PMU, RPs, and partners should not only demarcate the wetlands restored by the project, but ideally all target wetlands in the project districts[[5]](#footnote-5).

**Recommendation 4.2.8.** During delivery of the project Outputs the RPs – MWE, MAAIF, and UNMA should work as one team to ensure that wetland restoration and climate-smart livelihood activities are implemented simultaneously and communities do not wait for a long time for alternative livelihood options after they have vacated the wetlands.

**Recommendation 4.2.9**. For delivery of the Outcome 2 the IE team suggests a specific set of the following recommendations: prioritize quality over quantity of provided livelihood options to make sure they are sufficient, sustainable, and accompanied with enough capacity building; exercise a due diligence to select credible local private sector entities in the districts to supply inputs such as seeds, feeds, pesticides, fertilizers, beehives; multiply a few successful livelihood options and avoid unsuccessful ones; pay more attention for development of alternative livelihood options in Eastern Uganda where the main income of local communities is generated from rice farming in wetland; explore and use potential of existing vocational training centers in Uganda instead of establishment of new job training centers; develop partnerships with FAO, IUCN, World Vision and other organizations to fast track delivery of sustainbale livelihood options to local communities.

**Conclusion 4.3**. **The project has relatively strong project management arrangements. However, the process management is currently insufficient to ensure full delivery of the project Outputs in the remaining time and needs to be improved** (please, see section 3.4. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management for details).

See Recommendations 4.2.1- 4.2.8. Additional recommendations are provided below:

**Recommendation 4.3.1.** Similarly to the project planning, project annual and quarterly reporting should be more detailed with explanation of what was achieved in each of the project districts and detailed description of the project expenses against each activity[[6]](#footnote-6).

**Recommendation 4.3.2.** To effectivelyfast-track theproject implementation it is recommendedthat PMU employees seconded from the GoU should work full time for the project in 2021-2025 (or 2027) and should be freed from other responsibilities at their agencies. If this is not possible, consider hiring additional staff to the PMU to coordinate and ensure delivery of Outputs 1-3 on full time basis.

**Recommendation 4.3.3.** The PMU and RPs (MWE, MAAIF, UNMA) should organize quarterly field monitoring trips to the project sites and project districts. Output 2 requires even more intensive monitoring to timely detect any problems with provided livelihood options and implement timely corrective measures.

**Recommendation 4.3.4**. The PMU, RPs, UNDP CO and partners should organize quarterly lessons learning sessions to discuss what works, what do not work, and why.

**Conclusion 4.4. Despite the well-articulated project Gender Mainstreaming Plan no budget is allocated for specific gender mainstreaming activities.**

**Recommendation 4.1.** The PMU should allocate a budget for specific gender mainstreaming activities, especially under Output 2, to ensure that women, youth, poor and disabled people can fully participate and benefit from the project activities and livelihood options provided by the project, including irrigation farming schemes. Specifically, the following gender mainstreaming activities are recommended for consideration by the PMU and RPs and inclusion in the AWPs with specific budget (see Conclusions and Recommendation section for details):

• Annual trainings and refreshers on gender mainstreaming for RPs and LDGs;

• Annual GBV prevention initiatives (trainings, community dialogues, monitoring and follow up meetings, workshops on referral pathway synergies, etc.);

• Gender survey on how women benefit from the livelihood options provided, what options the most beneficial for women, and what options do not produce GBV;

**•** Specific climate-smart farming and vocational trainings and livelihood options for local women and women groups should be provided in project districts via NGOs that target gender issues;

**•** The PMU should explore viability and potentially implement revolving and micro-loan funds activities mentioned in the GCF proposals;

**Recommendation 4.2.** The PMU should operationalize GRM in the project districts in 2021. It looks like the GRM structure is already in place but it is not yet functional. Local women and other vulnerable groups should be aware of the GRM and know how to submit grievances.

1. Introduced by the IE team based on the GCF Impact, Outcome, and Output Indicators in the PRF. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Government of Uganda 2016. Uganda Wetlands Atlas. Volume 2. Popular Version; OAG 2018. A Value For Money Audit Report on the Management of Wetlands in Uganda by the Wetlands Management Department (WMD) under the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The IE team could not obtain estimates of wetlands area in the project regions in 2020: MWE has not provided any data for the IE mission in a response to UNDP request. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Numbering of the conclusions and recommendations in the Executive Summary is the same as numbering in the Section IV Conclusions and Recommendations [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Given the limited project budget, the IE team understand that demarcation of all target wetlands in the project districts (2,889 km², data of 2008) may not be possible. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The IE team recommends to attach an annex to the main report with a table to demonstrate a progress against Activity targets for each project district and another annex (in Excel) to show project expenses by districts against the Activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)