



**From  
the People of Japan**



Department of  
Environment



Conservation of  
Iranian Wetlands



Ministry of Agriculture  
Jahad



## **Terminal Evaluation of “Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation for Lake Urmia Restoration” project**

**Project no.: 114919**

**PIMS: 980**

**Implementing Agency: United Nations Development Programme**

**Executing Agency: Department of Environment**

**Focal Area: Biodiversity**

### **Terminal Evaluation Report**

**December, 2021**

**Dr. Arun Rijal (Independent International Consultant)**

**Mr. Soroush Saadat (Independent National Consultant)**

## **Terminal Evaluation of the project**

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**Project Period 2014-2021 (seven phases)**

### **Evaluation Team**

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**Terminal Evaluation Report**

**December 13, 2021**

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The views expressed in this report are intended to offer an overview of, and some of the lessons learned from this Project as it comes to its conclusion. We have tried to balance our thoughts and to offer fair perspectives of what was observed and learned from people far more knowledgeable about the Project and its context than we will ever be.

And finally, we are very happy to learn with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in managing the land from the basin area and restoration of Urmia Lake of high conservation values. We would like to thank them and wish them every success in their continuing endeavours.

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13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

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## Acronyms and Terms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBO	Community Based Organisation
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CEPA	Communication, Education, Participation & Awareness
CIWP	Conservation of Iranian Wetland Project
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DoE	Department of Environment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoI	Government of Iran
Ha	Hectare
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LMC	Lake Management Committee
LU	Lake Urmia
LURP	Lake Urmia Restoration Program
LWMN	Local Water Management Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoET	Ministry of Energy
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoAJ	Ministry of Agriculture Jihad
MoRT	Ministry of Road and Transport
NIM	National Implementation Model
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
NW	North West
NPD	National Project Director
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMC	Project Management Cost
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
RF	Result Framework
RWA	Regional Water Authority
SA	Sustainable Agriculture
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
SPAC	Strategic Planning affairs & Control of Govt. of Iran
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TE	Terminal Evaluation

TEC	Terminal Evaluation Consultant
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPCO	UNDP Country Office
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WPA	Wetland Protected Area

Currency of Iran is the Iranian Rial. At the time of the final evaluation, 1 Rial= 0.000024USD

## 1. Executive Summary

1. This Terminal Evaluation (TE) has been conducted as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation plan of the UNDP Project: “Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation for Lake Urmia Restoration”, and will be referred to as the “Project” in the scope of this report. The International Consultant interviewed stakeholders by virtual means and only the National consultant made field missions. This was caused by travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Extensive consultations with the project partners were conducted prior and following the site visits by the national consultant and virtual interviews to ensure a good understanding of the project’s results; leading to the submission of the TE report on the date of this report.

## Project Summary Table

2. As per requirements for TE, the Project Summary Table is provided below:

Project Summary Table				
<b>Project Title:</b>	“Contribution to Restoration of Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation”			
<b>Project no.</b>	<b>114919</b>		<b>At Endorsement (US\$)</b>	<b>Spent by September 2021(US\$)</b>
PIMS	980	Govt. of Japan	6,892,857	6,890,892
Country	Iran			
Region	Middle East	Govt. of Iran (In-kind)	6,012,143	Figures not available
Focal Area	Biodiversity			
Executing Agency/Implementing entity	UNDP	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	12,905,000	6,890,892+ in-kind contribution
Implementing Agency	Department of Environment			
Other Partners	Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Energy, Local Authorities, Local implementing partners, NGOs and CBOs	Project Document Signature date (Project start date): 01.03.2014		
		(Operational) Closing Date: December 2021	Proposed: December 2021	Actual December 2021

## Brief Description of Project

3. Thanks to Iran’s unique geography, the country is rich in aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems. Due to climate change and development activities, there is heavy pressure on environmental resources and biodiversity. Drought is one of the serious threats imposed by Climate Change, and wetlands are the most vulnerable ecosystems affected by water shortages. As result of these, Iranian wetlands across the 83 protected areas and 24 Ramsar sites are currently under pressure because these wetlands are subject to considerable shrinkage and in some parts major wetlands are already entirely dried out with serious impacts on biodiversity and local communities’ livelihoods.
4. The Lake Urmia (LU) is a vast hyper-saline wetland located in NW of Iran expanded between East and West Azerbaijan. The lake is a National Park, one of the largest Iranian Ramsar Sites, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, home to *Artemia Urmiana* and the largest lake in Iran. There are about 100 islands in the lake



including three bigger ones (Ashk, Espir and Arezou) supporting IUCN red listed endangered species of Persian Fallow Deer and Moulfon as endangered species. The wetland also supports a large number of other wildlife including 115 birds and 120 plant species. The lake is also supporting more than 5 million inhabitants living in the basin<sup>1</sup>.

5. The lake has been shrinking at an alarming rate over the past 2 decades (except for fluctuations in the past five years) and already more than 75% of its total 5000km<sup>2</sup> surface area has dried. More details on the lake's water level is available on the Urmia Lake Restoration Program (ULRP) website<sup>2</sup>. Regular extraction of water from the basin that feeds the lake is the root cause of the problem. In addition, the outflow (mainly evaporation) has vastly exceeded the inflow in recent years. Several attempts were made to address the problems by the government of Iran and other agencies but still a lot to be done to protect this lake and its biodiversity. This project has utilized best practices and lessons learned from earlier encounters (CIWP, ecosystem-based management approaches) and promoted upscaling of sustainable agriculture practices to address water and food issues of the surrounding communities. The previous sustainable agriculture piloting demonstrated that it not only improved the water efficiency by over 27% but also reduced chemical uses (more than 40% fertilizer and pesticides). At the same time, the yield has increased by more than 17%.

6. The objective of the project was “To establish an effective management system to systematically remove or substantially mitigate threats facing globally significant biodiversity and sustainability at two WPA demonstrated sites, while ensuring that the lessons learned are absorbed within WPA management systems throughout Iran.”

Outcome 1: Model wetland management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at demonstration sites to effectively address the most significant ‘internally arising’ threats to globally significant biodiversity.

Outcome 2: Model inter-sectoral coordination demonstrated at provincial and basin level enhances the sustainability of the wetland conservation system by, inter alia helping to address threats arising at ecosystem level.

Outcome 3: National level wetland management and inter-sectoral coordination structures poses and utilize enhanced capacities and the model system developed through Outcome 1 and 2 above is applied to wetlands throughout Iran through strategies, replications, tools and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.

7. The project is implemented in and around the Urmia Wetland. This project started in March 2014 and was renewed with 6 more phases up to February 2021. The project implementation was led by the Conservation of Iranian Wetland Project (CIWP) of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in cooperation with UNDP. The total project duration is 8 years and the total budget is US\$12.905 million.
8. The Project was executed by the Department of Environment (DoE) of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran through a Project Management Unit (PMU) with support from the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) in close coordination with various other institutions and local communities. The UNDP, as the implementing agency, was responsible for the completion of all activities including procurement, recruitment, monitoring, and financial management. The project has been executed in accordance with the

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<sup>1</sup> Somayeh Sima, David E. Rosenberg, Wayne A. Wurtsbaugh, Sarah E. Null, Karin M. Kettenring, Managing Lake Urmia, Iran for diverse restoration objectives: Moving beyond a uniform target lake level, *Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies*, Volume 35, 2021, 100812, ISSN 2214-5818, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejrh.2021.100812>.

<sup>2</sup> ULRP.ir/EN

standard rules and procedures of the UNDP NIM Modality. The project budget was US\$12.905 million including over US\$6 million from the Government of Iran as in-kind assistance and US\$6.9 million from Government of Japan. Earlier, GEF provided US\$2.91million for initial restoration activities in the Lake Urmia i.e. before the start of this 7 phase projects.

#### **KEY SUCCESSES**

9. The project made significant improvement in inter-sectoral collaboration in the Lake Urmia Basin among Department of Environment (DoE), Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoAJ), Regional Water Authorities, local NGOs and the private sector. Similarly, significant improvement could be seen in the level of awareness among the local communities for restoration of the Lake Urmia. The project successfully implemented participatory restoration of the Lake Urmia and promotion of Sustainable Agriculture (SA) for efficient use of water in the agriculture field. 13,500 farmers became familiar in SA, 4500 farmers trained and became capable of training others and 350 local experts trained in SA techniques. Application of SA contributed in decreasing water use in farm by 27.1% on average throughout all 7 phases. The project created 300 job for local experts. The project involved 19 NGOs and IPs. A total of 800 women were trained to take part in restoration of the Lake Urmia. The project provided 39 micro-credit funds and alternative livelihood program for women and over 700 women were involved in green jobs. 3 online monitoring network was established in 3 satellite wetlands (Norouzloo, Soldouz and Kanibarazan Wetlands) of the Lake Urmia. Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes were introduced and implemented in Kanibarazan wetland. Integrated management plans were developed and implemented in 3 satellite wetlands of the Lake Urmia (Norouzloo, Soldouz and Kanibarazan wetlands). The project also produced several types of support materials for awareness generation and capacity enhancement trainings.
- Almost all quantitative targets have been achieved as per listed in the logframe;
  - Qualitative assessments have been conducted regularly; results have been shared with all stakeholders;
  - Considering outside factors (Covid-19, drought, and hyperinflation), the PMU has successfully utilized agile management strategies to mitigate the risk of such factors on the overall objective of the project;
  - Over 200 local facilitators have been trained and capacitated to carry on the message of this project in the future even beyond the geographic scopes of this project;
  - Major improvement in knowledge, attitude, and practice of local authorities and local communities are reported in qualitative assessments and were confirmed through field visit of the national evaluation consultant;
  - A clear roadmap was designed and has been revised at the beginning of each phase including theory of change and workflow charts, which may be utilized by national authorities in the target area or other targets across the country.

#### **KEY PROBLEM AREAS**

10. The wetlands of Iran were affected in past two decades because of different factors including continuous drought, increasing number of dams, high demand of water for agricultural activities and over-extraction of underground waters. The Urmia Lake, the largest hyper-saline wetland of Iran that supports more than 5 million inhabitants from surrounding areas and important biodiversity within the lake and in islands. From past few years, considerable efforts have been made to improve the management of wetland across the country, but those were not sufficient to address huge problems related to wetlands. The Urmia Lake

harbours more than 115 birds and 120 plant species. The lake also support nearly 5 million people living around this lake. The decrease in areas and water level of the lake has affected biodiversity and human beings negatively. If reliable conservation efforts are not imposed then these biological species including endangered red listed species will disappear. It will also seriously affect people living around this lake.

11. To address the problems, various activities have been introduced and implemented throughout the seven phases of this project. While most activities have been effective, the following points need to be considered for better contribution to the overall objective beyond the life of this project:

- Continuous capacity building and awareness raising activities for existing stakeholders and for extended audience of watershed basins within the vicinity of the lake, communities, and newly appointed authorities;
- Helping facilitators to find innovative solutions and new sources of funding to enhance their performance and support local communities with implementing SA approaches and establishing diversified livelihood efforts;
- Showcasing successful pilot areas to national level authorities (new government team post 2021 election) as an advocacy mechanism toward increasing political, legal, and financial will to create better intersectoral relationship and contribute more efficiently to the overall objective of this project;

More detailed information on lessons learned and recommendations are provided on pages 49 to 51.

### Rating Table

11. As per UNDP requirements for TE, the Terminal Evaluation Rating Table as derived through the TE process for this project is provided below:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	2. IA& EA Execution	Rating
M&E design at entry	S	Quality of UNDP supervision/backstopping	S
M&E Plan Implementation	S	Quality of Execution by Executing agency	S
Overall quality of M&E	S	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	S
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	4. Sustainability	Rating
Relevance	R	Financial resources:	L
Effectiveness	S	Socio-political:	L
Efficiency	S	Institutional framework and governance:	L
Likelihood of Impact	L	Environmental:	L
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S	Overall likelihood of sustainability:	L
		Stakeholder participation	S

**Note:** S-Satisfactory, MS-Moderately Satisfactory, R-Relevant, L-Likely. Justification of rating is given in Annex IX.

## **Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned**

### **Conclusion**

12. The project was able to accomplish almost all targeted activities and these have contributed<sup>3</sup> towards addressing the issues of the Lake Urmia and its basin areas. To address the Wetland degradation problems, the project intervened in four areas: awareness generation, implementation of integrated SA and the lake restoration activities, alternative economic development and monitoring. The project is able to make significant improvement in inter-sectoral collaboration among the government relevant departments, regional water authority, private sector and the NGOs in the Lake Urmia restoration. There was also significant change in awareness level among the local communities regarding restoration of the Lake Urmia. Awareness program made 13,500 farmers aware about the project. Similarly, 4500 farmers were trained to become resource person, 360 local experts were also trained, created 300 jobs, and the sustainable agriculture technique contributed to decrease use of water by 27.1%. The project was able to involve 19 NGOs and Implementing Partners (IPs). 800 women were trained to take role in restoration of the Urmia Lake and 39 micro-credit funds and alternative livelihood programs were provided to women and over 700 women were involved in green jobs. The project established 3 satellite monitoring network in 3 satellite wetlands (Norouzloo, Soldouz and Kanibarazan wetlands) of the Lake Urmia. The project also introduced and implemented Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in Kanibarazan wetland. The project also developed and implemented integrated management plans for 3 satellite wetlands (Uromia, Norouzloo and Kanibarazan wetlands).
13. For knowledge management, the project conducted 15 village festivals, produced 3000 copies of 4 training manuals and distributed in the villages of the region. Seven documentary films were produced, more than 600 posters distributed in the villages and cities of the regions and more than 140 exhibitions held. More than 30 brochures were published and disseminated to farmers, more than 6000 students and 463 teachers were trained in the role of local communities in restoration of the Lake Urmia. More than 1,000,000 SMS were sent to a database of at least 9,000 farmers' mobile numbers about the functions of the Lake Urmia and local community role in restoration of the lake.
14. The Lake Urmia Project was designed with provision for appropriate management arrangements. However, based on the interviews conducted in this exercise and using triangulation methods to verify, it was noted that in the initial phases, the project team was faced with challenges of convincing farmers and relevant government authority on new sustainable agriculture techniques. The issue was addressed through awareness raising and persistency of facilitators in working with the community. In 2020, the project was inevitably affected for some time due to COVID-19 pandemic situation. But the project with the help of local community was able to accomplish targeted activities through remote communication and physical presence of facilitators on the ground. The project team has managed to deliver all interventions that have reduced the threats of pollution and decrease of water in the lake and enhanced water efficient and sustainable agriculture practices in the basin areas. Through generation of awareness from local to the national level, mainstreaming of sustainable agriculture and restoration of the Urmia lake was achieved. The project has been underpinned by good science and a technical approach of good calibre and this helped to maintain technical standard of the interventions. It has enhanced capacity to incorporate ground information related to the lake degradation into the agriculture development planning processes of the MoAJ and local governments in the pilot areas; and improved environmental awareness and raised concerns about threats to wetlands at the level of local communities and local government.

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<sup>3</sup> As reported in CIWP reports on "Justification for Consolidation" Nov 2021, and "PTD final report" Sep 2021 along with evidence of collaboration on annual reports as well as the field interviews of this exercise. CIWP reports are in Farsi and may be shared upon request.

15. To make the outcomes and interventions sustainable, the project formed farmers groups and women's groups. They were also trained in the lake restoration and SA techniques. The project also contributed in linking various institutions from national to grassroots levels, government agencies, local authorities and communities generating benefits for sustainability. An agreement is signed with the government of Japan for next three years to support replication of results to 2 new sites. The participatory model developed by this project is able in restoration of the lake and also addressed water related problems. The Urmia Lake is very big so there is need of such effort in all basin areas of this lake. Moreover, this model will be useful to several other lakes in Iran to address water related threats and conserve biodiversity within them.

### Recommendations

Rec.No.	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
<b>Relevance/Replication</b>			
1	This project has developed and successfully tested model to address water issues and contribute in restoration of the Lake Urmia. The Urmia lake basin is a large area, there is need of more assistance to replicate the successful model from this project. Similarly, other lakes of Iran also need such programme to address the threats. Hence, it is recommended to explore more support from different donor agencies and implement such model in wide areas.	PMU/UND P/CIWP	In the future
2	It is recommended that the federal government of Iran should adopt successful model from this project and acknowledge in its policy to incorporate them into their nationwide wetland restoration programme.	PMU/UND P/CIWP/M oET	In the future
<b>Design</b>			
3	Each training should be followed by the post training evaluation to assess change in level of knowledge and awareness after training. It is recommended to conduct post training assessment. Also capacity development trainings of future projects should make provision of post training assessment.	MoAJ, DOE, UNDP	Immediately so that it could provide feedback for the new phases.
4	More alternative livelihood options should be explored to switch the lake based economy for alleviating pressure from the lake.	DoE, MoAJ and UNDP	Future interventions
<b>Implementation/Management</b>			
5	It is recommended to help facilitators absorb funding to make provision of technical and machinery support to poor farmers who could not afford to buy or rent machinery.	PMU, MoAJ	Future interventions
6	The project has trained many people on SA technology and the lake restoration practices. Also, the project team has gained a lot of experience to work for the water issues, SA and restoration of the lake. These people should be used for future interventions in other areas of the Urmia lake/basin and also in other lakes within Iran.	UNDP, DoE, CIWP	In the future projects.

## **Lessons Learned**

### ***Strategic***

Lack of knowledge has been seen as a drawback in many projects limiting communities from taking precaution. Similarly, lack of knowledge and poor economy force them to adopt unsustainable agricultural practices. In this project, after adopting SA techniques they were able to see benefits from this techniques and it helped to attract farmers from neighbouring areas too.

- Establishment and capacitation of community groups for restoration of the Urmia Lake is a good participatory model of conservation of the lake and its biodiversity and it also plays role towards sustainability of interventions.

### **Design**

- Designing a project linking various institutions from national to grassroots levels, government agencies, local authorities and communities generates huge benefits for sustainability, and through the synergies developed provides the intervention with much greater effectiveness than that which can be achieved by stand-alone projects.
- Bottom-up planning of the project provided feedback from the people knowledge on the ground realities and this helped in smooth implementation of the activities and community easily adopted them.

### **Project Management**

- Working directly through existing government structures brings dividends. The project chose to work directly with the Department of Environment, Ministry of Jihad Agriculture and other local government rather than setting up parallel implementation structures. This decision has proved very useful not only in empowering government by providing experience and training, but also in developing effective government “ownership”, engagement, participation and motivation, thereby promoting long-term sustainability of the project’s achievements.

More on Recommendations and Lessons Learned are given on pages 49-51.



## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation**

16. As per UNDP's guidance for initiating and implementing terminal project evaluations of UNDP supported projects that have received grant financing from the donor, this Terminal Evaluation (TE) has the following complementary purposes:
- To assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of: achieving the outputs as per project document.
  - To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in terms of the implementation of activities that achieve outputs and outcomes, following up on lessons learned.
  - To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of the project accomplishments.
  - To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP activities.
  - To analyse the sustainability of the results of the project.
  - To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio (E & E unit) and need attention and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.
  - To contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving UNDP strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.
  - To gauge the extent of the project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with other UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.
17. This is designed to enhance compliance with both UNDP evaluation policies and procedural requirements, which are consistent and mutually reinforcing, and use common standards. It also responds to UNDP requirements to ensure that the Terminal Evaluations of donor-financed projects should include ratings of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring and evaluation implementation as well as the sustainability of results (outputs and outcomes).
18. By adopting "UNDP's guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported Projects", this Terminal Evaluation responds to both the UNDP and donor requirements for Terminal Evaluations.

### **2.2 Scope & Methodology**

19. This Terminal Evaluation (TE), was carried out by the independent consultants and was initiated by UNDP Iran as the Implementing Agency for the "Contribution of Restoration of the lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation" and "Local community participation in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation for the Lake Urmia Restoration" projects to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the project activities in relation to the stated purpose, and to collate lessons learned.
20. The TE was conducted over a period of 25 days between 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 by an international and one national consultant. The scope was determined by the terms of reference (Annex I) which were closely followed. Full details of the objectives of the TE can be found in the ToR, but the evaluation has concentrated on assessing the concept and design of the project; its implementation in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, financial planning, and monitoring and evaluation; the efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out and the objectives and outcomes achieved, the likely sustainability of its results, and the involvement of stakeholders. The text has been revised to correct

factual inaccuracies in the draft or to include additional information. All comments were addressed to ensure a fair hearing to all parties and responses to comments are listed in Audit Trail (Annex XIV).

21. The evaluation was conducted following a participatory approach to provide it with sufficient evidence upon which to base conclusions:  
Wherever possible the TE Consultants have tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the “Guidance for conducting Terminal Evaluation of *UNDP- supported project*”, namely:  
Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organisational policies, including changes over time, as well as the extent to which the project is in line with the UNDP Operational Programmes or the strategic priorities under which the project was funded.  
Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.  
Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.  
Results – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In UNDP terms, results include direct project outputs, short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.  
Sustainability – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. The projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.
22. The project results were measured against achievement of indicators guided by evaluation questions (Annex VI).
23. In addition, other scales have been used to cover sustainability (Annex -IXii), monitoring and evaluation, and to assess impacts. The Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method also requires ratings to be made for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. The rating scale is given in Annex IX- iii while Annex IX-iv shows how the two letter ratings for “achievement of outcomes” and “progress towards intermediate states” translate into ratings for the “overall likelihood of impact achievement” on a six-point scale. A rating is given a ‘+’ notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project which moves the double letter rating up one space in the six-point scale. Comments/suggestions from reviewers are addressed and changes made are mentioned in the Audit Trail in Annex XIV.
24. The results of the evaluation were conveyed to UNDP and other stakeholders. **Lessons learned** have been placed and further explained in pages 50-51.

### **Data Collection & Analysis**

25. The project documents were reviewed to generate information on the project design. Similarly, the project proposals and work plans were evaluated to see the achievement or performance against planned activities. The financial documents and spread sheets were analysed to study the expenses against the provisioned budget for each components. Information on the accomplishment of activities and monitoring and feedback mechanisms were analysed annual reports the review of various project documents. The co-financing provisioned in the ProDoc (also in agreement documents) and actual co-financing available was compared to see if the committed amount of in-kind contribution was available to the project or not. The information generated from these various sources were confirmed through the interviews (both face-to-face and virtually) with the stakeholders. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, it was not possible for the international consultant to make field visits to have first-hand information and further



verification at the site level. All field visits were done by the national consultant. Where possible the international consultant joined the interviews virtually.

26. **Ethics:** The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations”. The assessments were independent, impartial and rigorous, and the evaluators maintained personal and professional integrity.

### **2.3 Constraints**

27. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible for the International Consultant to visit Iran to have first-hand information and observe sites. The interviews were conducted through virtual means. Due to weak internet signal in the site areas and the language barrier, the International Consultant was not able to interview directly with the community level beneficiaries. The International Consultant interviewed only those who could speak in English. The interview with community level stakeholders and other officers (officers from the district level offices) were done by the National Consultant.

### **2.4 Structure of the Evaluation Report**

28. The TE report is structured in line with UNDP’s guidance and covers the following Sections:

The project description and development context (this includes project design, its rationale and development context, the problems the project sought to address, the objectives, establishment of baseline data, key stakeholders and expected results)

Findings (Results of implementation and comparison with the targets as set)

- Project Design / Formulation
- Project Implementation
- Project Results

Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

Annexes.

### 3. Project Description and Development Context

#### 3.1 Project Start and Duration

29. The first phase of conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) completed in April 2013 and a scale-up phase was approved and initiated in May 2013. In 2014, the high level arrangement between the governments of Iran and Japan led to allocation of one million US\$ by the government of Japan to address the issues of the critically endangered LU. The project “Contribution to Restoration of the Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation” was added to CIWP as a new outcome. The first phase was implemented in 41 villages. The second one million US\$ to institutionalize the process in 41 villages and scaling it to 34 new sites. The second phase of the project was developed based on the capacity built and lessons learned from the previous phase of the project and effectively contributed to restoration of LU through local community and farmers engagement to bring together the activities like promotion of sustainable agriculture and effective reduction of water consumption at farm level which would lead to increase in inflow to the lake, social mobilization, public awareness campaign, local water network initiatives and alternative livelihood practices aiming at water saving, biodiversity conservation of the main LU satellite wetlands as back-up ecosystems for LU critical situation. The objective of the second was to take CIWP successful pilot to a large scale and establish wetland management plans and inter-sectoral coordination structures for 10 important Iranian wetlands, establish a strong wetlands ecosystem management legislative platform, and share CIWP and other wetlands management initiatives, knowledge and lessons learnt with the entire region of south and central Asia.

Project phase	Implementation Period
1 <sup>st</sup> phase	1 March 2014 - 28 February 2015
2 <sup>nd</sup> phase	18 March 2015 – 17 March 2016
3 <sup>rd</sup> phase	18 March 2016 – 17 March 2017
4 <sup>th</sup> phase	1 March 2017 – 28 February 2018
5 <sup>th</sup> phase	1 March 2018 – 28 February 2019
6 <sup>th</sup> phase	1 March 2019 – 28 February 2020
7 <sup>th</sup> phase	1 March 2020 – 28 February 2021

#### 3.2 Development Context

30. The Islamic Republic of Iran is situated in a geographically unique area and harbours diverse climatic condition and rich biodiversity. Out of the 42 types of wetlands, Iran has representation of 41 wetland types. Iran has 25 Ramsar sites, and has highest number of designated wetlands in Ramsar Convention in the Middle East. Unsustainable development and climate change has imposed threats to these wetlands. Over the past decade, LU has been affected by severe droughts and increasing pressure of over-extraction of water, distributing the inflow-outflow balance of the lake.
31. Conservation of Iranian Wetland Project (CIWP), launched in 2005 with support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and Department of

Environment (DoE) of Iran, is an effort for enhancing wetlands management in Iran focusing on establishment of Ecosystem Management at local and national levels, providing for appropriate context for participation of stakeholders, and developing and implementing management plans. These management plans are developed in a participatory process with the aim of synergy among development projects and conservation measures in wetlands' basins and determine the responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organisations in conservation of wetlands along with sustainable development in the basin.

32. The project “Contribution to Restoration of the Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation (2014-2019) and Local community Participation in Sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation for the Lake Urmia Restoration (2019-2021) is implemented by the Government of Iran with the support from the UNDP and funding from the Government of Japan with the objective of contributing in the lake Urmia via modelling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species. This is delivered through three main outcomes:

Outcome 1: Model wetland management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at demonstration sites to effectively address the most significant ‘internally arising’ threats to globally significant biodiversity.

Outcome 2: Model inter-sectoral coordination demonstrated at provincial and basin level enhances the sustainability of the wetland conservation system by, inter alia helping to address threats arising at ecosystem level.

Outcome 3: National level wetland management and inter-sectoral coordination structures poses and utilize enhanced capacities and the model system developed through Outcome 1 and 2 above is applied to wetlands throughout Iran through strategies, replications, tools and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.

33. The project is implemented in the Urmia Lake including islands and surrounding areas. It started in March 2014 and was planned to end in Feb 2021.
34. The project is implemented through the **UNDP Support Services to National Implementation (NIM)** by the DoE. The project organisation structure includes a Project Steering Committee (PSC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a Lake management Committee (LMC) and a PMU. The governance structure includes a number of local stakeholders, as mentioned in the project management chart.

### 3.3 Problems that the Project sought to Address

- The disappearance of rivers and wetlands due to change in prioritizing water allocation to the benefit of agriculture sector and failure in providing environmental water right.
- Water, soil and natural resources pollution through excessive use of pesticides, nitrates and antibiotics to enhance the performance of agricultural products.
- Biodiversity depletion and health related issues for farmers and consumers of agricultural products.
- Lack of coordination between agencies related to agriculture and wetland management.

- Weak capacity regarding sustainable agriculture and wetland restoration with the relevant institutions and local communities.
- Knowledge gap among the responsible agencies and local communities related to climate change, biodiversity conservation, restoration of wetland etc.

### 3.4 Development Objectives of the Project

35. To integrate climate concerns as they affect agricultural sector-based livelihoods into associated national and sectorial planning and budgeting processes.

#### Baseline Indicators Established

36. To measure the achievement of the project, baseline indicators were established. The outcome and outputs are provided in section 3.6 below and target indicators of activities are provided in Annex VII.

### 3.5 Main Stakeholders

37. Stakeholders to be involved in the project implementation were identified at the project formulation phase with clear roles and responsibilities. Stakeholders were identified based on their strength and relevancy to the project. Extensive consultations were conducted with these stakeholders during the inception mission (11-20 June 2014) and throughout the project implementation. A wide range of stakeholders including NGOs, INGOs, Community institutions, academic institutions and government agencies were involved in the project development process and roles and responsibilities were clearly documented in the project implementation plan (see sub-chapter 2.9 Stakeholder involvement plan of ProDoc). The project development exercise was led by the Department of Environment (DoE).

### 3.6 Expected Results

38. The project aimed to achieve its objective through three outcomes and several outputs (differ in different phases).

Output level indicators were also developed for each of the Outputs and are listed as:

**Outcome 1:** Model wetland management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at demonstration sites to effectively address the most significant ‘internally arising’ threats to globally significant biodiversity.

**Outcome 2:** Model inter-sectoral coordination demonstrated at provincial and basin level enhances the sustainability of the wetland conservation system by, inter alia helping to address threats arising at ecosystem level.

**Outcome 3:** National level wetland management and inter-sectoral coordination structures poses and utilize enhanced capacities and the model system developed through Outcomes 1 and 2 above is applied to wetlands throughout Iran through strategies, replications, tools and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.

**Table 1:** Summary of expected global environmental benefits arising from the project

<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Model wetland management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at demonstration sites to effectively address the most significant ‘internally arising’ threats to globally significant biodiversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance capacity of the DoE to identify priorities, implement, monitor and evaluate SA techniques and restoration of the Urmia Lake.</li> <li>• Technical guidelines on SA techniques and the lake restoration developed.</li> <li>• Communities trained in implementation SA techniques and restoration of the Urmia lake.</li> <li>• 13,500 farmers were made familiar with the project activities.</li> <li>• Training 4500 farmers and 360 local experts to be a resource person.</li> </ul> <p>These activities help to promote SA techniques and restoration of the Urmia lake and making communities and local expert capable on these will make the project results sustainable and contribute to cover rare and endangered biodiversity of global significances in the Lake Urmia.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Model inter-sectoral coordination demonstrated at provincial and basin level enhances the sustainability of the wetland conservation system by, inter alia helping to address threats arising at ecosystem level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical staff trained in SA techniques including restoring and managing lake ecosystems and agro-ecological landscapes.</li> <li>• Steering committee was formed involving wide range of stakeholders. This has contributed improving inter-sectoral collaboration in the Lake Urmia Basin among DoE, MoAJ, Regional Water Authorities, local NGOs and the private sector.</li> <li>• Significant improvement of social responsibility among local communities for restoration of the lake Urmia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> National level wetland management and inter-sectoral coordination structures poses and utilize enhanced capacities and the model system developed through Outcomes 1 and 2 above is applied to wetlands throughout Iran through strategies, replications, tools and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities adopt SA techniques which decreased consumption of water and also decreased use of pesticides and chemical fertiliser and climate-smart livelihood strategies.</li> <li>• Appropriate climate-smart lake ecosystem rehabilitation and management interventions identified.</li> <li>• Long-term monitoring field sites established at intervention sites for measuring the effects of the Lake Ecosystem restoration and management.</li> </ul> <p>These activities will help to reduce threats to the Urmia lake and its Basin areas through integrated restoration model.</p>

Baseline indicators were fully established and the latter given in the Project Document ahead of the Project’s commencement. Baseline indicators are available in logfrmae included in Annex VII of this report.

### 3.7 Theory of Change

39. This project constitute a major part of the I.R. of Iran’s efforts to fulfil its national and international commitments to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, by helping restoration of the Lake Urmia and its satellite wetlands which play an important role as back-up ecosystems for the rich biodiversity of the region. The critical condition of the Lake Urmia caused by several factors including unsustainable development in its basin, insufficient multi-stakeholder coordination/management frameworks and the lack of efficient community participation mechanisms, made it necessary to take action for restoring the lake engaging different groups of users and stakeholders including the local communities, MoAJ, DoE, RWA, national and local private sectors, NGOs, UNDP, etc. Since the local communities in the area are considered as key audience, ensuring their engagement in the project’s participatory planning was the entry point to enhance the level of their participation in sustainable soil and water management and biodiversity restoration while at the same time, expanding their economic opportunities and welfare situation. Engaging other related sectors such as MoAJ and DoE are also entry points of the project; as it is the intention to move towards a behavioural change and results-based management in the basin. Enhancing the economic resilience of local communities in adaptation with

LU basin resources and upscaling the model in other wetland areas of the country, are other steps which would help the project to bring about the required change. This would be achieved through several interventions including, but not limited, to the below items as the main component of the project: Ecosystem-based management of wetlands is applied effectively in selected LU satellite wetlands through providing technical support to activate implementation and coordination mechanisms of LU satellite wetlands and capacity development of LU satellite wetlands secretariats to develop participatory annual M & E reports. Quick win projects will be also implemented through support of implementation of LU satellite wetlands Management plans. Promote local participation in sustainable soil and water management and biodiversity conservation through providing support for embedding SA in previous pilot sites to insure maintaining the results and implementation of an integrated approach in new pilot villages/sites based on past learning and proper results assessments. Design a model for climate change adaptation and mitigation in LU basin to prepare a plan of action in line with soil and water conservation will lead to identify and implement the new initiatives for better management of soil and water and biodiversity conservation. Support implementation of communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) activities is an essential tool in this area to promote the project's approach. Implementation of participatory economic valuation is a new practice along with support and monitor implementation of payment for ecosystem services (PES) pilots and implementation of business plan in the pilot sites Incorporate the project approach into national policies and up-scale the model in other wetland areas through documenting the best practices, success stories and lessons learned to prepare a toolkit on "modelling community participation in wetlands restoration" and embedding it within national systems. Revising LU basin master plan to be mainstreamed into the development documents is a complementary action to this subject. The project's measurable impacts will include:

- Increased social responsibility and resilience of local community to promote public participation in LU restoration through innovative activities
- Strengthened intersectoral cooperation in wetlands management and conservation
- Mainstreamed LU conservation in national, regional and provincial policies and plans
- Women empowerment, green jobs generation and wise use and sustainability of LU resources promoted and strengthened These impacts will lead to additional benefits such as an improved situation ecosystem in the basin, a sustainable and efficient use of water and soil resources, and a change in attitudes of decision makers and authorities in the affected areas. This project will be defined around the following premises and assumptions:
  - Ecosystem approach is fully accepted by key stakeholders
  - LURP, management committee of satellite wetlands and local communities all agree to implement the project's activities



## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Project Design/Formulation

40. The project was designed to address the identified problem by strengthening wetland and biodiversity management effectiveness and sustainable agriculture practices. It also aimed to make resource management inclusive and collaborative which will perform dual benefit of wetland ecosystem management and at the same time also contribute in livelihoods in communities. The project intervention at the broader level enhance the systemic and institutional capacity for planning and management of the climate-smart management with improved livelihood situation through sustainable agricultural techniques and reduced threats and strengthened governance. The initial project activities were a pilot attempt which was scaled up in other areas of the Lake Urmia basin.
41. There was no Result Framework until the third phase and only from 4<sup>th</sup> phase project had Strategic Result Framework with clear outputs and activities and SMART indicators to monitor implementation and achievements. The project was designed to work at a micro level (local government and pilot sites and community level). It aimed to work at developing the capacity of communities, local level authorities, generating awareness among communities, facilitating decision making of the local level planners and implementing participatory management practices to restore degraded wetlands and integrate sustainable agriculture practices to promote efficient water use and decrease pollution.
42. The implementing and executing institutions were involved in the project from the project design phase and the design involved a thorough analysis of capacities of various partners and their interests. The project was designed based on threat and management capacity analysis and it also incorporated lessons from past relevant projects and also initial phases of this project. The design also utilised past study findings. The roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners and other institutions were clearly defined in the project design. Hence to address the identified problem, the project was designed to apply the following approaches:
- (i) Established an online network in 3 satellite wetlands of the Lake Urmia;
  - (ii) Introduction of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in Kanibarazan wetland;
  - (iii) Development and implementation of integrated management plans for 3 satellite wetlands of the lake Urmia;
  - (iv) Conduct training on Sustainable Agriculture techniques for farmers and for government authority;
  - (v) Train local technical persons to become resource person in SA techniques;
  - (vi) Conduct various promotional activities to increase awareness on SA techniques, restoration of wetlands and biodiversity conservation;
  - (vii) Improve inter-sectoral collaboration in the Lake Urmia basin among DoE, MoAJ, Regional Water Authorities, Local NGOs and the private sector;
  - (viii) Mainstream SA techniques in local development planning and agriculture development planning;
  - (ix) Generate local green jobs as an alternatives for livelihood;
  - (x) Involve wide range of implementing partners to facilitate implementation process;

#### **4.1.1 Analysis of the Strategic Result Framework**

43. The project goal is to catalyse the sustainability of Iran's system of wetland protected areas (WPAs), thereby enhancing its effectiveness as a tool for conserving globally significant biodiversity. The Result Framework (RF) has a single objective, 3 outcomes and 13 outputs (different outputs from different phase are cumulated). The outcome and outputs are aligned with the objective of the project. Outcome 1 focuses on designing wetland management model and implement to address threats to globally significant biodiversity, Outcome 2 on developing model for inter-sectoral coordination at provincial and basin level enhancing the sustainability of the wetland conservation system, and Outcome 3 on scaling up the successful models from outcome 1 and 2 in other wetland areas of Iran. There was no Result Framework in the project document of the initial 3 phases of the project.
44. The indicators of the result framework are relevant, precise and mostly SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable and attributable; Relevant and realistic; Time-bound, timely, tractable and targeted) with the exception that it lack gender disaggregation. All are based on sound scientific monitoring protocols using the most relevant measures for a given criteria.

#### **4.1.2 Assumptions and Risks**

45. There were five risks identified in the project document and no additional risks identified at any stages. Due to institutionalising of centralised and top-down decision making and leadership in some of the partner organisations, the establishment of participatory and bottom-up approaches in the project implementation and management sometimes become challenging to achieve. Besides, weak inter-sectoral collaboration among some of key stakeholders including Ministry of Agriculture, Energy and the Department of Environment is weak. The project in its initial three years period improved the collaboration between institutions. Earlier, the national budget was not used be allocated on time but this was latter addressed. Private sector and the NGOs were underdeveloped hence not being considered within decision making process by the government. Besides, lack of skilled human resources, especially in the area of participatory approaches and targeted community mobilization, both in private and government sector are identified as the project risk. All the risks and assumptions outlined in the project document were logical and robust. These helped to identify appropriate activities and required precautionary measures to address them. Arrangements for all risks and assumptions were made and with these arrangements, the project was able to implement activities effectively and work towards the achievement of the targets. It is also assumed that the communities will support project interventions.

#### **4.1.3 Lessons from other Relevant Projects incorporated into Project Design**

46. Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) which was launched in 2005 with support of UNDP, GEF and Department of Environment (DoE) of Iran. A few initial Sustainable Agriculture (SA) piloting in the area was carried out in 2011 and a few more piloting in the Urmia lake basin with the support from government of Japan showed increase in the water efficiency by an average of 35% and reduction of the application of chemical materials (>50% chemical fertilizer and 60% pesticides) without compromising farmer's net income. This practice also demonstrated government and public partnership. This project used CIWP experiences and lessons learned regarding sustainable agriculture practices, efficient water use and pest control for biodiversity conservation of the Urmia lake and sustainable agriculture practices



in basin areas. The outputs of the project were derived from the management objectives of LU integrated Management Plan which was developed by CIWP and adopted by the cabinet in 2008.

#### **4.1.4 Planned Stakeholder Participation**

47. At the project development phase, the project development team undertook extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from national government bodies, non-government institutions, INGOs, local government bodies and academic institutions through a series of opinion polls, presentations, interviews, group discussions, site visits and workshops. These wide-ranging consultations were undertaken to ensure that stakeholders at all levels are aware of the project and its objectives and that they assist in the identification of threats of degradation of the Urmia Lake and biodiversity that could contribute to various activities of the project. A thorough assessment of relevance, experience and capacity of implementing partners and other stakeholders was also conducted. This assessment helped to utilise the strength of the implementing partners and to also develop capacity enhancement programs. The project design, criteria for potential sites and site selection was carried out with stakeholder participation.
48. The project planning had provision of implementing the project following the UNDP Support Services to National Implementation (NIM) modality by Department of Environment in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoAJ). The other responsible parties by virtue of their mandates were: local NGOs, civil society organisations, various district level government, academic institutions and communities.

#### **4.1.5 Linkages between the Project and other Interventions within the Sector**

49. Due to climate change and anthropogenic reasons, the lakes of Iran were threatened. These lakes were not only water store but also contributing to rare and endangered biodiversity and also large human population from the surrounding areas. The National Steering Committee (NSC) played a role of platform for cooperation between different government and non-government agencies. Similarly, the project technical committee was represented by wide range of institutions. This helped to generate technical contributions from many experts free of cost. Besides these, there was no formal linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector except the linkage with FAO's project on the lake restoration.
50. The project by improving efficiency of water use in the farm, contributed to maintain water in the lake and decrease pollution from chemical fertiliser and pesticides and this also contributed to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7: "ensure environmental sustainability"-Target 7A: "integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources." and by increasing productivity from the farm by applying sustainable agriculture technique, increased food security and thereby contributed to MDG1: "eradicating extreme poverty and hunger". The project is also related to other MDGs that are closely linked to the sustainable management and use of natural resources.

#### **4.1.6 Gender Responsiveness of the project**

51. The project took into account gender equity in the analysis of socio-economic and agriculture issues. In its attempt of identifying community livelihood options and develop strategies to improve them, it analysed gender aspect also. The gender dimension was also considered in local level activities to ensure socio-economic benefits to women. Women have been encouraged, involved and participated in the

process of development and implementation of Integrated Management Plans in wetlands and basin. Women were encouraged to involve in implementation of developed management plans. In this regards, establishment of alternative livelihood in support of Ghare-Gheshlagh MP was a priority action carried out by Zarineh & Chichast Women Cooperative. Women empowerment through introducing sustainable livelihood is carried out for 2 wetland dependent communities around Harra-Minab.

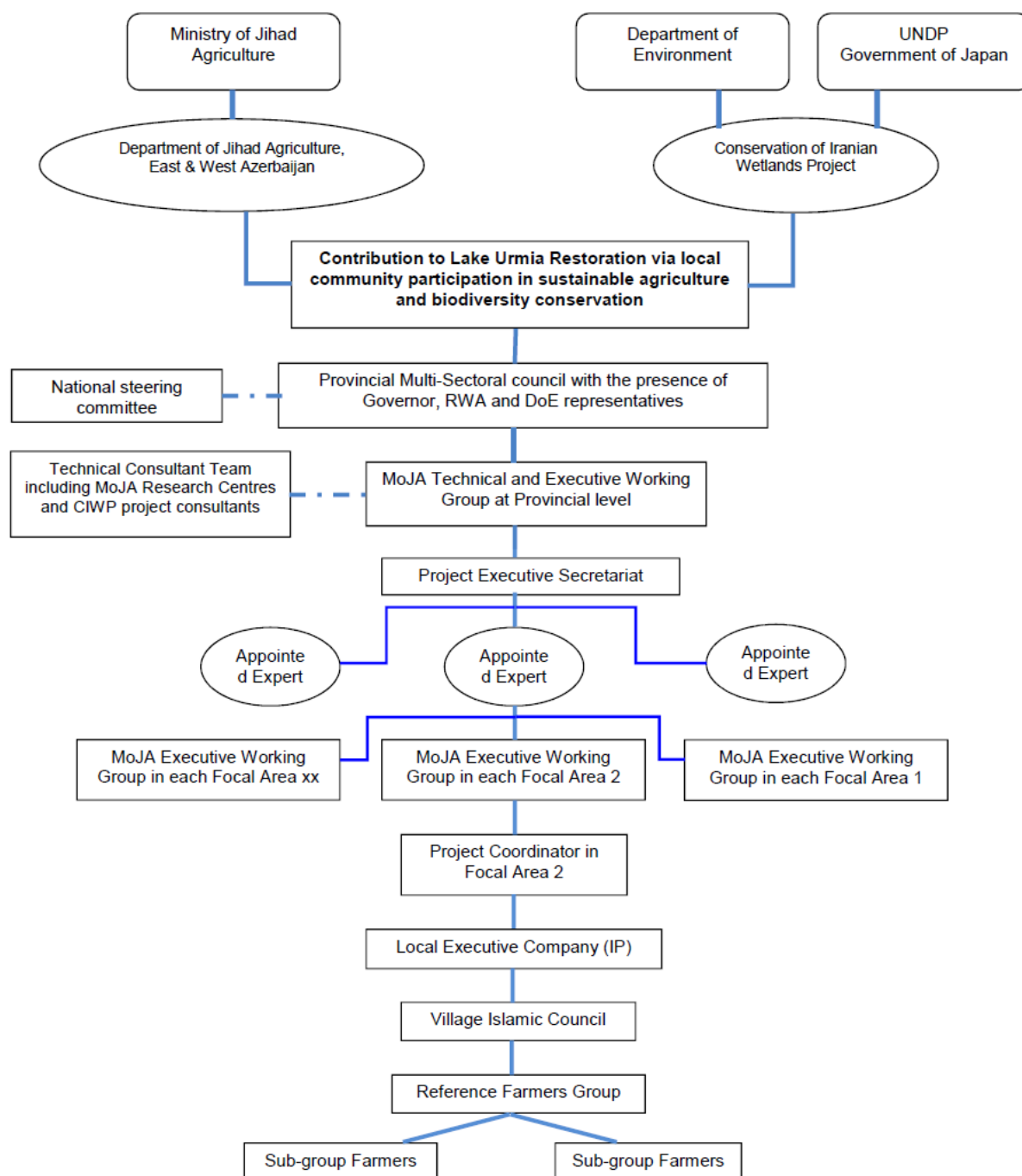
#### **4.1.7 Social and Environmental Safeguard**

52. The project analysed potential social and environmental impacts from the project activities and made provision to avoid negative impacts to the communities and the local environment. It has given priority to the social norms that were considered while identifying activities and implementation modalities.

#### **4.2 Project Implementation**

53. Entire Urmia lake and basin areas were selected by the project to implement the restoration of the Lake Urmia by modelling participatory sustainable agriculture practices and conservation of critical biodiversity. The project selected 41 villages in phase I, 75 villages in phase II, 90 villages in phase III, 110 villages in phase IV, 134 villages in phase V, 151 villages in phase VI and 20 villages in phase VII.
54. **UNDP Support Services to National Implementation (NIM)** was applied to ensure broad stakeholder participation and to create both high flexibility and an enabling environment for innovation. The DoE had responsibility of coordination for the implementation of activities and was accountable to UNDP and the Government of Japan for the project results. The Department of Environment of Ministry of Agriculture Jihad was lead implementing partner. The Project implementation took into consideration the technical and administrative capacity of the entity to assure responsibility for mobilising and effectively applying the required inputs in order to achieve the expected outputs. The Implementing Partner (UNDP) had responsibility for managing the project – including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieve project outputs and assure effective use of the project resources. The project was executed by DoE on behalf of the government of Iran in close coordination with other Department in particular the Department of Agriculture Jihad East and West Azerbaijan, Ministry of Energy, Local authorities, local communities, NGOs, CBOs, Local Implementing partners (contractors) and UNDP. The project also involved wide range of stakeholders including research centers, NGOs and private sector. The role and responsibilities of all staffs were clear and agreed in the contract document.
55. The Project had a National Steering Committee (NSC) which is the highest decision-making body in the project management and implementation structure. The project also had a technical consultant team including MoAJ Research Centers and CIWP consultants. At provincial level, there was MoAJ technical and executing working group in each focal areas. There was project coordinator at the field level. The project also formed farmers' group to facilitate the implementation of the project activities. The NSC was responsible to provide overall direction and review of the project implementation, reviewing and approving the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and reporting on the project implementation. The NSC also had responsibility of assurance to ensure the appropriate project function. The project collaborated with various parties to carry out capacity building activities in management of natural resources.
56. The Project had a National Project Director (NPD) who was responsible for the project on behalf of the government. The NPD on behalf of the government had responsibility of monitoring the regular activities of the project and provide guidance to the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PD provided the government's oversight and guidance for the project implementation, including the coordination of the project activities among the main parties to the project: the government implementing partners at the

national and local levels, the project manager, consultants and UNDP, including oversight of the PMU. The project had a Project Manager (PM) led management of the project with support of a team of technical and operational staff. The Project Manager was housed within the DoE. The PMU was responsible for carrying out day-to-day project management and strengthening both the executing ministry's and UNDP's capacity in ensuring project deliverables are both timely and achieve quality results. The PM accounted to the MoAJ, UNDP and the NSC for the quality, timelines and effectiveness of the activities carried out as well as the use of the funds. The PM was reporting to the NSC on a periodic basis.



#### **4.2.1. Adaptive Management**

57. The Project's adaptive management was well structured and the technical feedback has also been positive. The project was driven by the capable management team. At the end of each phase, shortcomings were analysed and recommended for improvement in the next phases. Additional components such as PTD and PES were recommended as a result of analysing the lessons learned from the earlier phases. The mobilization of the communities to join the project was slow in the beginning as to change mindset of the farmers and the responsible authorities who were reluctant to adopt a new Sustainable Agriculture techniques but from the second phase it became easier as farmers and also authorities saw positive impact of SA techniques. The coordination problems were identified in the beginning and addressed. The project was able to bring relevant government agencies, communities, NGOs and private sector to platform which helped to strengthen coordination and cooperation.

#### **Feedback from M&E Activities used for Adaptive Management**

58. The project was implemented in seven phases and each of them were of 1 year duration. The project's adaptive management has been good throughout. The monitoring technical aspects of the project was good and feedback on such areas was also good. At the end of each phase weaknesses were analysed and addressed in the new phase. Addition of PTD and PES components were based on the recommendation from analysis of the learnings from earlier phases. The project document and work plans were revised in the beginning of each phase to address the shortcomings. International and national academic capacities were also utilised to evaluate the implementation process. The project manager had regular meetings with all partners and the CTA. At the district level and community level, the project team members were in regular communication with all stakeholders in their respective sites. The annual renewal of the project prevented the stakeholders to plan long-term projects and they had to have some results to show at the end of each year which didn't match the "crop year". Utilising these learning, upcoming phase is planned for three years and donor is also convinced on this. The Covid-19 lockdowns for over a year affected 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> phase of the project. To address this crisis, project adopted online methods of communication to keep the momentum of implementation.

#### **4.2.2 Actual Stakeholder Participation/ Partnership Arrangements**

59. The UNDP CO provided technical and financial support and also fulfilled the role of monitoring. The Department of Environment (DoE) of Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoAJ) was the lead executing partner. The project also involved other partners to bring their expertise and cooperation for making programme implementation effective. The following partners were involved in the project:
- Ministry of Jihad Agriculture (MoAJ)
  - Ministry of Energy (MoE)
  - Department of Environment (DoE)
  - Office of Strategic Planning Affairs and Control of the Government of the Iran (SPAC)
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
  - Ministry of Roads and Transportation (MoRT)
  - Ministry of Interior (MoI)
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
  - Communities from the pilot sites

- NGOs

60. The project conducted various training and awareness workshops for government officials and also for community members and this helped to increase awareness among them. The project also reached a wider audience through awareness generation through brochure distribution, media coverage, web-pages of UNDP and MoAJ. The TECs found that stakeholder engagement and participatory approaches have been of good order throughout. But there are some indirect stakeholders (Senators, city council members and other government agencies) who may implement parallel civil projects utilising models from this project. Such stakeholders should be included to make sustainable impact.

The project has worked closely with many stakeholders throughout and the active engagement of stakeholders has been vital to fulfilling its achievements, hence stakeholder participation is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

### 4.2.3 Project Finance and Co-finance

61. The total project cost as per the project document (all seven phases) was US\$12.905 million, which includes US\$6,892,857 in cash and US\$6 million in-kind. Of these, the Government of Japan's contribution was expected to be US\$6,892,857 in cash and Government of Iran's (GoI) in kind contribution of over US\$6 million. The project had spent almost all of the budget and achievement was close to the target. Co-financing was well planned and clearly mentioned in the project document. The committed amount from Government of Japan was US\$6,892,857 and actual amount disbursed by end of March 2021 was US\$6,892,857. The committed amount from Government of Japan was fully received. The committed contribution from government of Iran was US\$27,000,000 while actual contribution figure was not available (it was partly hard to calculate considering the continuous fluctuation in exchange rate). The executing and implementing agencies made close monitoring of financial transactions and program implementation and materialised the fund for activities by changing mode of payment and this helped to accomplish some of the activities comparatively faster than during the initial year. The project conducted auditing every year and its presented financial transactions and audit report didn't report any major issues. The financial transactions were monitored by DoE as well as UNDP as part of their standard monitoring practices. Due to favourable exchange rates there was more money to be spent in local currencies and it helped to increase target sites e.g. in phase 5, the number of target sites were increased from 10 to 15.

62. As per the project document, the project management costs (PMC) (cash) was within the budgeted amount and none of the expenses has exceeded the budgeted amount in any phase. Information on the Government of Iran's contribution for management was not available (only 227500 in phase VII was available). Total spending by the project in seven phases was US\$6,890,892. Committed co-financing by Government of Iran was 10,330,000 which makes co-financing ratio of 1:1.66 (Donor: Govt of Iran), which is very good ratio.

The project expenses were fully covered from the donor funded cash.

Table 2: Total disbursement of funds by phases (US\$) against full project budget as per Project Document.

Phase	Donor/Source	Budgeted Cash	In-kind committed by Govt. of Iran	In-kind actual By Govt. of Iran	Expenses Cash	Balance
Phase I (2014-15)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,330,000		1,999,534.73	465.27
Phase II (2015-16)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000				
Phase III (2016-17)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	-		999,999.90	0.1
Phase IV (2017-18)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,000,000		999,999.00	1
Phase V (2018-19)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,000,000		998,614.56	1385.44
Phase VI (2019-20)	Govt. of Japan	892,857	2,000,000		892,828.00	29
Phase VII (2020-2021)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	231,000	227,500	999,916	84
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,892,857</b>	<b>10,330,000</b>		<b>6,890,892</b>	<b>1965</b>

Source: UNDP CO Iran

63. Table 2 shows the actual funds spent for each phase from the Government of Japan funds. These show clearly that the actual expenses has not exceeded the budgeted amount in any phase. Analysis of budgeted and actual expenditure does not show any big difference. Similarly, it is also observed that in some outputs', overall expenditure was less than the budgeted amount. The expenses correspond to work accomplishment in those respective phases.
64. GoI's in-kind contribution covered cost of the project office rooms, in the centre and also field offices, cost of electricity, telecommunication, government staff salaries, and costs of the time contribution by the PS and his team and chair of the project Steering Committee and technical support, transport to travel to and around the project sites etc. The exact figure of government's in-kind contribution was not available.
65. Personnel from all ministries, departments involved in this project, provincial government and research institutions, NGOs, community groups and UNDP CO, were found satisfied from the project activities. Ministry officials, Community groups, local authorities and UNDP CO expressed commitment to continue to support the project activities. The DoE has signed contract with the Government of Japan to replicate good practices in 2 new sites for three years.
66. At all times, the chair of the Project Steering Committee has been kept abreast on the project's progress though good reporting and this has allowed the necessary budget revisions to be made on a sound basis. Similarly, the link between the Department of Environment and the UNDP-CO has been efficient in ensuring that budget replenishments have been timely as far as practicable.



#### 4.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation: Design at Entry and Implementation

##### *M&E Design*

67. The project design included a good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan which is comprehensive in its depth and scope. The project had a log-frame (from 4<sup>th</sup> phase) to monitor achievement and the log-frame had clear objectives, components and appropriate to the issues and also designed considering the timeframe of the project. The output targets were also very realistic compared to the budget and timeframe. A detailed survey was conducted following the standard scientific methods to identify the most vulnerable sites which helped to identify locality for interventions. Roles and responsibilities of the partners were made clear from the project design phase. The indicators of the log-frame were all Specific; Measurable; Attributable and Relevant, Achievable and Realistic and Time-bound. No inception workshops were conducted before initiating project activities. All activities were listed and explained with clear responsibilities. The Terminal Evaluation was conducted after completion of seven phases. Baselines were already set in the Project Document but not gender disaggregated. The inclusions of indicators for each activities were not only appropriate and useful for evaluation but also good for management purposes. The activities targets have given priority to women in trainings, alternative livelihood activities and restoration of the Urmia lake.

The design of M&E included fully itemised and cost planed in the Project Document covering all the various M&E steps including the allocation of responsibilities; provision for monitoring of technical aspects and feedback mechanisms were also satisfactory. Similarly targets were very realistic for the timeframe, hence monitoring and evaluation design has been evaluated as Satisfactory.

##### *M&E Implementation*

68. Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities has been undertaken in varying detail at three levels:
- i. Progress monitoring
  - ii. Internal activity monitoring
  - iii. Impact monitoring
69. Progress monitoring has been good and was being done through annual reporting by the UNDP-CO. The annual work plans have been developed at the end of each phase with inputs from the project staff and the UNDP-CO. The annual work plans were then submitted for endorsement by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The implementing team has also been largely in regular communication with the UNDP-CO regarding progress, the work plan, and its implementation. The indicators from the result framework were realistic and effective in measuring progress and performance. The project management has also ensured that the UNDP-CO received annually progress reports providing updates on the status of planned activities, the status of the overall project schedule and deliverables completed. The report format contained quantitative estimates of the project progress based on financial disbursements. The UNDP-CO generated its own quarterly financial reports from Atlas. These expenditure records, together with Atlas disbursement records of any direct payments, served as a basis for expenditure monitoring and budget revisions, the latter taking place bi-annually following the disbursement progress and changes in the operational work plan, and also on an *ad hoc* basis depending upon the rate of delivery.

70. The UNDP-CO forwarded annual reports to UNDP Regional Coordination Unit, and also uploaded all the information in ATLAS. The annual reports cover major findings and observations of the period March to February (some reports were from January to December). Unlike other UNDP projects, no PIR was prepared. All key reports were presented to the Project Steering Committee members ahead of their meeting and through these means, the key national ministries and national government have been kept abreast of the project's implementation progress.
71. The Project Management Unit (PMU) and the UNDP-CO have maintained a close working relationship, meeting or talking with the project staff members on an almost regular basis to discuss implementation issues and problems.
72. The project's risk assessment has been updated annually by the UNDP-CO with the main risks identified along with adequate management responses and person responsible (termed the risk "owner"), who in most cases differs from the person who identified the risk. Since each phase of the project was of one year duration, there was no Mid-term Review (MTR).
73. Internal activity monitoring undertaken by UNDP CO, Department of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture Jihad and the Project Management appears to have been good comprising a range of mechanisms to keep informed of the situation and to respond quickly and effectively to any areas of concern. These comprised many of the methods used to track progress, and implementation has been guided by the Annual Work Plan. Generally the project has been small enough not to require formalised communication or monitoring procedures because the members were in almost frequent contact.
74. Impact monitoring has been well-developed, with formal protocols in place to measure the functioning of improved management, evidence-based planning, and decrease in pollution, increase in production of agriculture products and efficient use of water. Undoubtedly this has arisen from the scientific background of the project design team, enhanced by the same of its technical staff and managers. As is most often the case, adaptive management of the project has been influenced to a much greater extent by external variables and overcoming the problems (or taking opportunities) that these have presented than by responding to internal monitoring.

M&E implementation has been satisfactory, with progress monitoring and internal activity monitoring. Responses have also been made to the recommendations made at the end of each phase review and the risk assessments and the TECs considers it to be "good practice", hence the implementation of monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

#### **4.2.5 UNDP and Implementing Partners Implementation / Execution, Coordination and Operational Issues**

##### **Project Oversight**

75. The project was implemented following National Execution Modality (NIM) to ensure broad stakeholder participation and to create both flexibility and an enabling environment for innovation. During the project initiation meetings, UNDP's project assurance role and oversight was presented and discussed in detail and endorsed. The project implementation was led by the Department of Environment (DoE) in close coordination with Ministry of Agriculture Jihad and UNDP CO. There was very good communication and coordination between implementing and executing agencies. Regular meetings were conducted to discuss progress and constraints of the project. UNDP had ensured high-quality technical and financial implementation of the project through its local office in Tehran. UNDP CO was responsible for



monitoring and ensuring proper use of the Government of Japan's funds, timely reporting of implementation progress as well as undertaking of mandatory and non-mandatory evaluations. All services for the procurement of goods and services, and the recruitment of personnel were conducted in accordance with UNDP procedures, rules and regulations. The Project Management Unit (PMU) was formed to coordinate and manage the project activities and it facilitated the achievement of targeted results on time, adequate and appropriate management practices, program planning and proper implementation and timely reporting. The project was implemented through a PMU which had one Project manager, Technical Advisor and support staff (admin/finance staff, driver and field coordinators). The project utilised DoE and MoAJ institutions at the national and district levels to implement the activities and monitoring. A risk management strategy was developed involving all partners and experts through detailed analysis of issues and was effectively implemented. The project hired qualified experts to conduct studies and conduct demonstrations at sites levels. The capacity of the local government and community groups was enhanced for strengthening performance. Since DoE and MoAJ, other government institutions and local governments institutions' involvement was on behalf of Government of Iran, government ownership in the project was assured. It is learned from the field team that from 5<sup>th</sup> phase onwards, the physical presence of UNDP in the field visits from UNDP has dropped.

The Project has been planned and managed providing products of good quality and within budget, while responding to several internal and external challenges through good adaptive management, hence the implementation approach has been evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

#### **UNDP Supervision and Backstopping**

76. UNDP supervision was accomplished through standard procedures and undertaken competently. Key aspects of supervision were made through UNDP's involvement in communication with the DoE, MoAJ and other stakeholders. UNDP CO through its Energy and Environment Unit were heavily involved in regular issues such as the review and approval of work plans and budgets, review of progress and performance against such work plans and completion of the tracking tools. Annual and quarterly planning of activities was done on time with active participation of stakeholders including Technical Advisor (TA). TA also provided support in the quality assessment of all products coming from the project team and consultants. Similarly, risk management options were identified in close consultation of partners and experts and the project was able to manage risk efficiently. Respondents informed that the UNDP visits to field decreased after phase IV.

UNDP has provided an adequate level of supervision and backstopping to the project, and its performance has benefitted as a direct result, hence UNDP's supervision and backstopping role is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

#### **4.2.6 Risk Management**

77. The potential risks and opportunities were properly analysed during the project development. The risks were also analysed for their level of threats. The project development made provisions for the mitigation measures for the identified risks. In the beginning relevant authorities as well as community members were reluctant to adopt SA techniques as they were not confident of the new technology but later they were convinced by the project team. From the second phase seeing positive impact of the SA techniques, they themselves showed interest in adopting SA techniques. The only new risk identified at the

implementation phase was from the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the project monitoring and implementation for some time in 2020. The project implementation was also affected for time but later it resumed its process and accomplished remaining activities. The risks analysis and review of identified risks was done every year i.e. for each phase.

#### **4.2.7 Social and Environmental Standard**

78. At the design phase, the project assessed environmental and social issues and threats to the natural resources including wetland (including islands) biodiversity and the impact of climate change to agricultural practices and livelihoods in the project area. Based on the information from these assessments, programs were developed to address the threats to biodiversity, agriculture and livelihoods. Similarly, it was identified that one of the main reasons for threat to the lake and its biodiversity was the poor local economy and high dependency on the lake and unsustainable agriculture practise. To address these problems the project made farmers aware on SA techniques and restoration of the lake and impact of climate change, provisioned mainstreaming SA techniques into the local development planning and also provided alternative livelihood options through micro-credit and green jobs. Moreover, the project also provisioned participation of local communities in the project activities to make sure that the project results will be sustainable. The activities have paid attention to not harm local social and cultural values. Similarly, conservation efforts will improve the environment of the area and also safeguard land and lives of the area from climate change impacts.

## 4.3 Project Results

### 4.3.1 Progress towards objective and expected outcomes

#### *Attainment of Objectives:*

79. The project made effort to address environmental issues of the Lake Urmia and the barriers for adaptation identified in the problem analysis to a great extent. It contributed to enhance technical and institutional capacity to mainstream Sustainable Agriculture Technique into plans and programmes at the national and local levels, raised awareness and capacity of communities on implementing climate-smart ecosystem restoration and natural resource management measures. The following project outputs were delivered:
- Improved inter-sectoral collaboration between government, NGOs and private sector.
  - Improved awareness among local communities regarding restoration of the Lake Urmia.
  - Involved 19 NGOs and IPs in the project implementation.
  - 13500 farmers made aware of the project activities and objectives.
  - 4500 farmers trained to become resource person.
  - 360 local experts trained on SA techniques and restoration of wetland.
  - 300 jobs created for local experts.
  - 53 local implementing partners (companies and cooperatives).
  - 800 rural women trained in restoration of the Lake Urmia.
  - 750 rural women involved in green job.
  - Established online monitoring network in 3 satellite wetlands of the Lake Urmia.
  - Introduced PES schemes in Kanibarazan wetland.
  - Developed and implemented integrated management plans for 3 satellite wetlands of the Lake Urmia.
  - Conducted various awareness activities.
80. A Summary of the project's achievements is given below, followed by an outline of the attainment of objectives. This is followed by a Review of Outcomes to Impacts in Table 3 and a brief discussion on the verifiable impacts. A summary evaluation of the project Outputs is given in Table 4 followed by a more detailed description. A detailed evaluation of the level of achievements made against the indicators of success contained in the result framework is given in Annex VII.

#### *Summary of Achievements*

81. Through seven phases of this project, 202 villages (127 in West and 75 in East Azerbaijan) were covered with Sustainable Agriculture Schemes. About 13,500 local farmers came to know about the project and this resulted in decrease in application of water up to 29.1%. The project had implemented adaptive livelihood in 21 villages, women micro-credit funds in 8 villages, participatory technology development (PTD) in 11 villages, integrated project in 3 villages and payment for ecosystem services in 1 villages. The project results were measured against achievement indicators guided by evaluation questions (tracking tools, Annex VI). The Lake Urmia project has been well designed, but in the first phase had to face challenges to convince farmers and relevant government authorities on SA techniques. The project team has managed to deliver a series of interventions that could reduce the climate change threats and enhance the capacity of relevant institutions to mainstream SA techniques in agriculture development planning. In the process, the project has demonstrated some innovative approaches, particularly in community participation in implementing SA techniques and restoration of the Urmia lake. One of its biggest strengths has come about through a design-decision to work directly with the community groups

through the local government institutions rather than parallel project structures. Since the project was executed by the Department of Environment in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad (MoAJ), involving other relevant ministries and community groups and all agencies took full ownership for most of the project's Outputs. As will be seen below, the achievement of the Outputs and activities under each of the seven phases has been evaluated as **Satisfactory**, and the evaluation of achievements against indicators (provided in Annex VII) show that most of the activities have been accomplished. The project helped to address threats to the Urmia Lake and its biodiversity and livelihood of communities living in the vicinity of the lake from climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices through awareness-raising, strengthening capacity of relevant community groups and government institutions, improvement of monitoring, alternative livelihood options for local communities to support livelihoods and also to make natural resource management adaptive to climate change impacts.

Overall, the project has achieved most of its major global and local environmental objectives, and yielded some global environmental benefits, without shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”, and hence its attainment of objectives and results is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

### *Objective Indicators*

82. A single Project Objective was articulated in the result framework with a development objective. The project objective was to contribute in the Lake Urmia restoration via modelling local community engagement in sustainable agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation of critical species.
83. The project aimed to achieve its stated objective through three outcomes. Full details and an evaluation of achievements against targets are provided in Annex VII. The project was able to accomplish almost all of the targeted activities.

### **4.3.2 Relevance**

84. Iran has 41 wetland types out of the 42 which could be observed all over the world. Iran has 24 Ramsar sites which is the highest number of wetlands designated in Ramsar Convention in the Middle East. These diverse resources are under pressure of over-exploitation and mismanagement, maximized by scarcity of water and climate change. Non-sustainable development and massive agricultural schemes without consideration of impacts to natural resources are the main reasons of effects to wetlands of Iran. In the past decade, efforts were made to improve the management of wetlands across the country, recognising the significant pressure from human activities that was degrading wetland resources. The conservation of Iranian wetland project (CIWP) is an example of these efforts focusing on ecosystem-based management and establishment of integrated participatory management plans for important wetlands including the Urmia lake.
85. The Urmia lake project contributed to overcoming the existing barriers through strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of relevant government institutions to plan for and implement adaptation using an ecosystem management approach. The project has contributed to strengthening Gol's institutional capacity for climate change adaptation, particularly at the community and local government levels. It also contributed to implementing sustainable agriculture practices to address water related threats to the lake. The technical and institutional capacity building in ecosystem management and the use of a community-based approach of this project is aligned with the government of Iran's priority program.

86. It is aligned with the UNDAF(2012-2016) Outcome 4: National, sub-national and local capacities enhanced to ensure 1) integrated management, conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity; 2) mainstreaming environmental economics into national planning and audits; 3) effective use of knowledge and tools in prevention, control and response to current and emerging environmental pollution; 4) formulation and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans and projects. It is in line with the Country Programme Outcome: Policy and community based interventions in key threatened ecosystems, watersheds and trans-boundary water bodies designed to protect the human environment, biodiversity and natural resources. The project is aligned with the CPAP (2012-2016) Output 4.1: Institutional capacities for integration of sustainable development in national policies supported. It is also aligned with the UNDAF 2017-2021 Outcome 1: Environment CPD Outcome 1: Responsible government agencies formulate, implement and monitor integrated natural resource management, low carbon economy, and climate change policies and programmes more effectively.
87. ULRP as the governing agency for the Lake related matters has confirmed and promoted the idea of participatory approach on sustainable agriculture as well as livelihood diversification plans. Furthermore, the supreme leader of the country (Ayatollah Khamenei), has emphasized on environmental protection of the area and economic empowerment of the local community. The parliament has also ratified a policy on ‘The Right of Water’ for wetlands and the lakes of the country to be observed by all sectors specially in Dam building plans and international rivers flowing in the country.

The project intervenes to reduce water consumption and use of pesticides and chemical fertilizer in agricultural sector and contribute to wetland management in Iran and is congruent with the national priorities, and remains pertinent in light of the current levels of threats; hence it is evaluated as **Relevant**.

### 4.3.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency

#### Cost-effectiveness

88. The UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported projects defines the criteria of “efficiency” as:  
*“The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost effectiveness or efficacy.”*
89. The project has completed almost all targeted activities without exceeding the budgeted figures by the time of terminal evaluation, so the cost-effectiveness is **Satisfactory**. Almost all of the activities of three outcomes were accomplished without exceeding the budgeted amount and achievement indicates no lack of quality. Overall management cost was within the initially budgeted amount. Total expenditure of the project at the time of the TE was less than budgeted but there are some dues so it will be as per budgeted amount.
90. The Project was implemented by the government so it was able to use government office space which helped to reduce the cost of the project office space in the Ministry of Environment head office and in the field. The project also used national consultants to provide technical advice, helping to reduce the cost that otherwise could be very high. Involvement of local communities in implementing the project activities helped to increase their knowledge and skills. Increased income from the increased productivity due to SA practice could improve the livelihood of communities. Involvement of local communities in

Basin area and the lake management helped to generate interest among the communities towards conservation and this will generate local stewardship for the conservation of the Lake and biodiversity.

91. But it is necessary to change the bidding time for facilitators to make the project implementation more effective. When bidding is done in late summer, by the time facilitators are selected and given responsibilities, the cropping season had passed and by that time many farmers already started the procedure without receiving support from the facilitators. To start the project earlier, the bidding process for facilitators should be started earlier.

The project was able to achieve some of expected outputs. Though the cost-effectiveness has been a priority of the implementing agency throughout, the cost exceeded then what was provisioned. This, combined with some additional co-financing leveraged by the project's activities (government contribution), means the overall cost-effectiveness of the project has been good, and hence it is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

92. The project was able to contribute to achieve the expected outcomes and objectives. All of the targets set in project documents of all phases were fully achieved. The evaluation used target indicators of the revised result frameworks (in case of earlier phases the target indicators of the workplan) and judged achievement **effective** and efforts made by the project team **efficient**. The COVID-19 situation affected activities in 2020 but later it was managed by the implementing team.
93. The project has facilitated changes in management practices and development planning processes and has increased the level of awareness about the long-term positive impacts of sustainable and climate-smart agriculture and ecosystem management. Similarly, the project delivery modalities have been efficient and the project has been able to contribute to the UNDP objectives and also to national priorities. Since some of the interventions of the project showed impact (increased awareness regarding conservation of wetland, sustainable agriculture practices showed increase in yield and decrease in water consumption and pesticide and chemical fertiliser use decreased and etc.), the effectiveness of the project is rated as **Satisfactory**.
94. The project followed standard scientific methods and used qualified, experienced and dedicated technical manpower which helped in the implementation of activities and to achieve almost all of the targets to a greater degree, with quality outcomes.
95. The project maintained good relations with all stakeholders and worked in close cooperation and this helped to execute activities with their cooperation.

#### 4.3.4 Overall Outcome

96. The project was relevant to the country's needs and in line with the national policy and strategies. It is also relevant to the UNDP strategies and also contributes to SDG13 (climate action). The project had completed almost all of the targets at the time of evaluation. Similarly, management and program cost were within the budgeted amount and the project was able to receive the committed amount from the donors. Hence, both the project efficiency and effectiveness was rated as **Satisfactory** and the project's overall outcome is rated as **Satisfactory**.



#### 4.3.5 Sustainability

97. The project interventions are at three levels i.e. i) at the national level, ii) at individual household and iii) at community level. The results from all three levels are likely to be sustainable.
98. Financial: The outlook for the long-term financial sustainability of the project appears good as government has given it high priority and also UNDP is interested to continue their support to this initiative. Government agencies mentioned that their support will continue to the result of the project and also replicate in new areas. Since the project is in line with the government's priority, they may allocate budget to replicate the good practices from this project. Agreement is already signed with the Government of Japan to continue support for another three years to upscale project's successful practices in two new sites. Financial sustainability is therefore **Likely**.
99. Socio-economic: The social sustainability of the project appears good. The awareness-raising activities have certainly been beneficial and undoubtedly changed people's minds at the community level and at local and national government levels as regards climate change risks and adaptation practices. The empowerment of local communities through awareness raising and supporting household economy with increased income from SA practices has been one of the lynchpins upon which all behavioural change has occurred. This has created a supportive environment and as a result enjoys a very wide support base which could be an attraction for other agencies to replicate the good practices. Although unilateral sanctions of the US against Iran, continuation of the pandemic aftershocks on the tourism industry as an alternative source of income for the locals, drought, and high inflations may impact the socio-economic dynamics in the area, under normal circumstances the achievements of this project seem to be sustainable for the reasons mentioned above. As a result, the socio-economic sustainability is rated to be **Likely**.
100. Institutional and Governance: The institutional sustainability of the project is good. The project helped communities to form many groups that were addressing a number of interventions. The project worked with the Department of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture Jihad that have legal authority related to the Lake Biodiversity conservation and agriculture development. The government authorities are sensitised on climate change and threats to ecological functions of the lake and importance of biodiversity, so they may prioritise future outputs of this project in their work plans. Number of qualified private companies to act as facilitators have grown from less than 10 to over 50 in the past 5 years which can unleash extensive power to proliferate the results of this project in new areas. Therefore, the institutional sustainability is ranked as **Likely**.
101. Environmental: Environment sustainability is one of the important elements of the project strategy. The project achievements will directly reduce climate change related risks and rehabilitate the lake to maintain ecological functions. The capacity development and evidence-based planning to mainstream climate change could support to make the project outcomes sustainable. Moreover, involvement of local communities and community-based organisations contributes to the protection of the Lake and biodiversity. The project outcomes will also contribute to maintain ecological functions of the Lake Urmia and the basin areas and formation of community groups to manage SA and protect biodiversity also developed a sense of stewardship for maintaining wetland areas. The SA activities also help to reduce land degradation. Hence the environmental sustainability is deemed to be **Likely**.

The overall sustainability of the project results is ranked as **Likely**.

#### 4.3.6 Country Ownership

102. The project was implemented by the Department of Environment (DoE). Besides, other government departments, communities, local government, and NGOs were also involved from the project development stage. The project outcomes and outputs identification was also carried out involving relevant government agencies. The result of the project complemented the Government of Iran's priorities and development strategy. Being a party of UN convention on climate change and other global environmental conventions, the Government of Iran is committed to adapt climate change and manage existing climate risks including enhancing preparedness for and response to climate-induced disasters. It also supports implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigations involving local communities and other relevant partners. Therefore, Government of Iran has strong ownership of this project.
103. Finally, the project contributes to UNDAF Iran (2012-2016) in its outcome 4: National, sub-national and local capacities enhanced to ensure 1) integrated management, conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem, natural resources and biodiversity; 2) mainstreaming environmental economics into national planning and audits; 3) effective use of knowledge and tools in prevention, control and response to current and emerging environmental pollution; 4) formulation and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans and projects. The project also contributes to CPAP 2012-2016: Output 4.1: Institutional capacities for integration of sustainable development in national policies supported. The project is aligned with the CPAP (2012-2016) Output 4.1: Institutional capacities for integration of sustainable development in national policies supported.

#### **4.3.7 Gender Equity and Women Empowerment/Cross-cutting issues**

104. Though gender equality was not indicated in the project document, the project assessed gender-related aspects and proposed measures to contribute to gender equality. The project implementation involved both men and women in all activities. The Result Framework had no gender disaggregated baseline but target indicators had gender priorities. Due to cultural and political reasons, there was no gender empowerment activities directly spelled in the project documents but the SA techniques training, alternative livelihoods and restoration of the Lake Urmia program involved and trained large number of women.
105. Both male and female facilitators were trained before involving in the project implementation to collaborate with the local community. They spend sufficient time in each village to build trust and that allowed women to progressively take on higher role in the civil society of their village. Initial resistance toward having women start alternative business, has turned into receiving requests from villages beyond the project sites to provide support to engage women in economic activities. This was mostly observed in villages where agriculture no longer supports the economics of farmers.
106. A total of 19 women (roughly 20% of the project team) were involved in the project implementation through NGOs and IPs. 800 rural women were trained to take responsibility of restoration of the Lake Urmia. 39 micro-credit funds (in 20% of villages of the pilot sites, some of which cover more than one village) and alternative livelihood programs provided to women. More than 700 women involved in green jobs. Although no accurate statistics are available, through extrapolation, it could be assumed that over 35% of women in all households of the target group were exposed to concept or were supported to initiate diversified livelihood activities. 13,500 farmers became familiar with the SA techniques which includes a large number women. Besides, communities will also benefit from improved ecosystem service associated with reduced level of degradation of water resources. Since, women are involved in the agriculture practices, the SA techniques and micro-credit fund programs provided benefits to women. The livelihood and economic development programs could have long term impact on women.



#### **4.3.8 GEF Additionality**

107. GEF provided 2.91million Dollars for the Conservation of Iranian Wetland Project (CIWP) which was launched in 2005, is an effort for enhancing wetlands management in Iran focusing on establishment of Ecosystem Management at local and national levels, providing for appropriate context for participation of stakeholders, and developing and implementing management plans. This initiation contributed in receiving co-financing amounting to US\$ 6,892,857 from the Government of Japan for seven phases (each phase of 1 year) starting from 2014 to 2021. Government of Islamic Republic of Iran also contributed in-kind contribution of US\$10,330,000. Mobilising this co-financing also mobilized government's mechanism and expertise of UNDP and local NGOs, the project was able to achieve its targets and address the issues like overfishing, pollution and unsustainable water use in agriculture sector and threat to biodiversity. The project contributed in restoration of the lake Urmia and make arrangement of community support in management of the lake Urmia. The GEF funding helped to enhance capacity for evidence based management planning of government agencies and relevant department technical staff to manage the evolving risks and uncertainty. This project by improving coordination of sectors, enhancing technical capacity and improving efficient use of water in agriculture sector contributed in restoration of the lake Urmia and also support livelihood of people from the basin areas. The project also increased awareness of local population on climate change impact and appropriate adaptation options. The water level is increased, chemical pollution decreased and agricultural productivity from SA increased and the lake is rehabilitated through climate-smart land rehabilitation approaches. The project also helped to mainstream SA techniques in development planning of the local government. The sharing of lessons from this project will help a wider audience to address similar problems.

#### **4.3.9 Catalytic Role and Replication**

108. The success of wetland management in reducing climate change related and human induced threats and making sustainable economic growth for supporting livelihoods in the project pilot sites has indicated that the approach can work in Wetlands of Iran and could be replicated in other areas within the Urmia Lake and other lakes in Iran. The integrated approach of capacity enhancement, arrangement of participatory biodiversity conservation, improved monitoring systems for generating scientific evidence for evidence-based planning, community involvement, protection of wetland and its basin areas, establishment of a knowledge base for evidence-based management and alternative livelihood options for rural economic development for reducing their dependency on natural resources, provides a solid model of success that should influence future project design in the country.
109. Lessons learned with up-scaling needs to be replicated in other vulnerable areas of the Urmia Lake and other lakes within Iran. The project contributed to enhance capacity of the local level planners which will help to strengthen management efforts and also make replication easier. Government agencies, local government institutions and community-based organisations expressed interest to replicate lessons from this project in other areas. Already agreement is signed with the government of Japan to continue replicating this model in two new sites of the Urmila Lake basin. The project has trained 4500 farmers who could serve as resource person and 360 local experts were also trained to become resource person for expanding the successful model from this project. The project also trained 800 women to take role in the Lake Urmia restoration and these could contribute in replication of the successful model in new areas.
110. Besides Iran, the learning from this project could be useful for other countries with similar threats. Hence for the benefit of those and for replication in other areas, the project lessons need to be disseminated to a

wide audience through various means like report distribution, information sharing through different networks, sharing with other UNDP projects, international networks and other institutions.

111. The project conducted seminars, meetings and workshops with government officials and other stakeholders including farmers. Similarly, exposure visits were conducted for community members to provide first-hand information. The awareness generation among line department, government agencies and other stakeholders will play a catalytic role to replicate lessons in other areas with similar risks.

### 4.3.10 Progress towards Impacts

Table 3 provides a review of the likelihood of outcomes being translated into intended impacts.

**TABLE 3: Review of outcomes to impacts at project termination**

Component	Findings	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
<b>Site Level Outcomes</b>		
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Model wetland management system designed and being implemented by DoE and other local stakeholders at demonstration sites to effectively address the most significant ‘internally arising’ threats to globally significant biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convinced local farmers on SA techniques.</li> <li>• Developed capacity of stakeholders on implementation of related activities in terms of ecosystem approach, SA techniques/methods, more wetland-friendly livelihoods to lift pressure on the current source water resources, empowered local community, especially women and the youth, to render their existing capacities in restoration of LU through socioeconomic mobilization under micro-credit funds and NGOs’ engagement, and ultimately, wetland communication, education, participation, and awareness raising (CEPA).</li> <li>• Farmers from one village agreed to shut down their illegal water wells and use one permitted water well to pump water for irrigation.</li> <li>• 70% of beet farms in Malekan area have installed water efficient irrigation system which was beyond the geographic scope of this intervention.</li> </ul>	BA (Highly Likely)
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Model inter-sectoral coordination demonstrated at provincial and basin level enhances the sustainability of the wetland conservation system by, inter alia helping to address threats arising at ecosystem level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cross-sectoral collaboration in the Lake Urmia has been improved between DoE, MoAJ, Regional Water Companies, local NGOs and the private sector. Due to awareness generation, the social responsibility among the local communities for restoration of LU has increased.</li> </ul>	BA (Highly Likely)
<b>Outcome 3:</b> National level wetland management and inter-sectoral coordination structures poses and utilize enhanced capacities and the model system developed through Outcomes 1 and 2 above is applied to wetlands throughout Iran through strategies, replications, tools and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons from the initial phases were upscaled in new areas. Strengthening inter-sectoral coordination, capacity enhancement of local government staffs and community members and awareness generation activities contributed in all new sites.</li> </ul>	BA (Highly Likely)

112. TECs found local people very much aware of the climate change impacts and importance of restoration of wetland. Also, the local and central government officials were very much sensitized on the issues of Climate Change, Sustainable Agriculture techniques, evidence-based planning and the importance of restoration of wetlands and conservation of biodiversity. Due to awareness generated among the community members, 2150 farmers from West Azerbaijan were directly trained in SA techniques and applying it in their farm and 2200 farmers from East Azerbaijan were directly trained and are applying in their farms. In addition, more than 13,500 farmers from East and West Azerbaijan were indirectly

learned from exposer and applying some SA practices in their farms. A total 45,00 farmers were trained to be a resource person, 360 local experts trained in SA techniques and these helped to decrease water consumption in agriculture practices by 27.1% and generated 300 jobs for local experts. This project also helped to initiate coordination between different government agencies, NGOs and community organisations which is very important for promoting an integrated approach and helps to bring together expertise from diverse fields. Moreover, 750 women were benefited from livelihood diversification activities in both provinces.

113. Implementing project activities through communities' participation increases awareness and builds capacity and improves the likelihood of sustainability of initiatives. Documentation and dissemination of information on the project activities help to share knowledge for the benefit of large populations from various countries with wetland degradation and climate change risks. Similarly, mainstreaming SA techniques in local development planning will help to mitigate risks and make results of the project sustainable.

As a result of the review of outcomes to impacts, the overall likelihood of impacts being achieved are all **Likely**, hence the project is expected to achieve some of its environmental targets, and yield environmental benefits by improving the efficiency of water use in agriculture sector and managing wetland areas and its effectiveness is evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

#### 4.3.11 Ratings

114. As per UNDP guidelines, the TE ratings are consolidated in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Terminal Evaluation's Rating Project Performance**

Criterion	Comments	Rating
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>		
Overall quality of M&E	The design of M&E was up to standard with a fully itemised and cost plan included in the project document covering all the various M&E steps including the allocation of responsibilities.	Satisfactory
M&E design at project start up	As above.	Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation	M&E implementation was satisfactory both internal monitoring and monitoring of progress and impact. Progress monitoring supported revision and improvement of SA techniques.	Satisfactory
<b>IA &amp; EA Execution:</b>		
Overall quality of project implementation/execution	The Project implementation was slow at the beginning as it was a new approach so had to change mindset of farmers as well as government personnel. Due to COVID-19 pandemic it was affected in 2020. Before implementation of new phase activities, the SA techniques and other implementation approaches were revised in the light of experience from the past phase. There was delay in recruiting international expert which delayed implementation for some time.	Satisfactory
Executing agency execution	DoE integrated team exhibited drive to meet the targets and was able to complete targeted activities.	Satisfactory
Implementing agency execution	The Implementing agency linked very well with DoE and MoAJ, and was very actively involved in the project guidance, especially at the project steering committee level and provided some level of supervision and backstopping to the Project.	Satisfactory

Criterion	Comments	Rating
<b>Outcomes</b>		
Overall quality of project outcomes	Overall quality is of the good order. Most of the activities were completed (few not completed)	Satisfactory
Relevance	The project interventions to rehabilitate wetland areas and address climate change risks, was congruent with national priorities, and remains pertinent in light of the current levels of threats.	Relevant
Effectiveness	A review of outcomes to impacts (ROtI) shows the overall likelihood of impacts being achieved is Likely.	Highly Satisfactory
Cost-effectiveness (Efficiency)	The Project management costs has not exceeded the budgeted amount rather in some phases it is below the budgeted amount. Most of the activities were implemented within the budgeted amount.	Satisfactory
<b>Sustainability:</b>		
Overall likelihood of risks to Sustainability	Government of Iran is committed and an agreement is signed with the government of Japan for implementation of good practices in 2 new sites for three years. Local government authorities and communities trained in SA techniques and restoration of wetland. Awareness generated among larger number of residents from the surrounding areas of the lake. SA techniques are mainstreamed in the local government planning.	Likely
Financial resources	Government of Iran is committed to continue prioritising the Urmia Lake restoration and SA techniques to decrease use of pesticides and chemical fertilizer and increase efficiency of water use in agriculture practices. An agreement is signed with the Government of Japan to replicate good practices in 2 new sites for another three years.	Likely
Socio-economic	Communities were made aware of climate change risks and also on adaptation practices (SA) and restoration of UR. Farmers are trained in SA techniques and restoration of the Urmia Lake.	Likely
Institutional framework and governance	Social and political stability, improved institutional capacity at national level and local level, strong legal status of the SA and restoration of UL will make result of the project sustainable. 13,500 farmers made aware of the project activities, 4500 farmers trained and 360 local experts trained to become resource person and these contribute to make results sustainable.	Likely
Environmental	The project itself is designed to address environmental risks and it has improved the environmental condition of the basin and the lake. Threat related to water utilisation was addressed and water consumption reduced by 27.1% and water level in the lake increased by	Likely
<b>Impact:</b>		
Environmental status improvement	Improved agricultural practices, restoration of the lake and conservation of biodiversity contributed to improve the environment of the lake. Water efficiency was improved by 35%, pollution decreased by and decreased in use of pesticide and chemical fertiliser by 40%. The development of knowledge base contributes to evidence-based planning. Similarly, policy improvement and development of local stewardship for restoration of the lake Urmia contributes to make impact sustainable.	Likely
Environmental stress reduction	Climate-smart agriculture practices, restoration of the lake, decrease in use of pesticide, chemical fertilizer and efficiency in water use in agriculture contributes in stress reduction. Generation of awareness among community and local authorities also contributed in stress reduction. 1.25m water level increased compare to pre-project time.	Likely

Criterion	Comments	Rating
Progress towards stress/status change	Good – formation of community groups for management of the Urmia lake, improvement in monitoring system and promotion of evidence-based planning is expected to contribute in reducing threats related to climate change. Similarly, improvement in water use efficiency and decrease in use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides also contributes in stress reduction and change threat status of the lake, basin and its watershed areas. Demand of water decreased by 27.1%.	Likely
<b>Overall Project Results</b>		<b>Satisfactory</b>

### Achievement of Project Outputs & Outcomes

115. This section provides an overview of the main achievements of the project. Considering the results achieved under each of the outcomes, and the progress towards the overall objective, the project effectiveness is rated as **Satisfactory**. The project generated numerous significant results, fulfilling many of the planned activities. The project objective was stated as *“To establish an effective management system to systematically remove or substantially mitigate threats facing globally significant biodiversity and sustainability at two WPA demonstration sites, while ensuring that the lessons learned are absorbed within WPA management systems throughout Iran.”*
116. Based on the respective indicators and overall level of progress toward the three Outcomes, the Outcome ratings are as follows:

The project supported community-based wetland restoration to conserve wetland and biodiversity by incorporating activities like SA techniques for decreasing chemical pollution, use of water and increase productivity, evidence-based planning, restoration of the Urmia Lake, awareness generation, capacity enhancement of institutions and communities involved in land management and improving monitoring activities. These approaches were applied in selected pilot sites and successfully demonstrated a participatory approach of sustainable agriculture practices and restoration of wetland through cooperation between government staff and local communities. Most of the project outputs are ranked individually as **Satisfactory**; hence overall the achievement of outputs and activities is evaluated as **Satisfactory**. All of the project outcomes are achieved, hence achievement of outcomes of the project is also rated as **Satisfactory** and overall project is also rated as Satisfactory.

## 5. Main Findings, Conclusion, Recommendation & Lessons Learned

### 5.1 Main Findings

#### Phase I and II

**Output 1:** Sustainable Agriculture expansion in 12 satellite village (an average of 700ha each) while also embedding SA in the pioneer 41 villages initiated during 2014 through further promoting SA practices and applying new tools



- SA techniques implemented in 41 pilots of SA project first phase. 13000 individuals from 41 villages were introduced to SA techniques and 75% are implementing at least one SA technique in their farms and orchards. In the second phase 12 villages adjacent to 41 villages of first phase were identified for implementation of SA techniques. A knowledge sharing workshops were also conducted with series of field visits to earlier 41 pilot sites.
- A professional independent team from Tarbiat Modarres University and Agricultural Engineering Research Center were contracted for establishing project monitoring system and equipment in selected farms and orchards that implemented SA practices. An established monitoring system generated data constantly and analysed. The findings indicates that an average of 9.5% water saving took place with the SA techniques which is simple and cost-free.
- 2 villages from SA sites were selected to pilot the water-friendly alternative livelihood. A local NGO and a university were contracted to establish and build the capacity of 9 working groups each focusing on priority livelihoods identified in participatory workshops with the presence of local community and farmers. More than 150 individuals were benefitted from the first 2 pilots and 8 new alternative livelihoods are established and are practicing water-friendly livelihoods.
- A SWOT analysis was conducted to identify Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats with regards to establishment of Local Water Management Networks (LWMN) in the project pilot sites. 2 villages from SA sites were selected to pilot LWMN. The process contributed in enhancement of local capacities regarding efficient water distribution and management and establishment of two LWMN.
- A series of activities including “SA mobile fair”, “street theatre”, “farmers experience exchange” and “field visits” were conducted which was attended by 5000 farmers and their family members. It helped to convey the message of the project to more farmers in the first 41 pilot sites.
- A 7 minutes documentary film on “modelling local community participation for LU restoration”, a 26 minutes documentary film on “SA implementation process”, and a 16 minutes documentary on “public participation in LU restoration” were produced and 1000 copies distributed to the public at local, provincial and national levels. Similarly, the experience and lessons learned were published and 1000 copies were distributed to the public.
- 4 quarterly reports were developed and shared with different stakeholders. Monthly progress reports were developed and shared among the implementing partners. National project steering committee held regular M&E and planning meetings on a quarterly basis. Monthly M&E meetings were held to keep the project on track. Annual report was developed and submitted to UNDP at the end of each year. A technical expert was hired for project coordination.

**Output 2:** Up-scaling sustainable agriculture in 22 new villages (in average 700ha each) in the Lake Urmia basin resulting in at least 35% water saving.

- The methodology was updated with inputs from local farmers and executive partners, MoAJ experts and research centers, provincial DoE as well as CIWP experts and consultants. The project organisational framework was also reviewed and National Technical and Implementation Coordinator was substitute with National Steering Committee bringing collective knowledge and enhancing intersectoral integrated management of the project.
- Facilitators were trained to work effectively with local communities. More than 1500 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 15 new pilot sites. 15 volunteer groups formed by 500 farmers were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards. Besides, more than 2000 farmers and their family members from 15 new pilot sites attended SA mobile fairs and street theatres and learned about SA techniques.



- Baseline data were collected from 15 SA pilot areas and analysed and also identified actions needed. PDMs for main crops and orchards were developed in participation with local farmers and executive partners together with MoAJ research centers and project consultants. The exclusive farm action plans were also developed using PDMs adjusted by farm scanning process.
- SA techniques were applied in more than 450 farms/orchards as models for water/chemical saving in 15 new pilots and visited by at least 1500 neighbouring farmers as observers and future SA practitioners.
- The monitoring system was established, data was constantly collected and analysed. The results indicate that considerable water saving (an average of 30%) is achieved through application SA techniques by the end of harvest season.
- Several capacity building workshops were held for more than 200 agriculture engineers from MoAJ extension offices and local executive companies were trained to facilitate the project and assist local farmers in application of SA techniques aiming for LU restoration.

### **Output 3: Social Mobilisation for the Lake Urmia restoration and biodiversity conservation**

- More than 20 local NGO members in E/W Azerbaijan were trained on participatory education. More than 25 field staffs from key government offices including DoE, MoAJ, Regional Water Authority in E/W Azerbaijan were trained on participatory education and planning.
- The awareness campaign website is created in which public awareness is raised and their engagement in LU restoration is promoted. The public awareness campaign is activated in social networks including application such as Telegram and Instagram. Several video clips on LU restoration were developed and distributed to public.
- A dedicated SMS panel is purchased and a database of at least 5,000 farmers' mobile number is developed. CIWP in collaboration with MoAJ and DoE E/W Azerbaijan specified four major topics including "Wetland services in general", "LU ecosystem services in particular", "LU present situation/problems" and "possible solutions" and proper messages for each topic promoting local community participation in LU restoration were developed and sent to farmers in 75 pilot sites. At least 164,00 messages promoting local community participation in LU restoration are sent to farmers in 75 pilot sites.
- The integrated management plans for sustainable management of Ghorighol water supply canal is developed and implementation initiated. The integrated management plans for sustainable utilisation of Ghara-Gheshlagh vegetation is in progress.

The outputs has achieved all of its major targets, and yielded some global environmental benefits, without shortcomings. These outputs can be presented as "good practice" and is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The project has accomplished several activities that were required to restore degraded wetland by providing a viable long-term security to wetland management and local ecology from degradation, over exploitation etc.; hence the outcome achievement is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

### **Phase III**

**Output 1:** Continuing to strengthen in the pioneer 75 villages initiated during 2014-2015 through further promoting SA practices.

- Implementation of SA techniques accomplished involving 7000 farmers for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> seasons by local executive companies supported by CIWP and MoAJ.
- 12 satellite villages adjacent to 63 pilots were identified and implementation of SA techniques for autumn/spring crops were completed involving 1300 farmers.
- 9 capacity building workshops on participatory planning, facilitation and intersectoral cooperation, were conducted in West and East Azerbaijan for managers and experts of MoAJ, DoE and Water Authorities. 230 individuals were capacitated through this program.
- Sustainable Agriculture methodology is reviewed and updated in a participatory workshop with MoAJ and local IPs.

**Output 2:** Up-scaling sustainable agriculture in 15 new villages in the Lake Urmia basin.

- 1500 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 15 new pilots through 200 trust building and 150 PRA workshops. More than 500 farmers forming 15 volunteer groups were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards.
- Baseline data in 15 SA pilot sites were collected, analysed and required actions were determined. More than 500 farmers implemented at least 3 SA techniques in farms. The selected techniques were extracted from PDMs. More than 2000 farmers and their family members in 15 new pilot sites attended and visited SA Mobile fairs and street theatres. They observed and received training on SA techniques during 200 workshops by MoAJ research center and IPs.
- Monitoring tools and equipment to observe and check water consumption including Partial flume, humidity meter and Traym pipes were installed in selected farms and orchards. An average of 35% water saving was achieved in the farms and orchards from pilot sites. A socio-economic assessment was also conducted in 75 villages to evaluate the effectiveness of both techniques and social responsibility of local communities.
- 1000 copies of an infographic procurement on SA was published both in English and Persian. A documentary was also produced on sustainable livelihood practices in Qarageshlag.
- 4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities was prepared and shared with related stakeholders. 10 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and international), project consultants, managers and experts.

**Output 3:** Mobilization and application of new tools and mechanisms as complementary elements of sustainable agriculture.

- PES initiated in one LU satellite wetland (Kanibarazan). Baseline studies were carried out by the consultant. Several meetings and field visits with local communities were conducted for participatory planning of a PES scheme. Local communities' preference and priorities were identified in participatory session.
- 45 workshops were conducted for empowerment of rural women. A number of 150 rural women were involved in the process. Micro-credit funds established in 3 villages and 7 environment friendly livelihoods (including sewing, carpet weaving, dried fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and dairy products). 29 person received loan from micro-credit funds.
- An online monitoring station planned to be installed in Kanibarazan wetland to monitor the key qualitative parameters of water such as PH, EC etc. The station is powered by solar system and records the data on a web based database through a blue-box. With the help of 2 local NGOs as implementing partners pollutant sources of Kanibarazan and Qorigol wetlands have been identified and 4 workshops with a total number of 60 participants from local

communities were organised to develop priority measures for decreasing pollutants discharge to the wetland. A training workshop was held to train related experts in east and west Azerbaijan on drought risk management software and was attended by 8 experts from provinces and HQ.

- The SMS panel is active with a database of at least 9000 farmers' mobile numbers. CIWP in collaboration with MoAJ and DoE E/W Azerbaijan specified three major topics including "wetland definition and importance", "SA techniques and water management in farms", "Social responsibility". At least 350,000 messages promoting local community participation in LU restoration are sent to farmers in 90 pilot sites. More than 15 village festivals were held in which farmers in project pilot sites attended SMS competition with regard to local community role in LU restoration.
- Local water management cooperative is formed in 3 SA pilot sites of phase III including Gerde Yaghoob, Qarageshlasq and Khezerloo villages and 150 farmers involved in this process. Local groups of water resource management were revived. 50 participatory workshops were conducted in villages to analyse water management related problems. 100 kilometres of water canals which are managed by local communities were degraded.

The outputs has achieved all of its major targets, which yield global environmental benefits, without any shortcomings. These outputs can be presented as "good practice" and is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

#### **Phase IV**

**Output 1:** Institutionalizing SA in 49 villages (Phase II & III) initiated during 2015-2016 through further promoting SA practices.

- MoAJ east & west Azerbaijan agreed on supporting SA project in 49 villages until it is fully established. The farmers accompanied in the implementation process of SA techniques in the current autumn cropping season by local executive companies supported by CIWP and MoAJ based on "project effectiveness evaluation". A "participatory action plan" was developed for each village.
- At least 98 field visits and 40 share fairs were conducted for the farmers in the autumn cropping season.
- At least 100 training workshops was held in the villages on the required subjects of autumn crops and orchards. Appropriate consultancy plan is also set for each village based on "participatory action plan".
- 1000 copies of brochure and an info-graphic sheet on SA achievements was published both in English and Persian. A report on achievements of SA project for water saving level in farms was published in electronic and printed copies.
- 5 capacity building workshops on participatory planning, participatory tools for working with farmers were conducted in west and east Azerbaijan for 90 local IPs.

**Output 2:** Up-scaling sustainable agriculture in 20 new villages in the Lake Urmia basin resulting in 35% water saving.

- SA methodology is reviewed and updated in a participatory workshop with MoAJ and local IPs.
- 2000 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 20 new pilot sites through 250 trust building and 200 PRA workshops. More than 600 farmers forming 20 volunteer

groups were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards. Baseline data in 20 SA pilot sites were collected, analysed and required priority actions were determined.

- More than 600 farmers implemented at least 3 SA techniques in farms. The selected techniques were extracted from PDMs. More than 2000 farmers and their family members in 20 new pilot sites attended and visited SA mobile fairs. They received knowledge from more than 200 workshops by MoAJ research centre and local IPs.
- Monitoring tools and equipment to observe and check water consumption including Partial flume, humidity meter and Traym Pipes were installed in selected farms and orchards. An average of 35% water saving was achieved in pilot sites.
- 4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities prepared and shared with related stakeholders. 35 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and international), project consultants, managers and experts to strengthen project coordination and monitoring.

**Output 3: Mobilization and application of new tools and mechanisms as complementary elements of sustainable agriculture.**

- A documentary on the Lake Urmia is being developed and 8 clips are produced and will be published after finalisation.
- The SMS panel is active with a database of at least 9000 farmers mobile numbers. More than 4 villages festivals including various programs are planned for awareness raising.
- 45 training and capacity building workshops were conducted in the villages. 7 environment friendly livelihoods (sewing, carpet weaving, dried fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and dairy products) is especially supported in 5 villages.
- Local water management cooperative is formed in 3 SA pilot sites including Gerde Rasg, Ghepchangh and Marangalou villages. 150 farmers involved in the process. 50 participatory workshops were conducted in villages to analyse water management related problems.
- 30 workshops were conducted for empowerment of rural women. 100 rural women were involved in the process. Micro-credit funds established in 2 villages. 20 individuals received the loan from micro-credit funds till now.
- PES initiated in one LU satellite wetland (Kanibarazan, **while target was 2**). The results of baseline studies is used through implementation of two priority actions in the villages of Kanibazaran wetland. Several meetings and field visits with local communities were conducted for participatory planning of a PES scheme.
- Priority actions are identified through a participatory process. Some actions including awareness raising workshops for hunters, formation of local monitoring groups, and establishment of a shooting club were been selected for implementation.
- 2 monitoring platforms were established in Solduz and Kanibarazan wetlands. Seven parameters are measured in each of the stations and related data is recorded for further analysis.
- **Distribution of awareness campaign materials and joining awareness movement by 50,000 individuals was not done.**
- **10 water-friendly alternative livelihood establishment was not done.**
- **Identification of key species in at least 3 LU satellite wetlands and taking conservation measures to protect endangered species was not done.**

The outputs has achieved most of its major targets, and which could yield global environmental benefits. These outputs can be presented as “good practice” and is rated as **Satisfactory**.

## **Phase V**

### **Output 1: Institutionalizing SA in LUB (110 pilot sites)**

- The implementing partners carried out the participatory assessment and 35 analysis reports were submitted to the project which helped planning the activities. This analysis provide better illustration on better way to adopt SA.
- CIWP received 18 proposals from implementing companies. The results from the assessment helped the companies to develop the action plan for the new year through a participatory process involving farmers and MoAJ experts.
- About 70 knowledge sharing events including visits and share-fairs were held in pilot villages of phase III and IV. In west Azerbaijan 250 farmers (4visits, 60 farmers in each visit) visited the pilot sites in the province. 2 other visits were held involving 240 participants to pilot sites in Miandoab and Malekan. In 5 visits to east Azerbaijan, 280 farmers had a visit to Moghan Kesht –o- Sanat to have first-hand information. These farmers were provided training brochures packages.
- The stories and experiences of facilitators in working with the local communities documented and published in a booklet entitled “The footprint that remains” and 1000 copies distributed.
- 11 capacity building workshops on monitoring and evaluation and reporting were held. A 6-day workshop with 2 international trainers from Praxis Institute was held. The subject of the workshop was “Participatory application of audio-visual tools in working with local communities”. The workshop was attended by 25 participants from 11 implementing companies.
- The provincial committee quarterly meetings were held in presence of representatives from related sectors of MoAJ including soil and water, cultivation and plant breeding departments. There were negotiations with related sectors on budget allocation for the project.
- 50 new villages from the basin were identified and budget approved.
- The integrated approach was piloted in 4 villages involving 10-12 families in each villages. These families themselves are involved in SA practices, and their family members are also engaged in the related projects such as sustainable livelihoods, micro-credit funds, PES, etc. **The target was 110 women and 110 youth so the achievement is below target.**
- **Identification of at least 2 legal and institutional obstacles for implementing sustainable agriculture at province level to follow up and define, plan and implement remedial action was not done.**
- **Development of fundraising plan for effective and efficient sourcing of funds for out scaling SA activities within LU and other basins in Iran was not done.**

### **Output 2: Out-scaling of SA, non-farm livelihood (as alternative livelihood) and women’s micro-credit funds in new villages in the Lake Urmia basin based on past learning (20 pilots).**

- In each of the 20 new pilot sites, 15 farmers were directly engaged in the planning and implementation processes of the SA while 25 other farmers were indirectly involved. **Achievement was below the target because target was to benefit 800 farmers from the participatory action plans.**
- The results of monitoring techniques applied in about 50 pilot farms indicate about 34% water saving and 40% increase in irrigation efficiency. In 4 training workshops a total number of 120



experts were trained on data collection and analysis. The results of applying moisture sensors which show the best irrigation frequency based on the need of the crops, indicate about 63% water saving. The meta-analysis study, reviewed the monitoring data of 4 previous years of the project and the inter-relation of different technique. The results of this study would identify the most effective techniques and lead to better planning of the project in next phases.

- 6 Dirin pieces of social comedy animation were produced and published in the social media, DoE telegram channel, CIWP Aparat and website. CIWP success story in LU restoration was published in WLI bulletin. A clip was published regarding the held exhibition on the project achievements. A festival was held to collect innovative ideas for LU restoration with participation of local communities. More than 80 proposals were received under two themes including new ideas and star-up among which 6 were selected and awarded in a ceremony.
- 4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities prepared and shared with related stakeholders. A total of 50 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and International), project consultants, managers and experts. 3 meetings of National Steering Working Groups were held. **Achievement is below target because target was to produce 9 progress reports.**
- **Suppose to prepare 2 reports on impact assessment of the project regarding less water use and better socioeconomic but it was not done.**

#### **Output 3:** Up-scaling sustainable agriculture in the Lake Urmia Basin.

- As a result of reflecting the achievements and best practices of the project to the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, the applied techniques were formally announced to the provincial organisations to be replicated. Close collaboration and communication has formed with LURP. The project experience was presented in the technical meeting of LURP which was held in Urmia and they also visited pilot sites. About 240 women were involved in this area and 14 livelihood initiative formed in LUB including carpet weaving, fruit processing, traditional aviculture and tailoring. Some significant results of these initiatives include official registration of women cooperatives, official permit for weaving traditional carpets and marketing through carpets and marketing through social networks and receiving supportive loans for expanding their activities.
- A 3-day international event was held jointly with Ramsar Regional Centre in which representative from 7 countries (Iraq, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Syria, Azerbaijan, Oman) in the region attended. In the workshop the project achievement in LU restoration were presented to the participants and their experiences were also shared and participants were also taken to the project sites for first-hand information.
- **Supposed to recognize establishment of SA in LUB by MoAJ/LURP and provide financial support for at least 50 pilot villages but this has not happened.**

#### **Output 4:** Application of environmental tools and mechanisms as complementary elements of biodiversity conservation in LUB.

- Kanibarazan ecotourism master plan was approved by Habitats office and Wetlands conservation and restoration office of DoE. Sustainable Agriculture was introduced to the farmers (about 40) from 2 villages (Khorkhore and Qaradagh) near Kanibarazan wetland and agreement was signed with the farmers in order to help enhancing the quality and quantity of water flow to the lake. Another PES scheme focused on livestock grazing. The related plan has been prepared in participatory workshops with the ranchers from 6 villages near Kanibarazan. **Target of involving**

**families (at least 150 women and 150 youth) of volunteer farmers of 15 pilot sites from previously involved in SA are in LU restoration and empowering was not met.**

- After finalisation of the wetland information center by the MP of Noroozloo the center was constructed. In addition, CIWP provided technical support for activating the wetland management secretariats of 4 wetlands (Gharegheshlagh, Solduz, Noroozloo, Kanibaraza). The secretariat of Gharegheshlagh wetlands started the process of revising its integrated management plan.
- White-headed duck and goose were selected as targets of this conservation project. The implementing partners conducted some measures based on the plans they developed. The situation of the target ecosystem is better now.
- **Target of 15% increase in awareness level of stakeholders and the public regarding role of public participation in restoration of LU was not done. No assessment was conducted after the program so not possible to confirm this target.**

The outputs has achieved most of its major targets. These outputs can be presented as “good practice” and is rated as **Satisfactory**.

## **Phase VI**

**Output 1:** SA, water-friendly livelihood and Micro-credit funds in LUB are integrated and institutionalized in previous pilot sites (44 pilot sites).

- The implementing partners submitted to the project 57 analysis reports that were fed into planning of Phase VI. Arrangement were made to continue implementation in 44 SA pilot sites of Phase IV and V. 90 village of phase II and III were handed over to MoAJ.
- Workshops were held to conduct efficiency assessment of the previous experience and elicit lessons learned in the piloted villages. This was conducted in a participatory approach to assess previous year's activities and their priority. Furthermore, training needs to sustain the outcomes were identified. Accordingly, the contractors based their planning and implementation on these outcomes. 17 farmers from the previous phase participated in a workshop in Keik Abad Village, Mahabad and defined three training modules (Farm School: post-harvest Management in Apple Orchard; Farm School: autumn wheat coated seeds; Farmland levelling using laser leveler.
- Engagement of the 20% of the farmer household members in 13 pilot sites in development projects where three components of sustainable agriculture, livelihoods, and women micro-credit fund were integrated. Two village were selected for integrated projects and 11 villages for PTD project (totally 13 as mentioned above).
- A 5-day capacity building workshop was held on participatory processes and teamwork approaches. About 500 farmers and experts of implementing companies had cross-visits of the other teams' activities and farms to exchange experiences. At least 60 events (workshop, meetings and ceremonies) were held on cropping patterns and irrigation methods.
- To promote water efficient, wetland-friendly products an online platform was established (<https://www.denizmarkasi.com>). The technical capacity, legal requirements and risks that stakeholders may face after handing over of this platform is being studied.

**Output 2:** Out-scaling integrated approach of SA, water-friendly livelihood/women micro-credit funds in selected pilot sites (17 new sites).



- Conducted five workshops on monitoring and evaluation for IPs.
- A 5-day workshop on participatory M&E, reporting, and participation of implementing companies in west and east Azerbaijan for MOAJ, local companies, and NGOs.
- 10 capacity building workshops on monitoring and evaluation and reporting for 38 participants from 19 implementing companies.
- 15 farmers directly and 25 others indirectly were engaged in the planning and implementation processes of the SA each of 17 new pilot sites. As a result, and contrary to previous years, livelihood, SA, and water management activities were integrated rather than being considered as island activities.
- The SA project was piloted in 17 new villages.
- Water-friendly livelihoods were continued in 3 pilots from previous years and in 6 new pilot sites.
- The livelihood project was piloted in 2 pilot sites from previous phases and in 9 new villages and 10 families from each village were involved.
- More than 250 women were involved in livelihood activities. These initiatives resulted in official registration of women's cooperatives, official permit for traditional carpet weaving, and marketing through social networks and receiving supportive loans for expanding their activities. The financial support was provided to the cooperatives (7 cases in 2 provinces).
- As an integral part of the activity, relevant knowledge-sharing and capacity building were pursued. At least 30 knowledge-sharing events including visits and share-fairs were held in pilot villages of phases IV, V and VI project to help future planning of the activities. In west Azerbaijan more than 250 farmers visited the pilot sites and in the east Azerbaijan more than 220 farmers visited the best practices in other pilot sites. Training brochures and packages were provided for each visit. 30 capacity building and training workshops were held for 320 participants (250 women and 70 men).
- At least 180 women were involved in this area and 9 livelihood initiative formed in LUB including carpet weaving, fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and tailoring.
- 68 pilot sites were monitored by implementing companies.
- In 5 training workshops, a total of 120 experts were training on data collection and analysis.
- 40 visits to the pilot sites were conducted (regional, national and international) by the project consultants, managers and experts.

**Output 3:** Institutionalized, consolidate and integrate project results and achievements to up-scale project approach at basin and national level.

- A MoU was signed between DoE and MoAJ regarding implementation of best practices. The project experience was presented to LURP in two technical meetings which also included two visits to the project sites by LURP.
- Produced thematic comedy animation “Dirin Dirin” served as a tool communicating messages on ecosystem approach as well as wetlands conservation and restoration. During the Second Festival of Innovative Ideas for Restoration of LU four start-up ideas and four independent ideas were selected and rewarded. It is noteworthy that one of the winner ideas will be sponsored by the project in near future.
- The four team members from Hamoon project were exposed to the CIWP's knowledge and experience (one tour in EAZ and one in WAZ). Currently, the Hamoon team is using and integrating the lessons learned acquired from this study tour in their monitoring model and capacity development activities.

- A 3-day international event was held with Ramsar Regional centre which was attended by seven countries. The experience from LU restoration was presented to the participants. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the workshop, a field visit was arranged to the project sites.
- The comprehensive data from phase I to VI (on water use and saving, chemical inputs etc.) was collected and reflected on the project web site <http://www.wetlandsproject.ir/>

**Output 4:** Conservation of LU satellite wetlands biodiversity & ecosystem is supported through implementation of MPs and SA integrated approach.

- 10 meetings were held by the local committee for the satellite wetlands of the Lake Urmia. Monitoring reports (including monitoring reports of 5 wetlands) were submitted. In addition, CIWP provided technical support for achieving the wetland management secretariats of 5 wetlands (Ghare Gheshlaq, Solduz, Noroozloo, Kanibarazan and Ghourigol).
- SA was introduced to 50 farmers from two villages (Khorkhore and Qaradagh) near Kanibarazan wetland and following this an arrangement was signed with the farmers in order to help enhancing the quality and quantity of water flowing into the lake. A change in the approach was observed in the study conducted by the water consultant indicating improvement in water quality and quantity (59462.4m<sup>3</sup>/h) inflowing to wetlands.
- A student contest (painting and photography) was carried out in Kanibarazan to raise awareness. The event was also covered by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (at province level).
- Two participatory conservation action plans were developed by the implementing partners and four local groups (50 members) were formed and mobilized in LU satellite wetlands (Qara Gheshlagh and Hassan-Lou) to conduct conservation activities. They were also trained on migratory corridors, identifying habitat hotspots, identifying duck and goose species (in Ghare Ghishlaq) and the white-headed duck (in Hassan-Lou). Also, a telescope was provided to the General Directorate of the Environment in Hassan-Lou for bird watching. An ecotour was arranged in Qara Gheshlagh in order to train the groups on biodiversity with the purpose of capacity development for tourism development (bird watching tourism).
- **Target of implementing 1 new PES scheme was not done.**

The outputs has achieved most of its major targets without shortcomings. These outputs can be presented as “good practice” and is rated as **Satisfactory**.

## **Phase VII**

**Output:** Application of Ecosystem Approach in LU and the Satellite wetlands management.

- The CIWP in collaboration with the targeted secretariats as well as the Office of Wetland Restoration (OWR), DOE, periodically monitored MP implementation and secretariats performance through administering questionnaires and meetings.
- As a result of the capacity development training provided by the CIWP to Kanibarazan Secretariat and the respective cross-sector coordination facilitated by the CIWP, competency has increased that the secretariat autonomously holds regular meetings to pursue MP implementation. In the regular meeting of secretariat various MP stakeholder gather to discuss wetland-related issues and collectively execute the MP. Kanibarazan’s environmental water right has been regularly released by the Regional Water Company of West Azerbaijan to prevent its drying out and conserve its ecosystem functions and services (<http://www.wnn.wrm.ir/cs/NewsCrawler/559/54739>).

- In order to adaptively communicate with stakeholders during covid-19 outbreak, implement MPs, and submit periodic monitoring reports, the capacity of five secretariats encompassing seven members (including one female member) was enhance.
- Quick win sub-projects aim at piloting implementation of priority actions stipulated in MPs. Accordingly, quick wins set an example for the MP stakeholders to observe how a cross-sector approach works and relevant priority actions are implemented. Five quick wins, an effort by the CIWP in consultation and collaboration with the targeted secretariats and participation of the local communities, were implemented in the target areas as follows: 1. Operationalizing a visitor center in Ghurigol International Wetland, West Azerbaijan, and developing ecotourism in Yousefabad Village and establishment of a group of local wetland guards (25 members); 2. Equipping and operationalizing ecotourism infrastructure in Solduz Wetland, Naghadeh; 3. Supporting community-based ecotourism in line with implementation of MPs in Nowruzlou Wetland, Miandoab County – establishment of a group of local tour guides (12 individuals); 4. Initiated Collection of local knowledge on wetlands as one the priority actions in MPs; 5. Protection of white-headed duck population in Hasanlou (Shurgol) Wetland, Naghadeh, through participation of local communities living around the wetland; to this end, end, a CBO was established and training was provided for the locals, and a participatory action plan was developed that will be carried out in the future.
- Assistance was provided from the CIWP through elaborating the relevant MP priority actions to local committees and secretariats to expand their capacity in terms of ecotourism initiatives and sustainable tourism. This was pursued through publishing a tourism guidebook and supporting celebration of Tourism and Ecotourism Day in Kanibarazan Wetland (see a related newsfeed at: <http://www.haje.ir/Newsdetails.aspx?itemid=15475>). Further to this, five websites were established in Gharagheshlagh, Nowruzlou, Kanibarazan, and Soldouz for awareness raising purposes about these wetlands and their ecotourism potential. In regard to capacity development of secretariats with the purpose of contributing to provision of an enabling environment to contribute to implementation of MPs, seven members from five secretariats were targeted where female members were involved as well (six men and one woman).

**Output 2:** Promote local participation in sustainable soil and water management and biodiversity conservation.

- The integrated approach was freshly piloted in new pilot villages (160% target achievement) through inception phase, meetings and visits to share agricultural local knowledge, and training workshops. Moreover, sustaining results was carried on in previously piloted villages (80% target achievement) where cumulatively 4,950 locals were engaged through orientation, introduction of SA techniques in a participatory manner, experience sharing by reference farmers, and training workshops (pre-cropping seed coating by biological fertilizers, plant nutrition, modern irrigation methods, principles of fertilization, drill hole fertilization, sugar beet seedlings, correct trimming for vineyards, tape irrigation). In addition to committed targets, in phase 7, monitoring activities were conducted in 11 pilots (49 farms and orchards in EAZ, 69 farms and orchards in WAZ) aiming at decreasing agricultural water consumption. With regard to CEPA activities, the status quo of twelve Iranian wetlands was assessed in terms of CEPA.
- Under a national campaign called “My share of Wetland” ([www.wetland.campaigne.ir](http://www.wetland.campaigne.ir), <https://www.instagram.com/wetlandcampaign>) a series of activities were conducted: 1) A short-

story contest was organized across 26 wetlands to attract interested individuals and authors toward wetland themes. The motto of the contest was “You share: Writing a Short Story for Wetlands”. 61 titles were submitted and ultimately, four selected works were awarded. Moreover, the eight qualified works were podcasted – narrated by the authors themselves. 2) A bilingual (English-Farsi) booklet on modelling public participation in LU restoration was produced. 3) A guideline on bird watching in Gurigol Wetland was produced.

**Output 3:** Enhance the economic resilience of local communities in adaptation with LU basin resources.

- Community-based initiatives (diversifying rural livelihoods) was implemented in two target provinces – (17 villages including 14 new pilot villages and 3 previous pilot villages). This was pursued through inception phase, training workshops, meetings and forums. As the result of this, 79 livelihood groups were established for 377 individuals (266 women, 111 men) and a IRR-1,880,000,000 facility was provisioned for 16 community funds. **Target was to empower 1000men and 100 women and youth so it is below target.**
- Out of 377 individuals engaged in in community-based initiatives, 266 women and 111 men benefitted from the project.
- **Target of managing 2 more livelihood and PES initiatives was not done.**

**Output 4:** Incorporate the project approach into national policies and up-scale the model in other wetland areas.

- To include the project in high-level documents, the University of Tehran is modelling the project experience and its ecosystem-based as well as participatory approach. This model is yet to be presented as a toolkit at national level to a wide range of audience and stakeholders, especially the MoAJ, to contribute to its inclusion in the 7th National Socioeconomic Development Plan. In regard to the international events, in a series of online experience sharing meetings, the project experiences/achievements were shared with the Ramsar Regional Center of Central and Western Asia. In addition to this, in an online seminar, the project achievements were shared with Conference on Interaction and Confidence (CICA) members, namely Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Thailand and China (<https://twitter.com/CicaSecretariat/status/1414895907343044612?s=20>). With respect to the national events, a cross-visit by key stakeholders of Fars Province was organized to visit the best practices in LUB where 20 representatives from governmental as well as non-governmental stakeholders participated. The project experiences/lessons learned were transferred to the visitors. By large, this task contributed to laying foundation for the project inception in Fars Province. In addition to the above, a two-day field visit was organized for the Ambassador of Japan and the UNDP team, including UNDP RR, to the project achievements in the LU basin ([https://www.instagram.com/tv/CRbqSIRHEs3/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/tv/CRbqSIRHEs3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)). Moreover, CIWP hosted a technical webinar on wetlands and CEPA on 2 February 2021 with 250 participants from local communities, interested individuals, NGO's, and academia. In this webinar, the distinguished presenter, Mr. Chris Rostron (the International Engagement Manager, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust), lectured on the role of wetland centers in enhancing environmental

literacy in communities. Regarding the local events, the project implementing partners in hand with the local communities celebrated the World Wetland Day, Biodiversity Day, and Clean Air Day in several villages – cumulatively 21 local events in both West and East Azerbaijan provinces. Ultimately, to disseminate the Project success stories, a book titled “the Lasting Footprint” was published. This book narrates the CIWP’s entry (inception) to the target areas and how the project promoted participatory and ecosystem-based approaches to enable and support the local communities to ultimately contribute to the LU restoration. Further to this and based on this book, a series of documentaries consisting of 10 film were produced. Each film narrates the story of one member of the targeted local community and how the Project facilitated their capacity development and assisted them to establish SA and alternative livelihoods to ultimately contribute to LU restoration without jeopardizing their livelihoods. In addition to this, to share the project knowledge/experience, technical and non-technical content was produced and disseminated as follows: 1) “Guidelines on Economic Valuation of Wetlands” (1000 copies); shared with directorate generals of environment, UNDP, and selectees of “the Third Festival of Ideas and Innovative Products”; 2) “Fifty-Two Actions for Biodiversity Conservation” (1000 copies); shared with UNDP and selectees of “the Third Festival of Ideas and Innovative Products”. 3) “Identification, Control, and Management of Marine Pollution” (2000 copies, republication). 4) Shared electronic copy of “Guideline on Practical Experiments in Ecohydrology” with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; 5) Translation of “the Lasting Footprint” into English and sharing it with the Ambassador of Japan and the UNDP team during their visit to the project achievement in the target areas. This book narrates the project’s participatory approach and its impact on the targeted communities. 6) A children book titled “Wetland; My Heart”. In brief, the progress toward targets follows: i) International events: 65%, ii) National events: 30%, iii) Local events: 200%, iv) Success stories: 80%.

- **Only on international event organised while target was 3 international events.**

The outputs has achieved most of its major targets without shortcomings. These outputs can be presented as “good practice” and is rated as **Satisfactory**.

## 5.2 Conclusion

117. The project was able to accomplish almost all activities to meet its targets and these have contributed towards addressing the issues of the Lake Urmia and its basin areas. To address the Wetland degradation problems, the project intervened in four areas: awareness generation, implementation of integrated SA and lake restoration activities, alternative economic development and monitoring. The project is able to make significant improvement in inter-sectoral collaboration among the government relevant departments, regional water authority, private sector and the NGOs in the Lake Urmia. There was also significant change in awareness level among the local communities regarding restoration of the Lake Urmia. A total of 2200 farmers from East Azerbaijan and 2150 farmers from West Azerbaijan were trained in SA techniques and were applying in their farms. Awareness program made 13,500 farmers aware about the project. Similarly, 4500 farmers were trained to become resource person, 360 local experts were also trained, created 300 jobs, and the sustainable agriculture technique contributed to decrease use of water by 27.1%. The project was able involve 19 NGOs and Implementing Partners (IPs). 800 women were trained to take role in restoration of the Urmia Lake and 39 micro-credit funds and alternative livelihood programs were provided to women and 750 women were involved in green jobs. The project established 3 satellite monitoring network in 3 satellite wetland (Norouzloo, Soldouz and



Kanibarazan wetlands) of the Lake Urmia. The project also introduced and implemented Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in Kanibarazan wetland. The project also developed and implemented integrated management plans for 3 satellite wetlands (Uromia, Norouzloo and Kanibarazan wetlands).

118. For knowledge management, the project conducted 15 village festivals, produced 3000 copies of 4 training manuals and distributed in the villages of the region. Seven documentary films were produced, more than 600 posters distributed in the villages and cities of the regions and more than 140 exhibitions held. More than 30 brochures were published and disseminated to farmers, more than 6000 students and 463 teachers were trained in the role of local communities in restoration of the Lake Urmia. More than 1,000,000 SMS were sent to a database of at least 9,000 farmers' mobile numbers about the functions of the Lake Urmia and the local community role in restoration of the lake.
119. The Lake Urmia Project was designed with provision for appropriate management arrangements but in the initial phase had to face challenge of convincing farmers and the relevant government authority on new sustainable agriculture techniques. In 2020, the project was affected for some time due to COVID-19 pandemic situation. But, with the help of local community it was able to accomplish targeted activities. The project team has managed to deliver almost all interventions that have reduced the threats of pollution and decrease of water in the lake and enhanced water efficient and sustainable agriculture practices in the basin areas. Through generation of awareness from local to the national level, mainstreaming of sustainable agriculture and restoration of the Urmia lake was achieved. The project has been underpinned by good science and a technical approach of good calibre and this helped to maintain technical standard of the interventions. It has enhanced capacity to incorporate ground information related to the lake degradation into the agriculture development planning processes of the MoAJ and the local governments in the pilot areas; and improved environmental awareness and raised concerns about threats to basin areas at the level of local communities and local government. Some of the activities of phase IV to VII were not completed (detail informed in respective phase of "5.1 Main Finding section"). The project was not able to implement biodiversity conservation programs in the Urmia Lake.
120. To make the outcomes and interventions sustainable, the project formed farmers groups and women's groups. They were also trained in the lake restoration and SA techniques. The project also contributed in linking various institutions from national to grassroots levels, government agencies, local authorities and communities generating benefits for sustainability. An agreement has been signed with the government of Japan for next three years to support replication of results to 2 new sites. The participatory model developed by this project is able in restoration of the lake and also addressed water related problems. The Urmia Lake is very big so there is need of such effort in all basin areas of this lake. Moreover, this model will be useful to several other lakes in Iran to address water related threats and conserve biodiversity within them.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Rec.No.	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
<b>Relevance/Up scaling</b>			
<b>1</b>	This project has developed and successfully tested model to address water issues and contribute in restoration of the Lake Urmia. The Urmia lake basin is a large area, there is need of more assistance to replicate the successful	PMU/UNDP/CIWP	In the future

	model from this project. Similarly, other lakes of Iran also need such programme to address the threats. Hence, it is recommended to explore more support from different donor agencies and implement such model in wide areas.		
2	It is recommended that the federal government of Iran should adopt successful model from this project and acknowledge in its policy to incorporate them into their nationwide wetland restoration programme.	PMU/UNDP/CIWP/MoET	In the future
3	It is learned that several organisations are working to address the problem related to water in Iran and they are unaware of the model developed by this project. Hence, it is recommended to disseminate success stories or lessons learned to wider audiences so that others working in Iran and elsewhere to resolve water related problems will benefit.	PMU/UNDP/CIWP	Immediately so that others could include in their work plan.
<b>Design</b>			
4	Each training should be followed by the post training evaluation to assess change in level of knowledge and awareness after training. It is recommended to conduct post training assessment. Also capacity development trainings of future projects should make provision of post training assessment.	PMU, DoE, MoAJ	Immediately so that it could provide feedback for the new phases. Also in the future projects.
5	More alternative livelihood options should be explored to switch lake based economy for alleviating pressure from the lake.	DoE, MoAJ and UNDP	Future interventions
6	It is recommended to use local knowledge and capacity to promote alternative livelihood activities, while providing necessary training in market research and branding.	DoE, MoAJ and UNDP	Future interventions
7	It is recommended to explore more constructive collaboration with FAO or other implementing agencies working with the similar objectives to create better synergies.	UNDP, DoE, MoAJ	In the future interventions



8	It is recommended that UNDP and DoE should convince donor to make project life more than one year. At least 4 to 5 years needed for any project to accomplish integrated conservation approach and see tangible impact.	UNDP	In future projects
9	Project timeline does not match the crop calendar. When bidding is done in summer time and by the time facilitators are selected and given responsibility, it will be late and farmers have already started the procedure without support from the facilitators. It is recommended to start bidding for facilitators earlier so that selection process will complete before the plantation period and farmers could receive support from the facilitators.	MoAJ/DoE	Plan at the beginning of the new project.
<b>Implementation/Management</b>			
10	It is recommended to provide incentives for facilitators for bringing new ideas to contribute in overall object of the project.	PMU, MoAJ	Immediately in the new project
11	The project established 3 monitoring stations in three satellites wetlands. As the lake is very big, more monitoring points should be identified and monitored by establishing more monitoring station. It is recommended to utilise meteorology and agriculture department's capacity to establish monitoring station in other parts of the Urmia lakes. To make this effort wide, supports should also be explored.	PMU, UNDP	In the future
12	It is recommended to help facilitators absorb funding to make provision of technical and machinery support to poor farmers who could not afford to buy or rent machinery.	PMU/MoAJ	From the new project or new phase.
13	The project has trained many people on SA technology and the lake restoration practices. Also, the project team has gained a lot of experience to work for the water issues, SA and restoration of the lake. These people should be used for future interventions in other areas of the Urmia lake/basin and also in other lakes within Iran.	UNDP, DoE, CIWP	In the future projects

14	There could be more sources of water to the lakes. Obstruction to those sources will affect water supply to the lake. Also, increase or decrease of water level of the lake could be due to changed situation in those sources. Hence, it is recommended to study sources of water of the lake and analyse if they are under threat.	UNDP, DoE, CIWP	In the future intervention.
15	Only addressing water volume issue of the lake will not address the entire issues of the lake restoration. There should be plan for conservation of biodiversity of the lake and also need regular monitoring of water and biodiversity. Moreover, issues related to use of water by public also need to be addressed. Without addressing this, the PES program could not sustain. Hence, it is recommended to implement biodiversity conservation and water quality monitoring programs and also develop clear policy regarding use of water.	PMU/UNDP/CIWP/DoE	In the future intervention

## 5.4 Lessons Learned

### Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to Relevance, Performance and Success

Lessons learned are arranged under project-related headings. Further discussions and key points for future projects have been added in this section. Some of the lessons learned listed below have arisen from discussions with persons interviewed during the evaluation and the team thank them for their insights.

#### *Strategic*

- Community organisations lack scientific knowledge on importance of wetland management and also their relation to ecosystem and other climate change issues. The project support to enhance their knowledge and strengthen their capacity will help to encourage them to contribute in wetland restoration and protection of biodiversity.  
Lack of knowledge has been seen as a drawback in many projects limiting communities from taking precaution. Similarly, lack of knowledge and poor economy force them to adopt unsustainable agricultural practices. In this project, after adopting SA techniques they were able to see benefits from this techniques and it helped to attract farmers from neighbouring areas too.
- Introduction of micro-credit and other livelihood programs has shown more households being interested to participate in the activities of the project. If highly demanded products are incorporated

as livelihood options, then that will help to uplift local economy and decrease dependency on lake resources. This will contribute to alleviate pressure of the lake and demonstrate increased ownership.

- Establishment and capacitation of community groups for restoration of the Urmia lake is a good participatory model of conservation of the lake and its biodiversity and it also plays role towards sustainability of interventions.

### ***Design***

- Designing a project linking various institutions from national to grassroots levels, government agencies, local authorities and communities generates huge benefits for sustainability, and through the synergies developed provides the intervention with much greater effectiveness than that which can be achieved by stand-alone projects.
- Community participation in the project design, formulation of implementation modality, implementation and monitoring is very important. This helped in implementing the project activities effectively and also to make activities sustainable. In this project, inclusion of the local communities in SA practices and restoration of the Urmia Lake with livelihood incentive packages including efficient water use in agriculture and protection of the lake has improved the impact of the project.
- Bottom-up planning of the project provided feedback from the people's knowledge on the ground realities and this helped in smooth implementation of the activities and community easily adopted them.

### ***Project Management***

- Working directly through existing government structures brings dividends. The project chose to work directly with the Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture Jihad and other local government rather than setting up parallel implementation structures. This decision has proved very useful not only in empowering government by providing experience and training, but also in developing effective government "ownership", engagement, participation and motivation, thereby promoting long-term sustainability of the project's achievements.
- Inter-sectoral cooperation helps to implement holistic models to achieve the objectives. It also generates technical supports for the project without adding cost to the project.

## **Annex I: Terms of Reference for Terminal Evaluation**

### **Annex I Terms of Reference (TOR)**

#### **International Consultant for Terminal Evaluation of wetlands Lake Urmia component “Contribution to Restoration of Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation (2014-2019) & Local community participation in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation for Lake Urmia Restoration (Special component of UNDP’s Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project) (2019-2021)**

##### **1. Background:**

During the past two decades, different factors including continuous drought, increasing number of dams, over-abstraction of underground waters, etc. have impacted many wetlands in Iran, particularly the Lake Urmia, the largest hyper-saline wetland of Iran supporting more than 5 million inhabitants and important biodiversity. To overcome this challenge, the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran, together with national and international organizations such as UNDP, started several initiatives to stop the degradation trend and restore this important Lake. UNDP’s special efforts on LU restoration started since 2014, with financial support of the government of Japan, and implemented through its long- standing “Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project” (CIWP). Initially, the project focused on local communities’ participation in restoration measures mainly Sustainable Agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation but the results of experiences and lessons learnt led to extension of the scope of activities to other areas such as socio-economics and introduction of complementary tools to practice more integrated approach during seven phases of the project.

The project activities fall within the following areas:

2. Institutional development and mainstreaming participatory ecosystem-based management and conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity conservation;
3. Piloting and scaling up sustainable agriculture practices;
4. Establishing and sustaining wetland friendly alternative livelihoods;
5. Participatory technology development (PTD);
6. Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA); and
7. Innovative tools contributing to conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity such as economic valuation and payment for ecosystem services.

##### **2. Objectives of Final Evaluation**

- 1) Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the Project in terms of: achieving the outputs as per the Project Document;
- 2) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project in terms of the implementation of activities that achieve outputs and outcomes, following up on lessons learned;
- 3) Establish the impact and sustainability of the Project, and the extent to which the approach and implementation of the Project contributed to restoration of Lake Urmia and its participatory ecosystem-based management and conservation;
- 4) Review the Project Design and Management structures, in terms of achieving clear objectives and strategies, the use of monitoring and evaluation, the level of coherence, and the appropriateness of management structures at national, province, and local levels (wetland secretariats); and
- 5) Make clear and focused recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of scaling up and replication of project

achievements and results across the LU basin and other wetlands across the country.

### **3. Scope of Work**

In assessing the Project and its alignment to the broader Project Document, the evaluation will take into consideration the following criteria:

#### ***Relevance and appropriateness***

1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to LU restoration goals and challenges with focus to local community participation in Lake restoration?
2. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibility of the UNDP, the Department of Environment (DOE), and the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad (MOAJ) as the major stakeholders of the Project and key actors within those institutions?
3. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the UNDP assistance mandate and development goals?
4. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the international and national strategic/upper-hand documents, e.g. SDGs, UNDAF, UNDP CPD, and UNDP Strategic Plan?
5. Evaluate how the project addressed country priorities. Evaluate country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?
6. Evaluate how the project addressed donor priorities. Evaluate donor ownership. Was the project concept in line with the donor development priorities and plans?
7. Evaluate how private sector and local cooperative were engaged in the process?
8. Evaluate of local community participation in the project. Evaluate local community ownership.

#### ***Effectiveness and efficiency***

9. Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective and efficient?
10. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities? What might have been done better or differently?
11. How did the project deal with issues and risks?
12. Were the outputs achieved in a timely manner?
13. Were the resources utilized in the best way possible?
14. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient?

#### ***Impact and sustainability***

15. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?
16. Were the actions and result owned by the local partners and stakeholders?
17. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?
18. What is the level of contribution of the project management arrangements to national ownership of the set objectives, result and outputs?
19. Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to promote national ownership and sustainability of the result achieved?
20. Did the Project contribute to sustainable management of LU and its satellite wetlands?
21. Did the Project address cross cutting issues including gender?
22. Evaluate the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provided the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
23. Socio-economic risks to sustainability: Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
24. Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

25. Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability: Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.
26. Environmental risks to sustainability: Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?
27. Financial risks to sustainability: What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the donor assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

### ***Project design***

28. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
29. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analysed while designing the project?
30. Were there clear objectives and strategy?
31. Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance?
32. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process?
33. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project to the country's wetland conservation efforts by the DOE and its key players within this institution?
34. Was there coherence, coordination and complementarity by the project with other donor funded activities in the field of LU restoration, conservation and biodiversity (including Japan, GEF, etc.)?
35. Evaluate the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Evaluate the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
36. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
37. Evaluate decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
38. Evaluate the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design.

### ***Project management, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management***

#### **Management Arrangements:**

39. Are the project management arrangements appropriate at the team level and project board level?
40. Evaluate overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
41. Evaluate the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
42. Evaluate the quality of support provided by the Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.



#### Work Planning:

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

#### Finance and co-finance:

46. Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
47. Review and evaluate the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
48. Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
49. Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

#### Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

50. Evaluate the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
51. Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

52. Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
53. Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
54. Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

#### Reporting:

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

#### Communications:

58. Was there appropriate visibility and acknowledgement of the project and donors?
59. Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
60. Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
61. For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

#### ***Gender Equality***

62. To what extent have gender equality, the economic empowerment of women, social inclusion and youth been addressed in the Project design, implementation and reporting? What are the key achievements?
63. In what way could gender equality be enhanced in the future similar projects?

#### ***COVID-19***

64. To what extent has the project results been affected by Covid-19 and what remedial measures/tools/ processes were introduced to address this?
65. In what way the project management/implementation/monitoring approaches could be adapted based on Covid-19 and similar crisis, in future similar projects?

#### ***Results Framework/Logframe***

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

#### ***Progress Towards Results***

##### **Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:**

- Review and evaluate the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red). If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

<sup>2</sup> Populate with data from the Project Document

<sup>3</sup> If available

<sup>4</sup> Colour code this column only

<sup>5</sup> Use the 6-point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

<b>Outcome1:</b>	Indicator 2:							
<b>Outcome2:</b>	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
<b>Etc.</b>								

#### Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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This work will include reference to an ecosystem approach at the core of the project design. The Final Evaluation should be aligned with the principles established in UNDP's [Evaluation Policy](#) and the UN Evaluation Group's [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#).

### 5. Methodology

Based on UNDP guidelines for evaluations, and in consultations with UNDP Iran, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory, involving principal stakeholders into the analysis. During the evaluation, the consultant is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis. Moreover, the International consultant will work closely in team with a national consultant and the former will be the team leader and responsible for finalizing the report. The national consultant will assist the international consultant in all terminal evaluation process including preparation, mission, and reporting phases.

- Desk review of relevant documents including progress reports and any records during the life of the Project;
- Key informative interviews with the DOE, MOAJ and other assistance providers/partners, and UNDP Senior Management and Project Staff in the Country Office, local communities and other major stakeholders;
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with the former Project Technical and Steering Committees
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders, government officials, service providers including CSO partners and donor partners, etc.

During the implementation of the contract, the consultant will report to the UNDP Programme Team, who will provide guidance and ensure satisfactory completion of final evaluation deliverables. There will be close coordination with the project team who will assist in connecting the consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders. In addition, the project staff will provide key project documentation prior to fieldwork.

*Note: The International Evaluation Consultant is expected to work in team with a national consultant to deliver the required tasks.*

### 6. Expected outputs and deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report;
- A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation with, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the CIWP and UNDP as well as other major partners as deemed necessary;
- Final report, including a 2-3 pages' executive summary, including issues raised during presentation of draft.

The Implementation Arrangements and Reporting Requirements are as follows:

	Output	Due date
1	Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report	2 November 2021
2	A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the IEC and partners	30 November 2021
3	Final evaluation report	15 December 2021
TOTAL:		

## 7. Duration of Work

The contract shall commence on 17 October 2021 till 15 December 2021.

### Special note:

*Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions may require many of the in-person missions/consultations and data gathering/activities to be carried out remotely using electronic conferencing means. Alternatively, some or all in person interviews may be undertaken by the national consultant in consultation with the evaluation team leader.*

## 8. Qualifications of the Successful Individual Contractor

### Competencies:

The candidate should be able to:

- Ability to work under pressure against strict deadlines
- Ability to think out of the box
- Ability to present complex issues persuasively and simply
- Ability to contextualize global trends in accordance with dynamics of the operating working environment
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing skills and proven ability to produce quality and analytical reports within the shortest period of time

### Qualifications and Professional Experience

- Advanced university degree and/or professional background in institutional/governance aspects of natural resource management and environment;
- 15 years of relevant professional experience;
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience in applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Preferably 5 years of experience in international development cooperation;
- Fluency in English, both written and spoken;
- Competent in usage of MS Office programmes (MS Word, Excel, Power point);
- Experience working in Asia/the Middle East (experience in Iran will be an asset); and
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

## 9. Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' which are available here:





<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>. The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultants must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

## **10. Conflict of Interest**

### **Conflict of interest due to past engagement**

UNDP commissioning units may not assign consultants to the evaluation of UNDAFs, country programmes, outcomes, sectors and thematic areas in which they have had prior involvement whether in design, implementation, decision-making or financing. Following this principle, UNDP staff members — including advisers based in regional centres and headquarters units, civil servants or employees of NGOs that may be or have been directly or indirectly related to the programme or project — should not take part in the evaluation team. More broadly, UNDP programme units should consider whether conducting multiple assignments could create a conflict of interest. Many consultants and evaluators undertake numerous assignments for UNDP and its partners during the course of their professional careers. This can include a mixture of evaluation and advisory roles with multiple agencies at different levels. Programme units should make a judgement as to whether a consultant with a high reliance on work with UNDP may preclude them from producing an impartial evaluation. The ERC gives a history of evaluations undertaken by an evaluator in recent years.

### **Conflict of interest to due potential future involvement**

Programme units must ensure that the evaluators will not be rendering any service (related or unrelated to the subject of the evaluation) to the programme unit of the project or outcome being evaluated in the immediate future. Evaluators should not subsequently be engaged in the implementation of a programme or project that was the subject of their evaluation. Equally, evaluators should not be engaged as designers of next phases of projects that they have evaluated.

### **Evaluator's obligation to reveal any potential conflicts of interest**

Evaluators must inform UNDP and stakeholders of any potential or actual conflict of interest. The evaluation report should address any potential or actual conflict of interest and indicate measures put in place to mitigate its negative consequences. If a conflict of interest is uncovered or arises during the evaluation, the organization should determine whether the evaluator should be dismissed and/or the evaluation terminated.

### **Location:**

Tehran, Iran (*Given the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic and travel restrictions that are in place, the consultant may be required to conduct many of the in- person missions/activities remotely using electronic conferencing means. However, required travel costs could be included into the financial proposal so that travel to Tehran can be done if/when restrictions are lifted*)

### **Supervision and Verification:**

The tasks will be performed under overall supervision of Resident Representative (RR). International consultant work directly with Head of Development Effectiveness Unit.

#### **Payment Term:**

In full consideration for the services performed by the contractor under the terms of this contract the UNDP shall pay the contractor the total agreed and contracted amount of EUR 15,100 in one instalment after completion of the work and finalization and approval of the evaluation report, and against submission of signed invoiced and certificate of payment form (COP):

No.	Output/Deliverables	Due Date	Amount (EUR)
1	Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report	2 November 2021	3000
2	A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the IEC and partners	30 November 2021	9000
3	Final evaluation report	15 December 2021	3000
4	Communication		100

- Consultant shall not do any work, provide any equipment, materials and supplies or perform any other services which may result in any cost in excess of the contract's amount.
- The offer shall be submitted in EUR and the contract is also issued in EUR. However, for those consultants who are residing in Iran, the payment can be only made in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the request for payment/invoice shall be submitted in Iranian Rial using the UN official exchange rate of the day of request.
- The risks in fluctuations due to changes in the official exchange rate rests solely with the contractor -i.e. risks associated with currency appreciation or depreciation are expected to be factored in by the contractor when submitting an offer. For using UN Official Exchange Rate, please refer to <https://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/default.php>.
- Communication costs, costs of typing and preparing the soft and hard copies of documents and any other relevant costs regarding this activity.
- The travel costs to join duty station and repatriation, if applicable, shall be included in the financial proposal.
- Upon receiving and verification of deliverables, payments will be transferred by UNDP to the account number of the consultant introduced through an official letter.
- Payments will be made according to UNDP regulations as explained in the contract documents.
- Payments will be made to the consultant against invoices submitted by the consultant.
- If the contractor is required to travel inside the country, such arrangement shall be fully coordinated in advance with UNDP. The cost of such travels will be covered by UNDP, i.e., the travel cost is excluded from the total consultancy fee. The travel arrangements should be in line with UNDP rules and regulations.

## 11. Travel Requirements:

If travel is required under the contract, the individual contractor shall:

- Obtain the required Security Clearance from UNDP office (the details of travel including date of departure and arrival, accommodation and purpose of travel shall be submitted to UNDP office 2 working days before date of travel);
- Undertake the training courses on BSAFE and provide UNDP with the certificate. The link to access the course is <https://training.dss.un.org/course/category/6>
- Undertake a full medical examination including x-rays and obtain medical clearance from an UN- approved physician. This is only applicable for the Consultant on the age of 65 years or more.
- All ICs who will be hired during the COVID-19 Pandemic period are required to submit “Statement of Good Health” based on the WHO information on the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with underlining conditions before their travel.
- The Contractors shall consult with the delegated authorities on the bases on Travel requirements before date of departure and arrival, and inform UNDP accordingly.

## 12. TOR annexes

### Annex A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the evaluators

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- Project Original Documents, Logframe
- UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
- Strategic Results Framework (and proposed revision of the SRF)
- All Project Implementation
- Progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
- Audit reports
- All technical reports and plans produced by the project
- Oversight mission/back-to-office reports
- All monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team
- Financial and Administration documents

The following documents will also be available:

- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
- Minutes of the Project Steering Committee and other meetings
- Project site location maps

### Annex B. Key stakeholders and partners

- Department of Environment
- The Tehran Embassy of Japan (as the representative of the Government of Japan)
- The UNDP Tehran Office
- Ministry of Agriculture Jihad
- Ministry of Energy
- Forests, Range, and Watershed Organization
- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism

- Ministry of Health and Medical Education
- Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare
- Universities and research centres
- The pioneer farmers
- The implementing partners (local companies)
- The related NGOs

#### **Annex C: Evaluation matrix (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report)**

The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE EVALUATION MATRIX

Relevant Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/Success Standards	Methods for Data Analysis

#### **Annex D: Schedule of tasks, milestones and deliverables.**

Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.

#### **Annex E: Inception report template**

Follow the link: [Inception report content outline](#)

#### **Annex I: Required format for the evaluation report.**

The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports. Follow the link: [Evaluation report template and quality standards](#)

#### **Annex J: Evaluation Recommendations.**

Follow the link: [Evaluation Management Response Template](#)

#### **Annex K: Evaluation Quality Assessment**

Evaluations commissioned by UNDP country offices are subject to a quality assessment, including this evaluation. Final evaluation reports will be uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC site) after the evaluations complete. IEO will later undertake the quality assessment and assign a rating. IEO will notify the assessment results to country offices and make the results publicized in the ERC site. UNDP Lao PDR aims to ensure evaluation quality. To do so, the consultant should put in place the quality control of deliverables. Also, consultants should familiarize themselves with rating criteria and assessment questions outlined in the Section six of [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#)

#### **Annex L: Code of conduct.**

UNDP requests each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the 'Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the United Nations system', which may be made available as an attachment to the evaluation report. Follow this link: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

## Annex II: Itinerary of Activities of the Final Evaluation Mission

	Title	Position	Contact Info	Date	Time
<b>Tehran</b>	Mehri Asnaashari	National Project Manager	9127245039	17-Nov	9:00
	Arezoo Ashrafizadeh	Manager of Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Office	2142781046	17-Nov	10:30
	Mohsen Soleimani Roozbahani	Director of Environmental and Economic and Social Development Programs of the United Nations Development Programme	9128157800	17-Nov	12:00
	Sarah Koochaki	United Nations Development Office Program Officer	2122860925	17-Nov	14:00
	Dr. Lahijanzadeh	National Project Executive and Deputy of Marine Environment and Wetlands	2142781712	18-Nov	9:00
	Dr. Akbari	Deputy Minister of Water and Soil Minister of Agriculture Jihad	2188947060	18-Nov	10:30
	Dr. Javanbakht	Deputy Minister of Water and Sewage	2143680101	18-Nov	12:00
	Dr. Spry *	Director General of International Sustainable Development Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2161154413	18-Nov	14:00
	Akawa Kazutoshi *	Ambassador of Japan	2122660710	18-Nov	16:00

<b>East Azerbaijan</b>	Akbar Fathi	Head of organization Agricultural Jihad Organization	4134438000	21-Nov	9:00
	Ayatollah Ebadpour	Director of Agricultural Extension Coordination MoJ	9143261170	21-Nov	10:00
	Atabak Mohammadi Orsi	Head of Promotion Department MOJ	9143073581	In person	
	Asghar Hamdast	Promoting Expert MoJ	9144321228	In person	
	Seyed Farhad Dori	Jahad Department, head of the promotion department of Ajabshir county	9144011530	In person	
	Nasser Siamy	Jahad Department, Head of Malekan City Promotion	9147625242	In person	
	Mansour Zeinalzadeh	Promoter/Facilitator	9146467993	In person	

	Hassan Abbasnejad	Director General of the Department of Environmental Protection	4133346612	21-Nov	15:00
	Davood Ghanipour	Vice President of Natural Environment	9144057139	In person	
	Lida Partonia	Head of Public Participation	9144085279	In person	
	Yadollah Azarhava	Technical Expert	9149119864	In person	
	Hossein Mohammadi	Agricultural Research Center Researcher	9144477404	22-Nov	10:00
	Shirin Abdollahi	Executive Company	9147277767	22-Nov	11:00
	Shabnam Pashayi	Executive Company	9367079523	22-Nov	12:00
	Mahdieh Feizpour *	Executive Company	9146432367	22-Nov	13:00
	Khosrow Mohammadi	Executive Company	9148927848	22-Nov	14:00
	Mohammad Mesbah	Executive Company	9149170744	22-Nov	15:00
	Afifa Mousavi	Rural Women Expert	9055310636	22-Nov	16:00
	Hussain Pak Nia	Director of The Office of Public Partnerships	9141212459	23-Nov	9:00
	Javad Rahmati	Deputy Governor for Development Affairs Coordination	4135291500	23-Nov	10:00
	Mostafavi	Establishment of sustainable agriculture	9143223039	23-Nov	11:00
	Karimi	Managing Director of Saman	9143002665	23-Nov	12:00
	Hanify dust	Managing Director of Saman	9141783287	23-Nov	13:00
	Fatemeh Rezanejad	Contributor to livelihood diversification project	9143042685	In person	
	Farzaneh Hajizadeh	Contributor to livelihood diversification project	9364839229	In person	

West Azerbaijan	Akbar Keramati	Head of organization Agricultural Jihad Organization	4432620956	24-Nov	9:00
	Bitah Ahmadian	Director of Agricultural Extension Coordination	9144460346	24-Nov	10:00
	Behrouz Khezhloo	Head of Promotion Department	9143478291	24-Nov	11:00
	Roqieh Heidarzadeh	Head of Education Department of Promoting Beneficiaries	9143409609	24-Nov	12:00
	Behzad Ghanbari	Technical Deputy of Miandoab County Managemen	9143808842	24-Nov	13:00
	Ramin Hamidi	Head of Promotion of Urmia City	9144474014	In person	
	Mehran Nazari	Director General of the Department of Environmental Protection	044-33827706	In person	
	Alireza Seyed Ghorishi	Director of Education Department	9144403872	24-Nov	14:00



	Vahidreza Verdinejad	Professor Urmia University	9147117073	24-Nov	15:00
	Latif Haqqi	Board of Directors and Facilitator of Daneshpajouhan Company	9144390212	24-Nov	16:00
	Leila Vojdan *	CEO of Daneshpagan	9141407115	25-Nov	9:00
	Nowruz shahamat Azar	Board of Directors and Facilitator of Padideh Sabz Anil Co	9143814770	25-Nov	10:00
	Fereydun Khanabaei	Director of The Office of Public Partnerships	9144741990	25-Nov	11:00
	Aydin Rahmani	Deputy Governor for Development Affairs Coordination	4431972000	25-Nov	12:00
	Abbas Fathi	Establishment of sustainable agriculture	9141802583	In person	
	Arshad Mahmoodi	Establishment of sustainable agriculture	9141417240	In person	
	Roqieh Hassanzadeh	Member of Rural Fund	9385905206	In person	
	Mrs. Bayazidi	Mrs. Bayazidi	9149486725	In person	
	Idris Wahhabi	Managing Director of Saman	9143876264	In person	

<b>Tehran and Alborz (Continued)</b>	Seyed Majid Mirlatifi	Professor, Tarbiat Modares University	9121019308	25-Nov	13:00
	Nastaran Mousavi	Compatible Livelihood Consultant, Integrated Project	9121765049	25-Nov	14:00
	Seyed Babak Mousavinejad	Project Capacity Building, PTD Project	9120299516	25-Nov	14:30
	Ahmad Lotfi	Project Consultant	9121076419	25-Nov	15:00
	Sara Bagheri *	PTD Instructor	9399791251	25-Nov	15:30
	Hamid Farahani Rad	Project Evaluator	9122360208	25-Nov	16:00
	Neda Falsafi	(former project coordinator)	9177141421	27-Nov	9:00
	Zahra Amjadian	Former livelihood project executive and economic valuation expert	9122239685	27-Nov	10:00
	Amir Alam beigi	Socioeconomic Evaluator of Phases 3 to 5	9122014972	27-Nov	11:00
	Rohollah Rezaei	Socioeconomic evaluator of phases 6 to 7	9127425781	27-Nov	12:00
	Hossein Dehghani Sanij	Faculty Member and Head of Agricultural Engineering Institute- Integrated Project Consultant	9121675238	27-Nov	13:00

### Annex III: Persons Interviewed

	Title	Position	Contact Info	Date	Time
Tehran	Mehri Asnaashari	National Project Manager	9127245039	17-Nov	9:00
	Mohsen Soleimani Roozbahani	Director of Environmental and Economic and Social Development Programs of the United Nations Development Programme	9128157800	17-Nov	12:00
	Sarah Koochaki	United Nations Development Office Program Officer	2122860925	17-Nov	14:00
	Mr. Golriz *	Director General of International Sustainable Development Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2161154413	18-Nov	14:00

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	Nasser Siamy	Jahad Department, Head of Malekan City Promotion	9147625242	In person	
	Hassan Abbasnejad	Director General of the Department of Environmental Protection	4133346612	21-Nov	15:00
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	Bitah Ahmadian	Director of Agricultural Extension Coordination	9144460346	24-Nov	10:00
	Behrouz Khezarloo	Head of Promotion Department	9143478291	24-Nov	11:00
	Roqieh Heidarzadeh	Head of Education Department of Promoting Beneficiaries	9143409609	24-Nov	12:00
	Behzad Ghanbari	Technical Deputy of Miandoab County Management	9143808842	24-Nov	13:00
	Ramin Hamidi	Head of Promotion of Urmia City	9144474014	In person	
	Dr. Jabbari	Director General of the Department of Environmental Protection	044-33827706	In person	
	Alireza Seyed Ghorishi	Director of Education Department	9144403872	24-Nov	14:00
	Vahidreza Verdinejad	Professor Urmia University	9147117073	24-Nov	15:00
	Latif Haqqi	Board of Directors and Facilitator of Daneshpajouhan Company	9144390212	24-Nov	16:00
	Leila Vojdan *	CEO of Daneshpajouhan	9141407115	25-Nov	9:00
	Nowruz shahamat Azar	Board of Directors and Facilitator of Padideh Sabz Anil Co	9143814770	25-Nov	10:00
	Fereydon Khanbabaie	Director of The Office of Public Partnerships	9144741990	25-Nov	11:00
	Abbas Fathi	Establishment of sustainable agriculture	9141802583	In person	
	Roqieh Hassanzadeh	Member of Rural Fund	9385905206	In person	
	Hamid fazli	Farmer	9149486725	In person	
	Barat ali Shamsavar	Farmer	9143876264	In person	

	Nastaran Mousavi	Compatible Livelihood Consultant, Integrated Project	9121765049	25-Nov	14:00
	Seyed Babak Mousavinejad	Project Capacity Building, PTD Project	9120299516	25-Nov	14:30

Ahmad Lotfi	Project Consultant	9121076419	25-Nov	15:00
Sara Bagheri *	PTD Instructor	9399791251	25-Nov	15:30
Hamid Farahani Rad	Project Evaluator	9122360208	25-Nov	16:00
Neda Falsafi	(former project coordinator)	9177141421	27-Nov	9:00
Zahra Amjadian	Former livelihood project executive and economic valuation expert	9122239685	27-Nov	10:00
Hossein Dehghani Sanij	Faculty Member and Head of Agricultural Engineering Institute- Integrated Project Consultant	9121675238	27-Nov	13:00

## **Annex IV: Documents Reviewed**

- LU Phase I ProDoc 2014
- LU Phase II ProDoc 2015
- LU Phase III ProDoc 2016
- LU Phase IV ProDoc 2017+18
- LU Phase V ProDoc 2018+19
- LU Phase VI ProDoc 2019-20
- LU Phase VII ProDoc 2020+21
- Phase I annual Report
- Phase I & II Annual Report
- Phase III Annual Report
- Phase IV Annual Report
- Phase V Annual Report
- Phase VI Annual Report
- Phase VII Annual Report
- Fact Sheet CIWP

## **Annex V: Summary of Field Visits**

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic situation International consultant could not visit Iran. National consultant had face-to-face interviews and also project site visits. International consultant joined interview through virtual means.

Mission initiated from 17<sup>th</sup> November with meeting with UNDP and PMU staff (Mehri Asnaashari, and Mohsen Soleimani Roozbahani). From Nov 27<sup>th</sup> to Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting conducted with Stakeholders including beneficiaries in West and East Azerbaijan. The field visits and interviews continued from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of November in Tehran and Alborz. Detail list of individuals consulted are listed in the Annex III.



## Annex VI: Evaluation Question Matrix

<b><u>Evaluation Criteria/Questions</u></b>	<b><u>Indicators</u></b>	<b><u>Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Methodology</u></b>
<b>Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?</b>			
<b>Relevance:</b> How does the project related to the main objective of the country priorities and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project objectives and activities related to objective of priorities at national, local and regional level</li> <li>• Consistency and contribution to national development strategies</li> <li>• Stakeholder views on project significance and potential impact related to the project objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents, report vs Government development plans</li> <li>• Interview with authorities at different level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project report review in the light of government's national development priorities</li> <li>• Interviews with relevant personnel</li> </ul>
<b>Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?</b>			
<b>Achievements:</b> Are there indications that the project has completed its final targets that contributed to, or enabled progress towards mainstreaming sustainable agriculture and ecosystem based wetland management in the wetland and agriculture development of Iran for improved ecosystem resilience and reduced vulnerability of livelihoods to climate shocks. Has awareness generation among communities living in Lake Uromiyeh basin conducted to change their attitude for reducing risks to wetlands and biodiversity? Are community empowered with skills, knowledge, partnerships and institutions for managing SA to reduce vulnerability to climate change and increase resilience of natural and social capital?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on successful implementation of SA practices</li> <li>• Population status of key species</li> <li>• Information on improved livelihood or change in yield, less use of water etc.</li> <li>• Reduction in climate change risk.</li> <li>• Improved ecosystem resilience and reduction of vulnerability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Reports</li> <li>• Interview with stakeholders.</li> <li>• Observation in the field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of project reports/documents.</li> <li>• Interaction with local to national level stakeholders.</li> <li>• Field observation.</li> </ul>

Is result framework appropriate to analyse the progress towards the development objectives? Are activities and indicators SMART?			
<b>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting and project communications supporting the project's implementation?</b>			
<b>Efficiency:</b> Was the project implemented efficiently in-line with international and national norms and standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasonableness of the costs relative to scale of outputs generated</li> <li>Efficiencies in project delivery modalities</li> <li>Consistency and contribution to national development strategies</li> <li>Changes in project circumstances that may have affected the project relevance and effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial statements</li> <li>Project structure and function</li> <li>Project document and annual reports</li> <li>Experience of project staffs and other relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of financial statements.</li> <li>Analysis of project structure and functionalities</li> <li>Analysis of project circumstances in project document (past and present)</li> <li>Interaction with relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness:</b> To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of achievement of expected outcomes or objectives to date</li> <li>Long term changes in agricultural practices and wetland management, Lake Uromiyeh basin and management processes, practices and awareness that can be attributable to the project</li> <li>Enhanced capacity of relevant institutions</li> <li>Favourable management option and effective implementation of efficient and sustainable agricultural practices and wetland management</li> <li>Participation of women in all activities of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in the ground situation observed.</li> <li>Policy/strategy or program formulation activities included women and their issues incorporated.</li> <li>Policies/strategies/ programs effectively implemented</li> <li>Institutions strengthened</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report with information on effective implementation of activities and strategies</li> <li>Report on intuition setup</li> <li>Interaction with the policy level people to ground level communities and field staffs.</li> <li>Polity document review report.</li> <li>Field verification of activities</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts:</b> Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress towards rehabilitation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved monitoring.</li> <li>Increase in knowledge among communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Reports</li> <li>Interview with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of project reports/documents.</li> </ul>

Lake Uromiyeh, increased awareness among the communities, sustainable agriculture and ecosystem based wetland management visible?	regarding SA and wetland management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable improvements in wetland areas and level of water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation in the field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with local to national level stakeholders.</li> <li>• Field observation.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			
<b>Sustainability:</b> To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree to which outputs and outcomes are embedded within the institutional framework (policy, laws, organizations, procedures)</li> <li>• Implementation of measures to assist financial sustainability of project results</li> <li>• Observable changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as a result of the project</li> <li>• Change in knowledge among the local communities</li> <li>• Measurable improvements from baseline levels in knowledge and skills of targeted staffs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project report</li> <li>• Observation in the field</li> <li>• Interview with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of project reports.</li> <li>• Observation in the field to see impact on the ground</li> <li>• Interaction with stakeholders</li> </ul>

## Annex VII: Summary Evaluation of Project Achievements by Objectives and Outcomes

The Project Result Framework in the Project Document was reviewed in the Inception Report. The present evaluation matrix uses the version contained in the Inception Report and also used by the MTR.

### KEY:

**GREEN** = Indicators show achievement successful at the end of the Project.

**YELLOW** = Indicators show achievement nearly successful at the end of the Project.

**RED** = Indicators not achieved at the end of Project.

HATCHED COLOUR = estimate; situation either unclear or indicator inadequate to make a firm assessment against.

**Project Objective:** To establish an effective management system to systematically remove or substantially mitigate threats facing globally significant biodiversity and sustainability at two WPA demonstration sites, while ensuring that the lessons learned are absorbed within WPA management systems throughout Iran.”

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of project target <sup>4</sup>	Source of Information	Cumulative progress
Outcome 1					
Outcome 2					
Outcome 3					
<b>Phase I &amp; II</b>					

Output 1			<p>-Field level activities along with planning and budgeting within national system to ensure and sustain implementation of SA techniques for next cultivation sessions in 41 villages.</p> <p>-Identifying 12 satellite villages adjacent to existing 41 sites and introducing SA techniques covering at least 8400 hectares of farms and orchards,</p> <p>-M&amp;E of indicative farm results (particularly water saving) through expanding and using established monitoring system.</p> <p>-Identifying and supporting water-friendly alternative livelihoods as a complementary</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SA techniques implemented in 41 pilots of SA project first phase. 13000 individuals from 41 villages were introduced to SA techniques and 75% are implementing at least one SA technique in their farms and orchards. In the second phase 12 villages adjacent to 41 villages of first phase were identified for implementation of SA techniques. A knowledge sharing workshops were also conducted with series of field visits to earlier 41 pilot sites.</li> <li>• A professional independent team from Tarbiat Modarres University and Agricultural Engineering Research Center were contracted for establishing project monitoring system and equipment in selected farms and orchards that implemented SA practices. An established monitoring system generated data constantly and analysed. The findings indicates that an average of 9.5% water saving took place with the SA techniques which is simple and cost-free.</li> <li>• 2 villages from SA sites were selected to pilot the water-friendly alternative livelihood. A local NGO and a university were contracted to establish and build the capacity of 9 working groups each focusing on priority livelihoods identified in participatory workshops with the presence of local community and farmers. More than 150 individuals were benefitted from the first 2 pilots and 8 new alternative livelihoods are established and are practicing water-friendly livelihoods.</li> <li>• A SWOT analysis was conducted to identify Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats with regards to establishment of Local Water Management Networks (LWMN) in the project pilot sites. 2 villages from SA sites were selected to pilot LWMN. The process contributed in enhancement of local capacities regarding efficient water distribution and management and establishment of two LWMN.</li> <li>• A series of activities including “SA mobile fair”, “street theatre”, “farmers experience exchange” and “field visits” were conducted which was attended by 5000 farmers and their family members. It helped to convey the message of the project to more farmers in the first 41 pilot sites.</li> </ul>
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			<p>element of sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>-Supporting formation of local farmer initiatives (networks, cooperatives, etc.) on better water management.</p> <p>-Extending SA techniques to farms of less exposed farmers in 41 villages including demonstration visits.</p> <p>Documentation and analysis of SA process, technical results, good practices and lessons learnt to develop a model for further advocating and up-scaling sustainable agriculture at basin level as well as incentivising it in the long term.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 7 minutes documentary film on “modelling local community participation for LU restoration”, a 26 minutes documentary film on “SA implementation process”, and a 16 minutes documentary on “public participation in LU restoration” were produced and 1000 copies distributed to the public at local, provincial and national levels. Similarly, the experience and lessons learned were published and 1000 copies were distributed to the public.</li> <li>• 4 quarterly reports were developed and shared with different stakeholders. Monthly progress reports were developed and shared among the implementing partners. National project steering committee held regular M&amp;E and planning meetings on a quarterly basis. Monthly M&amp;E meetings were held to keep the project on track. Annual report was developed and submitted to UNDP at end of each year. A technical expert was hired for project coordination.</li> </ul>
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			-Project coordination, monitoring and regular follow ups (includes office expenses and possible staff requirement).		
Output 2			<p>-Reviewing SA methodology based on lessons learnt and establishing organisational framework at local and provincial level.</p> <p>-Introduction of sustainable agriculture related approaches to local community trust building, formation of farmer volunteer groups and demonstration visits.</p> <p>-Implementation of SA techniques at farm level based on participatory farm action plan.</p> <p>-Establishing M&amp;E mechanisms including</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The methodology was updated with inputs from local farmers and executive partners, MoAJ experts and research centers, provincial DoE as well as CIWP experts and consultants. The project organisational framework was also reviewed and National Technical and Implementation Coordinator was substitute with National Steering Committee bringing collective knowledge and enhancing intersectoral integrated management of the project.</li> <li>• Facilitators were trained to work effectively with local communities. More than 1500 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 15 new pilot sites. 15 volunteer groups formed by 500 farmers were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards. Besides, more than 2000 farmers and their family members from 15 new pilot sites attended SA mobile fairs and street theatres and learned about SA techniques.</li> <li>• Baseline data were collected from 15 SA pilot areas and analysed and also identified actions needed. PDMs for main crops and orchards were developed in participation with local farmers and executive partners together with MoAJ research centers and project consultants. The exclusive farm action plans were also developed using PDMs adjusted by farm scanning process.</li> <li>• SA techniques were applied in more than 450 farms/orchards as models for water/chemical saving in 15 new pilots and visited by at least 1500 neighboring farmers as observers and future SA practitioners.</li> </ul>

			<p>monitoring equipment at farm level.</p> <p>-Capacity building for MoAJ extension offices in LUB on establishment of SA.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The monitoring system was established, data was constantly collected and analysed. The results indicate that considerable water saving (an average of 30%) is achieved through application SA techniques by the end of harvest season.</li> <li>• Several capacity building workshops were held for more than 200 agriculture engineers from MoAJ extension offices and local executive companies were trained to facilitate the project and assist local farmers in application of SA techniques aiming for LU restoration.</li> </ul>
Output 3			<p>-Capacity building for proper awareness raising among local communities and authorities.</p> <p>-Developing and implementing a public awareness campaign on water saving and biodiversity conservation at basin level through active participation of local communities, authorities and the media.</p> <p>-Utilising ITC for participatory monitoring of environmental condition and SA activities at LUB as</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 20 local NGO members in E/W Azerbaijan were trained on participatory education. More than 25 field staffs from key government offices including DoE, MoAJ, Regional Water Authority in E/W Azerbaijan were trained on participatory education and planning.</li> <li>• The awareness campaign website is created in which public awareness is raised and their engagement in LU restoration is promoted. The public awareness campaign is activated in social networks including application such as Telegram and Instagram. Several video clips on LU restoration were developed and distributed to public.</li> <li>• A dedicated SMS panel is purchased and a database of at least 5,000 farmers' mobile number is developed. CIWP in collaboration with MoAJ and DoE E/W Azerbaijan specified four major topics including "Wetland services in general", "LU ecosystem services in particular", "LU present situation/problems" and "possible solutions" and proper messages for each topic promoting local community participation in LU restoration were developed and sent to farmers in 75 pilot sites. At least 164,00 messages promoting local community participation in LU restoration are sent to farmers in 75 pilot sites.</li> <li>• The integrated management plans for sustainable management of Ghorighol water supply canal is developed and implementation initiated. The integrated management plans for sustainable utilisation of Ghara-Gheshlagh vegetation is in progress.</li> </ul>

			<p>well as dissemination of informative and training materials on local community role in restoration of Lake Urmia, SA and endangered biodiversity.</p> <p>Support participatory management and conservation of at least 2 main LU satellite wetlands as backup ecosystems for LU critical situation.</p>		
<b>Phase III</b>					
Output 1	<p>-All farmers in 63 pilots directly approached villages (Year I &amp; II) are fully introduced to SA techniques and at least 65% implementing one SA technique in their farms and orchards.</p>		<p>Field level activities along with planning and budgeting within national system to ensure and sustainable implementation of SA techniques in 63 villages.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of SA techniques accomplished involving 7000 farmers for the 5th and 6th seasons by local executive companies supported by CIWP and MoAJ.</li> <li>• 12 satellite villages adjacent to 63 pilots were identified and implementation of SA techniques for autumn/sping crops were completed involving 1300 farmers.</li> <li>• 9 capacity building workshops on participatory planning, facilitation and intersectoral cooperation, were conducted in West and East Azerbaijan for managers and experts of MoAJ, DoE and Water Authorities. 230 individuals were capacitated through this program.</li> </ul>

	<p>-At least 15% of farmers implement SA techniques in each 12 satellite village (phase III).</p> <p>-At least 4 capacity building program implemented for MoAJ staff, executive companies and NGOs.</p> <p>-SA methodology is reviewed and updated.</p>		<p>-Extending SA techniques to farms of less exposed farmers in 12 satellite villages including demonstration visits.</p> <p>-Capacity building for MoAJ/executive companies/NGOs on establishment of SA in LUB.</p> <p>-Reviewing SA methodology based on lessons learnt and establishing organisational framework at local and provincial level.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Agriculture methodology is reviewed and updated in a participatory workshop with MoAJ and local IPs.</li> </ul>
Output 2	<p>-All farmers in 15 villages are introduced to LU restoration via establishment of SA and at least 20% are implementing SA techniques in their farm.</p> <p>-SA techniques are implemented in all</p>		<p>-Introduction of SA related approaches to local community, Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA), trust building, formation of farmer volunteer groups and demonstration visits.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1500 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 15 new pilots through 200 trust building and 150 PRA workshops. More than 500 farmers forming 15 volunteer groups were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards.</li> <li>• Baseline data in 15 SA pilot sites were collected, analysed and required actions were determined. More than 500 farmers implemented at least 3 SA techniques in farms. The selected techniques were extracted from PDMs. More than 2000 farmers and their family members in 15 new pilot sites attended and visited SA Mobile fairs and street theaters.They</li> </ul>

	<p>farms owned by volunteer farmers.</p> <p>-Monitoring system including monitoring equipments are established in at least 8% of project sites.</p> <p>-A SA booklet is developed in which SA process, technical results, good practices and lessons learnt are documented.</p> <p>-Four quarterly reports and one annual report are produced.</p>		<p>-Implementation of SA techniques at farm level based on participatory farm action plans.</p> <p>-Monitoring and evaluation of indicative farm results (particularly water saving) through expanding and using established monitoring system including equipment at farm level.</p> <p>-Documentation and analysis of SA process, technical results, good practices and lessons learnt to develop a model for further advocating and up-scaling SA at basin level as well as incentivizing it in the long term.</p> <p>-Project coordination, monitoring, reporting and regular follow ups</p>		<p>observed and received training on SA techniques during 200 workshops by MoAJ research center and IPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring tools and equipment to observe and check water consumption including Partial flume, humidity meter and Traym pipes were installed in selected farms and orchards. An average of 35% water saving was achieved in the farms and orchards from pilot sites. A socio-economic assessment was also conducted in 75 villages to evaluate the effectiveness of both techniques and social responsibility of local communities.</li> <li>• 1000 copies of an infographic procurement on SA was published both in English and Persian. A documentary was also produced on sustainable livelihood practices in Qarageshlag.</li> <li>• 4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities was prepared and shared with related stakeholders. 10 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and international), project consultants, managers and experts.</li> </ul>
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			(includes office equipment, expenses and possible staff requirement)		
Output 3	<p>-PES is initiated in at least 1 LU satellite wetlands</p> <p>-At least 2 community-led micro-credit fund is established to empower women in SA pilot sites (phase II).</p> <p>-Drought Risk Management model is adopted by water</p>		<p>-To apply payment for ecosystem services (PES) approach as a market-based mechanism, to encourage the conservation and restoration of LU via participation of local communities, NGOs, private sector, NGOs, Industrial bodies and the government.</p> <p>-Help start a community-led micro-credit fund that enables women to take out affordable loans and start water-friendly micro-enterprises as a long-term sustainable approach to LU restoration.</p> <p>-Support</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PES initiated in one LU satellite wetland (Kanibarazan). Baseline studies were carried out by the consultant. Several meetings and field visits with local communities were conducted for participatory planning of a PES scheme. Local communities' preference and priorities were identified in participatory session.</li> <li>• 45 workshops were conducted for empowerment of rural women. A number of 150 rural women were involved in the process. Micro-credit funds established in 3 villages and 7 environment friendly livelihoods (including sewing, carpet weaving, dried fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and dairy products). 29 person received loan from micro-credit funds.</li> <li>• An online monitoring station planned to be installed in Kanibarazan wetland to monitor the key qualitative parameters of water such as PH, EC etc. The station is powered by solar system and records the data on a web based database through a blue-box. With th help of 2 local NGOs as implementing partners pollutant sources of Kanibarazan and Qorigol wetlands have been identified and 4 workshops with a total number of 60 participants from local communities were organised to develop priority measures for decreasing pollutants discharge to the wetland. A training workshop was held to train related experts in east and west Azerbaijan on drought risk management software and was attended by 8 experts from provinces and HQ.</li> <li>• The SMS panel is active with a database of at least 9000 farmers' mobile numbers. CIWP in collaboration with MoAJ and DoE E/W Azerbaijan specified three major topics including "wetland definition and importance", "SA techniques and water management in farms", "Social responsibility". At least 350,000 messages promoting local community participation in LU restoration are sent to farmers in 90 pilot sites. More</li> </ul>



	<p>authorities and its utilisation is initiated to enhance water allocation to different water users in LUB.</p> <p>-Public engagement and transferring key message as a means of public awareness mechanism via established ICT system is continued in all pilot sites Phase (I, II, III).</p> <p>-Local water management cooperative is formed in 2 SA pilot sites of phase II.</p>		<p>establishment of LUB drought risk management model to enhance water allocation to different water users in LUB.</p> <p>-Embedding and promoting ICT based system established in phase II and using the tool for public engagement and transferring key messages as a means of public awareness mechanism, local community mobilisation for LU restoration, SA and biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>-Up-scaling local farmer initiatives (networks, cooperatives,etc) on better water resources management based</p>		<p>than 15 village festivals were held in which farmers in project pilot sites attended SMS competition with regard to local community role in LU restoration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local water management cooperative is formed in 3 SA pilot sites of phase III including Gerde Yaghoob, Qarageshlaq and Khezerloo villages and 150 farmers involved in this process. Local groups of water resource management were revived. 50 participatory workshops were conducted in villages to analyse water management related problems. 100 kilometers of water canals which are managed by local communities were degraded.</li> </ul>
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			on best practices and lessons learnt of phase II.		
<b>Phase IV</b>					
Output 1	<p>-Number of pilot sites participatory action plan for institutionalization of SA techniques in 49 pilot sites (phase II &amp; III) are developed and implemented.</p> <p>- Number of booklets published on establishment of SA techniques.</p> <p>-Number of individuals trained.</p>	<p>41 in 2016</p> <p>1 in 2016</p> <p>52 in 2016</p>	<p>- Participatory techniques are institutionalized in 49 pilot sites.</p> <p>- A booklet on institutionalizing local community participation in establishment of SA techniques is published.</p> <p>- At least 100 individuals including MoAJ/DoE staff, executive companies and NGOs are trained</p>	<p>-MoAJ-Local Implementing partners</p> <p>-National and Local implementing partners-MoAJ</p> <p>-National Implementing partner (private sector)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoAJ east &amp; west Azerbaijan agreed on supporting SA project in 49 villages until it is fully established. The farmers accompanied in the implementation process of SA techniques in the current autumn cropping season by local executive companies supported by CIWP and MoAJ based on “project effectiveness evaluation”. A “participatory action plan” was developed for each village.</li> <li>At least 98 field visits and 40 share fairs were conducted for the farmers in the autumn cropping season.</li> <li>At least 100 training workshops was held in the villages on the required subjects of autumn crops and orchards. Appropriate consultancy plan is also set for each village based on “participatory action plan”.</li> <li>1000 copies of brochure and an info-graphic sheet on SA achievements was published both in English and Persian. A report on achievements of SA project for water saving level in farms was published in electronic and printed copies.</li> <li>5 capacity building workshops on participatory planning, participatory tools for working with farmers were conducted in west and east Azerbaijan for 90 local IPs.</li> </ul>

Output 2	-Project best practices and lessons learned applied for updating implementation methodology.	3 in 2016	-Sustainable Agriculture methodology is reviewed and updated.	-National and Local implementing Partners- MoAJ, DoE, CIWP- Project consultants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA methodology is reviewed and updated in a participatory workshop with MoAJ and local IPs.</li> <li>2000 farmers were introduced to sustainable agriculture related approaches in 20 new pilot sites through 250 trust building and 200 PRA workshops. More than 600 farmers forming 20 volunteer groups were introduced to SA techniques and implemented them in their farms and orchards. Baseline data in 20 SA pilot sites were collected, analysed and required priority actions were determined.</li> <li>More than 600 farmers implemented at least 3 SA techniques in farms. The selected techniques were extracted from PDMs. More than 2000 farmers and their family members in 20 new pilot sites attended and visited SA mobile fairs. They received knowledge from more than 200 workshops by MoAJ research centre and local IPs.</li> <li>Monitoring tools and equipment to observe and check water consumption including Partial flume, humidity meter and Traym Pipes were installed in selected farms and orchards. An average of 35% water saving was achieved in pilot sites.</li> <li>4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities prepared and shared with related stakeholders. 35 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and international), project consultants, managers and experts to strengthened project coordination and monitoring.</li> </ul>
	-Number of village introduced to LU restoration via establishment of SA techniques	15 in 2016	-All farmers in 20 villages are introduced to LU restoration via establishment of SA and at least 25% are implementing SA techniques in their farm.	-MoAJ, DoE, RWA, LURP.	
	-Number of Sustainable agriculture techniques implemented in farms owned by volunteer farmers.	0 in 2016	-At least 3 SA techniques are implemented.	-MoAJ, Local Implementing partners, Volunteer farmers.	
	-Percentage of water saving occurred in pilot farms.	39 in 2016	-At least 35% water saved in farms owned by volunteer farmers.	-MoAJ, local implementing partners, Volunteer farmers, Independent monitoring team.	
	-Number of workshops held.	9 in 2016	-At least 10 capacity building program implemented for MoAJ staff, executive companies and NGOs in each.	-National Implementing partner.	

Output 3	- Number of individuals that will receive the LU public awareness campaign materials.	40,000	in	-By 2018, 50,000 individuals have received LU public awareness campaign material and join the movement.	- DoE, MoAJ, local implementing partners,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A documentary on Lake Urmia is beginning developed and 8 clips are produced and will be published after finalisation.</li> <li>• The SMS panel is active with a database of at least 9000 farmers mobile numbers. More than 4 villages festivals including various programs are planned for awareness raising.</li> <li>• 45 training and capacity building workshops were conducted in the villages. 7 environment friendly livelihoods (sewing, carpet weaving, dried fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and dairy products) is especially supported in 5 villages.</li> <li>• Local water management cooperative is formed in 3 SA pilot sites including Gerde Rasg, Ghepchangh and Marangalou villages. 150 farmers involved in the process. 50 participatory workshops were conducted in villages to analyse water management related problems.</li> <li>• 30 workshops were conducted for empowerment of rural women. 100 rural women were involved in the process. Micro-credit funds established in 2 villages. 20 individuals received the loan from micro-credit funds till now.</li> <li>• PES initiated in one LU satellite wetland (Kanibarazan). The results of baseline studies is used through implementation of two priority actions in the villages of Kanibazaran wetland. Several meetings and field visits with local communities were conducted for participatory planning of a PES scheme.</li> <li>• Priority actions are identified through a participatory process. Some actions including awareness raising workshops for hunters, formation of local monitoring groups, and establishment of a shooting club were been selected for implementation.</li> <li>• 2 monitoring platforms were established in Solduz and Kanibarazan wetlands. Seven parameters are measured in each of the stations and related data is recorded for further analysis.</li> </ul>
	- Number of public participation messages that will send to local communities.	120,000	in	-At least 150,00 SMS on public participation in restoration of LU is sent to local communities in project pilot sites.	-DoE, MoAJ, Local Implementing partners.	
	- Number of alternative livelihood established in pilot sites.					
	- Number of pilots establishing local water resources management networks.	2	in 2016	- At least 10 water-friendly alternative livelihood are established.	-DoE, MoAJ, Local NGOs and implementing partners.	
	- Number of women empowered by community led micro-credit funds.	3	in 2016	-Local farmer initiatives on better management of water resources is up-scaled in 2 pilot sites.	-DoE, MoAJ, RWA, Local implementing partners.	
	- Number of PES schemes established for enhancement of LU satellite wetlands.	60	in 2016	-At least 50 women are empowered in pilot sites.	-DoE, MoAJ, local implementing partners.	
	- Number LU satellite wetlands in which key endangered species are identified and conservation measures taken.	1	in 2016	-At least 2 PES schemes are established and implemented in 2 pilot sites.	-DoE, national and local implementing partners	
	- Numbers of LU satellite wetlands in which comprehensive monitoring	0	in 2016	-Key species in at least 3 LU satellite wetlands are identified	-DoE, national and local	

	mechanisms are established.	0 in 2016	and conservation messages are taken to protected endangered species.  -Comprehensive monitoring mechanisms are established in at least 2 main LU satellite wetlands.	implementing partners.  -DoE, national and local implementing partners	
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## Phase V

Output 1	-Number of reports produced  -Number of proposals supported by CIWP  -Number of knowledge and experience sharing events.	75 (2014-17)  75 (2014-17)  10000 (2014-17)	-Holistic understanding of “the knowledge and experience of how to adopt SA” is gained through conducting assessments and producing 35 reports for pilot sites (Phase III & IV).  -CIWP supports at least 15 proposals from implementing partners on institutionalising SA in 35 pilots based on results of the comprehensive assessment.  -At least 11000 farmers of 110 pilots are provided with	-MoAJ, local implementing partners, CIWP, Consultants  -Local implementing partners  -DoE, MoAJ, Farmers, CIWP, Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implementing partners carried out the participatory assessment and 35 analysis reports were submitted to the project which helped planning the activities. This analysis provide better illustration on better way to adopt SA.</li> <li>CIWP received 18 proposals from implementing companies. The results from the assessment helped the companies to develop the action plan for the new year through a participatory process involving farmers and MoAJ experts.</li> <li>About 70 knowledge sharing events including visits and share-fairs were held in pilot villages of phase III and IV. In west Azerbaijan 250 farmers (4visits, 60 farmers in each visit) visited the pilot sites in the provine. 2 other visits were held involving 240 participants to pilot sites in Miandoab and Malekan. In 5 visits to east Azerbaijan, 280 farmers had a visit to Moghan Kesht –o- Sanat to have first hand information. These farmers were provided training brochures packages.</li> <li>The stories and experiences of facilitators in working with the local communities documented and published in a booklet entitled “The footprint that remains” and 1000 copies distributed.</li> <li>11 capacity building workshops on monitoring and evaluation and reporting were held. A 6-day workshop with 2 international trainers from Praxis Institute was held. The subject of the workshop was “Participatory application of audiovisual tools in working with local communities”. The workshop was attended by 25 participants from 11 implementing companies.</li> <li>The provincial committee quarterly meetings were held in presence of representatives from related sectors of MoAJ including soil and water,</li> </ul>
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	<p>-Number of systematized and disseminated traceable good practices.</p> <p>-Number of legal and institutional obstacles addressed.</p> <p>-Number of organisations/sectors involved in SA-related procedures.</p> <p>-Number of new fundraising sources which are secured</p>	<p>8 (2014-17)</p> <p>-0 (2014-17)</p> <p>-3 (2014-17)</p> <p>-1 (2014-17)</p>	<p>practical knowledge on sustainable agriculture good practices using different outreach tools.</p> <p>-At least 2 traceable good practices are systematized and disseminated among LU stakeholders particularly MoAJ, DoE, LURP and the farmers.</p> <p>-At least 2 legal and institutional obstacles for implementing sustainable agriculture at provincial level identified and followed up, and remedial action defined, planned and implemented.</p> <p>-Fundraising plan for effective and efficient sourcing of funds for outscaling SA activities within LU and other basins in Iran is developed and at least 2 new funding sources is secured.</p> <p>-Families (at least 110 women and 110 youth) of volunteer farmers of</p>	<p>implementing partners.</p> <p>-DoE, MoAJ, Farmers, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>-DoE, MoAJ, Farmers, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>-DoE, CIWP, MoAJ, Local implementing partners.</p>	<p>cultivation and plant breeding departments. There were negotiations with related sectors on budget allocation for the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 new villages from the basin were identified and budget approved.</li> <li>• The integrated approach was piloted in 4 villages involving 10-12 families in each villages. These families themselves are involved in SA practices, and their family members are also engaged in the related projects such as sustainable livelihoods, micro-credit funds, PES, etc.</li> </ul>
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	-Number of farmers' family member (women and Youth) engaged in LU restoration and empowered.	-250 (2014-17)	11 pilots previously involved in SA are engaged in LU restoration and empowered.	-DoE, MoAJ, Farmers, Local implementing partners	
Output 2	<p>-Number of proposals received on SA in 20 pilot sites and AL and MC in up to 4 new pilot sites accepted by the committee</p> <p>-Number of beneficiaries exposed to participatory action plans.</p> <p>-Number of prepared reports</p>	<p>0 in 2014-17</p> <p>0 in 2014-17</p> <p>0 in 2014-17</p> <p>0 in 2014-17</p>	<p>CIWP supports proposals from implementing partners on conducting SA in 20 new pilot sites and alternative livelihood and women micro-credit funds in up to 4 pilot sites.</p> <p>-At least 800 farmers benefit from implementation of participatory action plans in 20 new plot sites.</p> <p>-At least 2 reports are prepared on impact assessment of project regarding less water use and better socio economic</p> <p>-At least 4 best</p>	<p>-DoE, MoAJ, CIWP</p> <p>- MoAJ, DoE, RWA, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>-MoAJ, Local implementing partners</p> <p>-CIWP, MoAJ, local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 80 proposals were received under two themes including new ideas and star-up among which 6 were selected and awarded in a ceremony.</li> <li>• In each of the 20 new pilot sites, 15 farmers were directly engaged in the planning and implementation processes of the SA while 25 other farmers were indirectly involved.</li> <li>• The results of monitoring techniques applied in about 50 pilot farms indicate about 34% water saving and 40% increase in irrigation efficiency. In 4 training workshops a total number of 120 experts were trained on data collection and analysis. The results of applying moisture sensors which show the best irrigation frequency based on the need of the crops, indicate about 63% water saving. The meta-analysis study, reviewed the monitoring data of 4 previous years of the project and the inter-relation of different technique. The results of this study would identify the most effective techniques and lead to better planning of the project in next phases.</li> <li>• 6 Dirin Dirin pieces of social comedy animation were produced and published in the social media, DoE telegram channel, CIWP Aparat and website. CIWP success story in LU restoration was published in WLI bulletin. A clip was published regarding the held exhibition on the project achievements. A festival was held to collect innovative ideas for LU restoration with participation of local communities.</li> </ul>

	<p>-Number of best practices identified and published.</p> <p>-Number of progress reports, number of meetings of national working groups, number of field visits</p>	0 in 2014-17	<p>practices are identified and published.</p> <p>-9 progress reports (6bimonthly, 1 mid-year, 1 annual, 1closure) are prepared and disseminated. At least 7 meetings of National working group are conducted. At least 12 field visits by provincial staff and 5by national staffs are done.</p>	<p>implementing partners.</p> <p>-CIWP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 quarterly reports on progress towards work plan activities prepared and shared with related stakeholders. A total of 50 visits to the pilot sites were conducted by high level authorities (national and International), project consultants, managers and experts. 3 meetings of National Steering Working Groups were held.</li> </ul>
Output 3	<p>-Number of pilot villages supported by MoAJ/LURP</p> <p>-Number of beneficiaries supported</p> <p>-Number of wetlands to which</p>	<p>50 in 2014-17</p> <p>0 in 2014-17</p> <p>1 in 2014-</p>	<p>-MoAJ/LURP recognize establishment of SA in LUB and provide financial support for at least 50 pilot villages.</p> <p>Responsible government entities provide financial/human resource support for 100 beneficiaries of women micro-credic fund and alternative livelihood.</p> <p>-SA experience for LU restoration in</p>	<p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, local implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, local implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a result of reflecting the achievements and best practices of the project to the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, the applied techniques were formally announced to the provincial organisations to be replicated. Close collaboration and communication has formed with LURP. The project experience was presented in the technical meeting of LURP which was held in Urmia and they also visited pilot sites. About 240 women were involved in this area and 14 livelihood initiative formed in LUB including carpet weaving, fruit processing, traditional aviculture and tailoring. Some significant results of these initiatives include official registration of women cooperatives, official permit for weaving traditional carpets and marketing through carpets and marketing through social networks and receiving supportive loans for expanding their activities.</li> <li>• A 3-day international event was held jointly with Ramsar Regional Centre in which representative from 7 countries (Iraq, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Syria, Azerbaijan, Oman) in the region attended. In the workshop the project achievement in LU restoration were presented to the participants and their experiences were also shared and participants were also taken to the project sites for first-hand information.</li> </ul>

	SA experiences for LU restoration is introduced	17	introduced to at least 2 other wetlands in the country	implementing partners.	
Output 4	<p>-Number of PES schemes which are implemented.</p> <p>-Number of LU satellite wetlands for which integrated management plans are developed</p> <p>-Increased number of key species in pilot sites</p>	<p>1 in 2014-17.</p> <p>2 in 2014-17,</p> <p>0 in 2014-17</p>	<p>-At least 2 PES schemes are implemented in the pilot sites.</p> <p>-2 LU satellite wetlands are equipped with Integrated Management Plan and all stakeholders are working together to save them.</p> <p>-Local communities are engaged and take action towards LU biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, Consultants, RWA, local NGOs and implementing partners.</p> <p>-DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, consultants, RWA, Local NGOs.</p> <p>-DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, RWA, local NGOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kanibarazan ecotourism master plan was approved by Habitats office and Wetlands conservation and restoration office of DoE. Sustainable Agriculture was introduced to the farmers (about 40) from 2 villages (Khorkhore and Qaradagh) near Kanibarazan wetland and agreement was signed with the farmers in order to help enhancing the quality and quantity of water flow to the lake. Another PES scheme focused on livestock grazing. The related plan has been prepared in participatory workshops with the ranchers from 6 villages near Kanibarazan.</li> <li>• After finalisation of the wetland information center by the MP of Noroozloo the center was constructed. In addition, CIWP provided technical support for activating the wetland management secretariats of 4 wetlands (Gharegheshlagh, Solduz, Noroozloo, Kanibaraza). The secretariat of Gharegheshlagh wetlands started the process of revising its integrated management plan.</li> <li>• White-headed duck and goose were selected as targets of this conservation project. The implementing partners conducted some measures based on the plans they developed. The situation of the target ecosystem is better now.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase VI</b>					
Output 1	<p>-Number of village in which SA is embedded.</p> <p>-Number of farmer's family members (women and Youth) engaged in LU</p>	<p>90 (2014-18)</p> <p>110 (2014-18)</p>	<p>-MoAJ continues SA activities in 110 pilot sites of previous phases.</p> <p>Families (at least 150 women and 150 youth) of volunteer</p>	<p>MoAJ, local implementing partners, CIWP consultants.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implementing partners submitted to the project 57 analysis reports that were fed into planning of Phase VI. Arrangement were made to continue implementation in 44 SA pilot sites of Phase IV and V. 90 village of phase II and III were handed over to MoAJ.</li> <li>• Workshops were held to conduct efficiency assessment of the previous experience and elicit lessons learned in the piloted villages. This was conducted in a participatory approach to assess previous year's activities and their priority. Furthermore, training needs to sustain the outcomes</li> </ul>

	<p>restoration and empowered.</p> <p>- % of increase of public awareness among communities around the lake</p>		<p>farmers of 15 pilot sites previously involved in SA are engaged in LU restoration and empowered.</p> <p>-15% increase level of awareness of stakeholders and the public regarding the role of public participation in restoration of LU.</p>	<p>Implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP consultants, RWA, Local NGOs, Implementing partners</p>	<p>were identified. Accordingly, the contractors based their planning and implementation on these outcomes. 17 farmers from the previous phase participated in a workshop in Keik Abad Village, Mahabad and defined three training modules (Farm School: post-harvest Management in Apple Orchard; Farm School: autumn wheat coated seeds; Farmland levelling using laser leveller.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement of the 20% of the farmer household members in 13 pilot sites in development projects where three components of sustainable agriculture, livelihoods, and women micro-credit fund were integrated. Two village were selected for integrated projects and 11 villages for PTD project (totally 13 as mentioned above).</li> <li>• A 5-day capacity building workshop was held on participatory processes and teamwork approaches. About 500 farmers and experts of implementing companies had cross-visits of the other teams' activities and farms to exchange experiences. At least 60 events (workshop, meetings and ceremonies) were held on cropping patterns and irrigation methods.</li> <li>• To promote water efficient, wetland-friendly products an online platform was established (<a href="https://www.denizmarkasi.com">https://www.denizmarkasi.com</a>). The technical capacity, legal requirements and risks that stakeholders may face after handing over of this platform is being studied.</li> </ul>
Output 2	<p>-Number of pilots in which SA, non-farm livelihood (water-friendly livelihood) and micro-credit funds are piloted in an integrated way.</p> <p>-Number of local cooperatives/companies involved and</p>	<p>0 (2014-18)</p> <p>20 (2014-18)</p>	<p>-Integration of SA, non-farm livelihood (water-friendly livelihood) and micro-credit funds are piloted in 20 new villages.</p> <p>-30 local cooperatives/companies are involved and empowered in project</p>	<p>MoAJ, Local implementing partners, DoE</p> <p>MoAJ, DoE, RWA, local implementing partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted five workshops on monitoring and evaluation for IPs.</li> <li>• A 5-day workshop on participatory M&amp;E, reporting, and participation of implementing companies in west and east Azerbaijan for MOAJ, local companies, and NGOs.</li> <li>• 10 capacity building workshops on monitoring and evaluation and reporting for 38 participants from 19 implementing companies.</li> <li>• 15 farmers directly and 25 others indirectly were engaged in the planning and implementation processes of the SA each of 17 new pilot sites. As a result, and contrary to previous years, livelihood, SA, and water</li> </ul>

	empowered in project activities.  -% of water saving in new pilot sites based on monitoring reports.	Not available	activities.  -At least 20% of saving in water consumption in pilot farms	MoAJ, DoE, RWA, local implementing partners.	<p>management activities were integrated rather than being considered as island activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SA project was piloted in 17 new villages.</li> <li>• Water-friendly livelihoods were continued in 3 pilots from previous years and n 6 new pilot sites.</li> <li>• The livelihood project was piloted in 2 pilot sites from previous phases and in 9 new villages and 10 families from each village were involved.</li> <li>• More than 250 women were involved in livelihood activities. These initiatives resulted in official registration of women's cooperatives, official permit for traditional carpet weaving, and marketing through social networks and receiving supportive loans for expanding their activities. The financial support was provided to the cooperatives (7 cases in 2 provinces).</li> <li>• As an integral part of the activity, relevant knowledge-sharing and capacity building were pursued. At least 30 knowledge-sharing events including visits and share-fairs were held in pilot villages of phases IV, V and VI project to help future planning of the activities. In west Azerbaijan more than 250 farmers visited the pilot sites and in the east Azerbaijan more than 220 farmers visited the best practices in other pilot sites. Training brochures and packages were provided for each visit. 30 capacity building and training workshops were held for 320 participants (250 women and 70 men).</li> <li>• At least 180 women were involved in this area and 9 livelihood initiative formed in LUB including carpet weaving, fruit processing, traditional aviculture, and tailoring.</li> <li>• 68 pilot sites were monitored by implementing companies.</li> <li>• In 5 training workshops, a total of 120 experts were training on data collection and analysis.</li> </ul>
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Output 3	<p>-Number of new wetlands introduced to best practices.</p> <p>-Number of knowledge sharing mechanisms established for presenting project achievements at provincial and national levels.</p> <p>-The amount of allocated budget to SA, micro-credit funds and water-friendly livelihood by related organisations at provincial and national levels.</p>	<p>1 (2014-18)</p> <p>3 (2014-18)</p> <p>Not available</p>	<p>-The project best practices are identified and at least 2 for them are introduced and promoted at national and international levels.</p> <p>- 1 knowledge sharing platform to provide access to project results and lessons learnt to wider audience.</p> <p>-The project approach is adopted by related sectors at national and basin levels and at least US\$300,000 budget will be allocated for upscaling.</p>	<p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, MFA, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, local NGOs, Implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, RWA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A MoU was signed between DoE and MoAJ regarding implementation of best practices. The project experience was presented to LURP in two technical meetings which also included two visits to project sites by LURP.</li> <li>• Produced thematic comedy animation “Dirin Dirin” served as a tool communicating messages on ecosystem approach as well as wetlands conservation and restoration. During the Second Festival of Innovative Ideas for Restoration of LU four start-up ideas and four independent ideas were selected and rewarded. It is noteworthy that one of the winner ideas will be sponsored by the project in near future.</li> <li>• The four team members from Hamoon project were exposed to the CIWP’s knowledge and experience (one tour in EAZ and one in WAZ). Currently, the Hamoon team is using and integrating the lessons learned acquired from this study tour in their monitoring model and capacity development activities.</li> <li>• A 3-day international event was held with Ramsar Regional centre which was attended by seven countries. The experience from LU restoration was presented to the participants. On the 3rd day of the workshop, a field visit was arranged to the project sites.</li> <li>• The comprehensive data from phase I to VI (on water use and saving, chemical inputs etc.) was collected and reflected on project web site <a href="http://www.wetlandsproject.ir/">http://www.wetlandsproject.ir/</a></li> </ul>
Output 4	-Number of functional management mechanisms and priority actions implemented for LU	1 management structures, 2 priority actions 2014-18	-At least 2 implementation mechanisms are established and 3 priority actions implemented for MPs.	DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, Consultants, RWA, Local NGOs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 meetings were held by the local committee for the satellite wetlands of Lake Urmia. Monitoring reports (including monitoring reports of 5 wetlands) were submitted. In addition, CIWP provided technical support for achieving the wetland management secretariats of 5 wetlands (Ghare Gheshlaq, Solduz, Noroozloo, Kanibarazan and Ghourigol).</li> </ul>



	<p>satellite wetlands MPs.</p> <p>-Number of PES Schemes implemented</p> <p>-Number of biodiversity conservation activities implemented.</p> <p>-Number of accomplished activities of CEPA plan</p>	<p>1 (2014-18)</p> <p>2 (2014-18)</p> <p>2 (2014-18)</p>	<p>-1 new PES scheme implemented</p> <p>At least 2</p> <p>At least 3 main activities will be accomplished.</p>	<p>implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, consultants, RWA, local NGOs</p> <p>DoE, CIWP, consultants, Local implementing NGOs.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, RWA, local NGOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA was introduced to 50 farmers from two villages (Khorkhore and Qaradagh) near Kanibarazan wetland and following this an arrangement was signed with the farmers in order to help enhancing the quality and quantity of water flowing into the lake. A change in the approach was observed in the study conducted by the water consultant indicating improvement in water quality and quantity (59462.4m<sup>3</sup>/h) inflowing to wetlands.</li> <li>A student contest (painting and photography) was carried out in Kanibarazan to raise awareness. The event was also covered by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (at province level).</li> <li>Two participatory conservation action plans were developed by the implementing partners and four local groups (50 members) were formed and mobilized in LU satellite wetlands (Qara Gheshlagh and Hassan-Lou) to conduct conservation activities. They were also trained on migratory corridors, identifying habitat hotspots, identifying duck and goose species (in Ghare Ghishlaq) and the white-headed duck (in Hassan-Lou). Also a telescope was provided to the General Directorate of the Environment in Hassan-Lou for bird watching. An ecotour was arranged in Qara Gheshlagh in order to train the groups on biodiversity with the purpose of capacity development for tourism development (bird watching tourism).</li> </ul>
<b>Phase VIII</b>					
Output 1	-Number of wetlands with MPs recording a “moderate satisfactory” score as measured by scorecard for implementation effectiveness.	<p>No data</p> <p>Water level</p>	1 wetland	<p>DoE, MoAJ, regional water authorities, local communities and NGOs, MCHTH, MIMT, CIWP.</p> <p>-Wetland management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CIWP in collaboration with the targeted secretariats as well as the Office of Wetland Restoration (OWR), DOE, periodically monitored MP implementation and secretariats performance through administering questionnaires and meetings.</li> <li>As a result of the capacity development training provided by the CIWP to Kanibarazan Secretariat and the respective cross-sector coordination facilitated by the CIWP, competency has increased that the secretariat autonomously holds regular meetings to pursue MP implementation. In the regular meeting of secretariat various MP stakeholder gather to discuss wetland-related issues and collectively execute the MP. Kanibarazan’s environmental water right has been regularly released by the Regional Water Company of West Azerbaijan to prevent</li> </ul>



	<p>-Number of annual wetlands monitoring reports collected from the stakeholders and compiled by the secretariats</p> <p>-Number of implemented quick win initiatives in LU satellite wetlands</p>	<p>in 7 Jan 2020=1271.27m</p> <p>8 (2014-19)</p>	<p>-2 reports</p> <p>3 initiatives</p>	<p>committee, DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, Implementing partners.</p> <p>Wetland management committee, DoE, CIWP, Implementing partners.</p>	<p>its drying out and conserve its ecosystem functions and services (<a href="http://www.wnn.wrm.ir/cs/NewsCrawler/559/54739">http://www.wnn.wrm.ir/cs/NewsCrawler/559/54739</a>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to adaptively communicate with stakeholders during covid-19 outbreak, implement MPs, and submit periodic monitoring reports, the capacity of five secretariats encompassing seven members (including one female member) was enhance.</li> <li>• Quick win sub-projects aim at piloting implementation of priority actions stipulated in MPs. Accordingly, quick wins set an example for the MP stakeholders to observe how a cross-sector approach works and relevant priority actions are implemented. Five quick wins, an effort by the CIWP in consultation and collaboration with the targeted secretariats and participation of the local communities, were implemented in the target areas as follows: 1. Operationalizing a visitor center in Ghurigol International Wetland, West Azerbaijan, and developing ecotourism in Yousefabad Village and establishment of a group of local wetland guards (25 members); 2. Equipping and operationalizing ecotourism infrastructure in Solduz Wetland, Naghadeh; 3. Supporting community-based ecotourism in line with implementation of MPs in Nowruzlou Wetland, Miandoab County – establishment of a group of local tour guides (12 individuals); 4. Initiated Collection of local knowledge on wetlands as one the priority actions in MPs; 5. Protection of white-headed duck population in Hasanlou (Shurgol) Wetland, Naghadeh, through participation of local communities living around the wetland; to this end, end, a CBO was established and training was provided for the locals, and a participatory action plan was developed that will be carried out in the future.</li> <li>• Assistance was provided from the CIWP through elaborating the relevant MP priority actions to local committees and secretariats to expand their capacity in terms of ecotourism initiatives and sustainable tourism. This was pursued through publishing a tourism guidebook and supporting celebration of Tourism and Ecotourism Day in Kanibarazan Wetland (see a related newsfeed at: <a href="http://www.haje.ir/Newsdetails.aspx?itemid=15475">http://www.haje.ir/Newsdetails.aspx?itemid=15475</a>). Further to this, five websites were established in Gharagheshlagh, Nowruzlou, Kanibarazan, and Soldouz for awareness raising purposes about these wetlands and their ecotourism potential. In regard to capacity development of secretariats with the purpose of contributing to provision of an enabling environment to contribute to implementation of MPs, seven members from five secretariats were targeted where female members were involved as well (six men and one woman).</li> </ul>
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Output 2	<p>-Number of new pilot villages in which integrated approach has been implemented.</p> <p>-number of previous pilot villages in which sustainability is embedded.</p> <p>-Number of CEPA activities</p>	<p>15 pilot villages (2014-19)</p> <p>SA project (150 pilot villages) 2014-19.</p> <p>1 in each city (11 in total) 2014-19)</p>	<p>Sustainable Agriculture is embedded in 20 new sites and institutionalised in previous pilot sites.</p> <p>40 previous pilot sites which are the pilots of phase VI and V.</p> <p>-4 CEPA activities in LU and 6 in satellite wetlands (10 activities in total)</p>	<p>MoAJ, Local implementing partners, DoE, CIWP, Regional water authorities.</p> <p>MoAJ, Local implementing partners, DoE, CIWP, Regional water authorities.</p> <p>NGOs, CBOs, MoAJ, DoE, RWA, Local implementing partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The integrated approach was freshly piloted in new pilot villages (160% target achievement) through inception phase, meetings and visits to share agricultural local knowledge, and training workshops. Moreover, sustaining results was carried on in previously piloted villages (80% target achievement) where cumulatively 4,950 locals were engaged through orientation, introduction of SA techniques in a participatory manner, experience sharing by reference farmers, and training workshops (pre-cropping seed coating by biological fertilizers, plant nutrition, modern irrigation methods, principles of fertilization, drill hole fertilization, sugar beet seedlings, correct trimming for vineyards, tape irrigation). In addition to committed targets, in phase 7, monitoring activities were conducted in 11 pilots (49 farms and orchards in EAZ, 69 farms and orchards in WAZ) aiming at decreasing agricultural water consumption. With regard to CEPA activities, the status quo of twelve Iranian wetlands was assessed in terms of CEPA.</li> <li>Under a national campaign called “My share of Wetland” (<a href="http://www.wetland.campaigne.ir">www.wetland.campaigne.ir</a>, <a href="https://www.instagram.com/wetlandcampaign">https://www.instagram.com/wetlandcampaign</a>) a series of activities were conducted: 1) A short-story contest was organized across 26 wetlands to attract interested individuals and authors toward wetland themes. The motto of the contest was “You share: Writing a Short Story for Wetlands”. 61 titles were submitted and ultimately, four selected works were awarded. Moreover, the eight qualified works were podcasted – narrated by the authors themselves. 2) A bilingual (English-Farsi) booklet on modeling public participation in LU restoration was produced. 3) A guideline on birdwatching in Gurigol Wetland was produced.</li> </ul>
Output 3	<p>-Number of previously established livelihoods initiatives which are managed independently.</p> <p>-Number of local community benefitted from the</p>	<p>3 (2014-19)</p> <p>12000 men involved in SA activities,</p>	<p>-At least 2 more previous livelihood and PES initiatives are managed independently.</p> <p>-1000 men, 100 women and youth are empowered.</p>	<p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, MCLS, Local implementing partners.</p> <p>DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, MCLS, local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community-based initiatives (diversifying rural livelihoods) was implemented in two target provinces – (17 villages including 14 new pilot villages and 3 previous pilot villages). This was pursued through inception phase, training workshops, meetings and forums. As the result of this, 79 livelihood groups were established for 377 individuals (266 women, 111 men) and a IRR-1,880,000,000 facility was provisioned for 16 community funds.</li> <li>Out of 377 individuals engaged in in community-based initiatives, 266 women and 111 men benefitted from the project.</li> </ul>

	<p>project (gender-based)</p> <p>-Number of community-based initiatives which indicate increased income of local communities and decrease use of the resources.</p>	<p>750 women benefited by launching green jobs, 4700 students trained of LU and its satellite wetlands importance, 200 local experts employed. (2014-19)</p> <p>43 (2014-19)</p>	<p>-10 new community based initiatives are launched.</p>	<p>implementing partners.</p> <p>-DoE, MoAJ, CIWP, MCLS, local implementing partners.</p>	
Output 4	-The project model is proposed by MoAJ to be incorporated in the 7 <sup>th</sup> National Socio-economic Plan of the	Formal correspondence from MoAJ to its provincial offices, Budget	The project model is documented and submitted by MoAJ to BPO.	DoE, MoAJ, CIWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To include the project in high-level documents, the University of Tehran is modelling the project experience and its ecosystem-based as well as participatory approach. This model is yet to be presented as a toolkit at national level to a wide range of audience and stakeholders, especially the MoAJ, to contribute to its inclusion in the 7th National Socioeconomic Development Plan. In regard to the international events, in a series of online experience sharing meetings, the project experiences/achievements were shared with the Ramsar Regional Center of</li> </ul>

	country (and other high level documents)	allocation by LURP for SA.			Central and Western Asia. In addition to this, in an online seminar, the project achievements were shared with Conference on Interaction and Confidence (CICA) members, namely Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Thailand and China ( <a href="https://twitter.com/CicaSecretariat/status/1414895907343044612?s=20">https://twitter.com/CicaSecretariat/status/1414895907343044612?s=20</a> ). With respect to the national events, a cross-visit by key stakeholders of Fars Province was organized to visit the best practices in LUB where 20 representatives from governmental as well as non-governmental stakeholders participated. The project experiences/lessons learned were transferred to the visitors. By large, this task contributed to laying foundation for project inception in Fars Province. In addition to the above, a two-day field visit was organized for the Ambassador of Japan and the UNDP team, including UNDP RR, to the project achievements in the LU basin ( <a href="https://www.instagram.com/tv/CRbqSIRHEs3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/tv/CRbqSIRHEs3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a> ). Moreover, CIWP hosted a technical webinar on wetlands and CEPA on 2 February 2021 with 250 participants from local communities, interested individuals, NGO's, and academia. In this webinar, the distinguished presenter, Mr. Chris Rostron (the International Engagement Manager, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust), lectured on the role of wetland centers in enhancing environmental literacy in communities. Regarding the local events, the project implementing partners in hand with the local communities celebrated the World Wetland Day, Biodiversity Day, and Clean Air Day in several villages – cumulatively 21 local events in both West and East Azerbaijan provinces. Ultimately, to disseminate the Project success stories, a book titled “the Lasting Footprint” was published. This book narrates the CIWP's entry (inception) to the target areas and how the project promoted participatory and ecosystem-based approaches to enable and support the local communities to ultimately contribute to the LU restoration. Further to this and based on this book, a series of documentaries consisting of 10 film were produced. Each film narrates the story of one member of the targeted local community and how the Project facilitated their capacity development and assisted them to establish SA and alternative livelihoods to ultimately contribute to LU restoration without jeopardizing their livelihoods. In addition to this, to share the project knowledge/experience, technical and non-technical content was produced and disseminated as follows: 1) “Guidelines on Economic Valuation of Wetlands” (1000 copies); shared with directorate generals of environment, UNDP, and selectees of “the Third Festival of Ideas and Innovative Products”; 2) “Fifty-Two Actions for Biodiversity Conservation” (1000 copies); shared with UNDP and selectees of “the Third Festival of Ideas and Innovative Products”. 3) “Identification, Control, and Management of Marine Pollution” (2000 copies, republication). 4) Shared
	-Number of international, national and local knowledge sharing events and published success stories.	3 international, 5 national, 10 local events in 2019, 4 success stories published in 2019.	3 international, 6 national and 10 local events, at least 6 success stories published.	DoE, MoAJ, CIWP.	

					<p>electronic copy of “Guideline on Practical Experiments in Ecohydrology” with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO; 5) Translation of “the Lasting Footprint” into English and sharing it with the Ambassador of Japan and the UNDP team during their visit to the project achievement in the target areas. This book narrates the project’s participatory approach and its impact on the targeted communities. 6) A children book titled “Wetland; My Heart”. In brief, the progress toward targets follows: i) International events: 65%, ii) National events: 30%, iii) Local events: 200%, iv) Success stories: 80%.</p>
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## **Annex VIII: Revised Table of Project Indicators**

There is no log-frame for each phase of the project and they differ from each other. Initial 3 phases didn't had result framework. Hence Table of Project Indicator is not inserted here. The Result Framework with targets and final status is presented in Annex VII above.

## Annex IX: Rating Scales

### i) Criteria used to evaluate the Project by the Final Evaluation Team

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

### ii) Scale used to evaluate the sustainability of the Project

Likely (L)	There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

### iii) Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards “intermediate states”

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

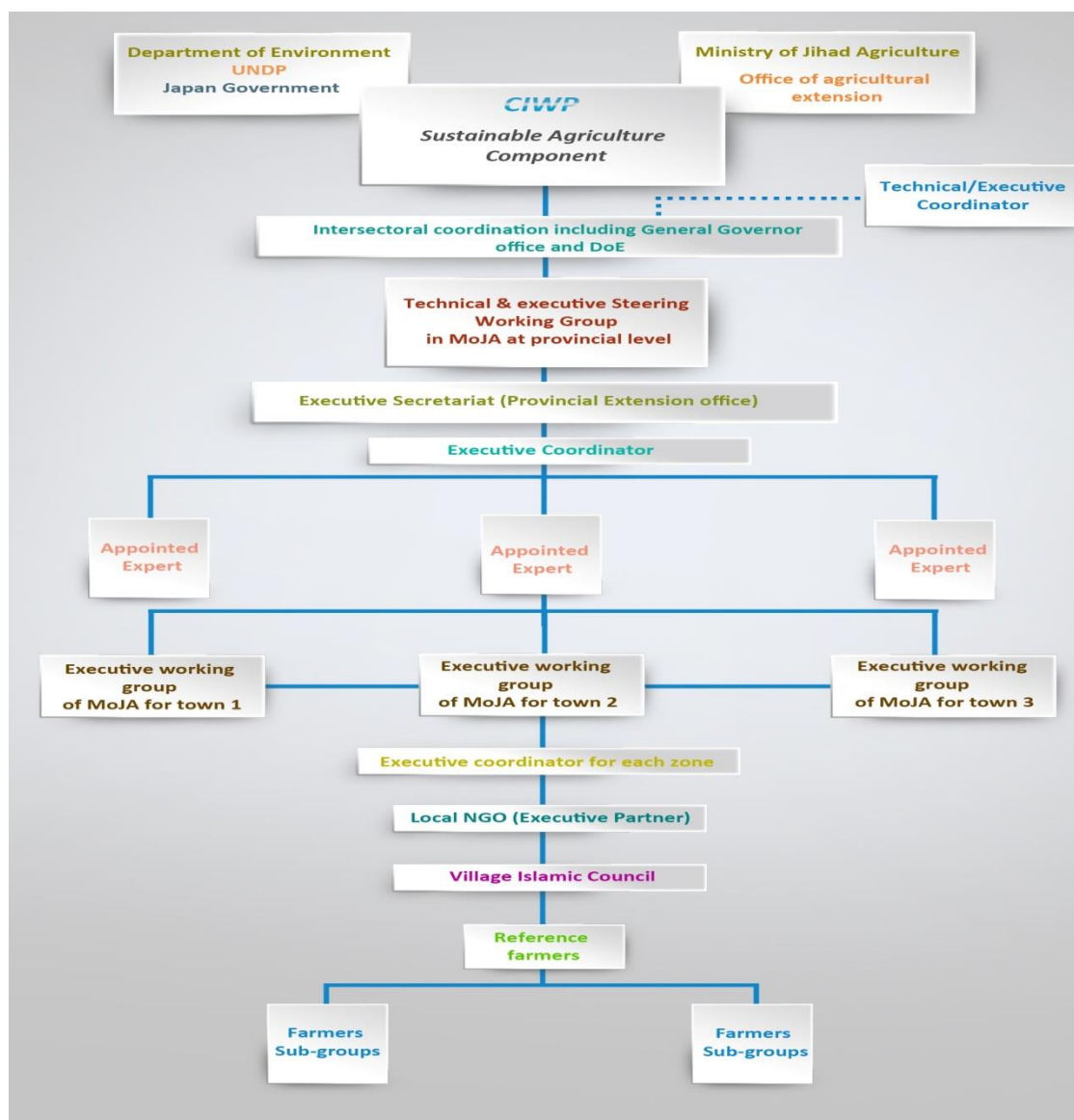
NOTE: If the outcomes above scored C or D, there are no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

### iv) Rating scale for the “overall likelihood of impact achievement”.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA BB+	BB AC+ BC+	AC BC	AD+ BD+	AD BD C	D



## Annex X: Organizational Structure of Project




## Annex XI: Evaluation Consultant Agreement Document

### ANNEX E: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM

#### Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form <sup>1</sup>	
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System	
Name of Consultant: <u>Arun Rijal</u>	
Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____	
I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.	
Signed at <u>plainecondite</u>	 Kathmandu, 18.10.2021
Signature: _____	

## Annex XII:TE Report Clearance Form

**Terminal Evaluation Report for (*Project Title & UNDP PIMS ID*) Reviewed and Cleared By:**

**Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Annex XIII: Co-financing Table

Phase	Donor/Source	Budgeted Cash	In-kind committed by Govt. of Iran	In-kind actual By Govt. of Iran	Expenses Cash	Balance
Phase I (2014-15)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,330,000		1,999,534.73	465.27
Phase II (2015-16)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000				
Phase III (2016-17)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	-		999,999.90	0.1
Phase IV (2017-18)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,000,000		999,999.00	1
Phase V (2018-19)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	2,000,000		998,614.56	1385.44
Phase VI (2019-20)	Govt. of Japan	892,857	2,000,000		892,828.00	29
Phase VII (2020-2021)	Govt. of Japan	1,000,000	231,000	227,500	999,916	84
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,892,857</b>	<b>10,330,000</b>		<b>6,890,892</b>	<b>1965</b>

**Note: Actual contribution figures from the Govt. of Iran was not available.**

## Annex XIV: UNDP TE Report Audit Trail

To the comments received in December 2021 from the Terminal Evaluation of the project titled, “Contribution to Restoration of Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation”

*The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Terminal Evaluation report; they are referenced by institution (“Author” column) and track change comment number (“#” column):*

Author	#/Date	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE Team’s response and actions taken

Audit Trail is submitted as a separate file.