

*Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources in
Compliance with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the National
Biodiversity Economy Strategy*
GEF full-size Project
(PIMS 5686; ID GEF 9255)

Midterm Review Report

MTR Team:

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Date: 7 March 2023

i. Basic Report Information

Title of the UNDP supported GEF financed project

Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources in Compliance with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy

Project ID#S

UNDP PIMS ID: 5686

GEF Project ID: 9255

MTR time frame

December 2022 – March 2023

Date of MTR report

7 March 2023

Region:

Africa

Country:

South Africa

GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program

Biodiversity/Program 8: Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on ABS

Implementing agency

United Nations Development Programme

Executing entities

Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)

Responsible Parties

Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)

MTR Team Members

Mr. Giacomo Morelli, International Evaluator (Team Leader)

Dr. Mziwandile Madikizela, National Evaluator

Acknowledgements

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ii. Table of contents

i. Basic Report Information	i
ii. Table of contents.....	ii
1. Executive summary	1
1.1. Project Information Table	1
1.2. Brief project description	1
1.3. Project Progress Summary	2
1.4. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table	2
1.5. Concise summary of conclusions	3
1.6. Recommendations Summary Table	5
2. Introduction	6
2.1. Purpose of the MTR and objectives	6
2.2. Scope & Methodology.....	6
2.2.a. Principles of design and execution of the MTR.....	10
2.2.b. MTR approach and data collection methods.....	10
2.2.c. Limitations to the MTR	10
2.3. Structure of the MTR report	11
3. Project Description and Background Context	11
3.1. Development context.....	11
3.2. Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted	12
3.3. Project Description and Strategy	13
3.4. Project Implementation Arrangements	14
3.5. Project timing and milestones	14
3.6. Main stakeholders: summary list	15
4. Findings	17
4.1. Project Strategy.....	17
4.1.a. Project Design	17
4.1.b. Results Framework.....	19
4.2. Progress towards Results	22
4.2.a. Progress towards outcomes analysis	22
4.2.b. Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.....	28
4.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management	28
4.3.a. Management Arrangements	28
4.3.b. Work planning.....	29
4.3.c. Finance and co-finance.....	30
4.3.d. Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems	30
4.3.e. Stakeholder engagement	31
4.3.f. Reporting	32
4.3.g. Communications	32

4.4. Sustainability	33
4.4.a. Financial risks to sustainability	33
4.4.b. Socio-economic risks to sustainability	33
4.4.c. Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability	34
4.4.d. Environmental risks to sustainability	34
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	34
5.1. Conclusions	34
5.2. Recommendations	37
6. Annexes	I
Annex 1 - MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)	II
Annex 2 - MTR evaluative matrix	X
Annex 3 – Ratings Scale	XIV
Annex 4 - MTR mission schedule	XVI
Annex 5 - List of persons interviewed	XVII
Annex 6 - List of documents consulted	XVIII
Annex 7 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form	XIX
Annex 8 – Audit trail matrix	XX

iii. Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Access to Benefit Sharing
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
BABS	Bioprospecting Access and Benefit Sharing
BMP	Biodiversity Management Plan
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COVID-19	Coronas Virus Disease 2019
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DAEARDLR	Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEDEAT	Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DST	Department of Science and Technology
EDD	Economic Development Department
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HBCoP	Honeybush Community of Practice
IRCC	Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance
NC R&D	Northern Cape Research and Development
NBES	National Biodiversity Economy Strategy
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NEMBA	National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PWG	Pelargonium Working Group
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
TK	Traditional Knowledge
TOPS	Threatened Or Protected Species
TT	Tracking Tool
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nation Evaluation Group

1. Executive summary

1.1. Project Information Table

Project Title: Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources in Compliance with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy			
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5686	PIF Approval Date:	August 26, 2015
GEF Project ID:	9255	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date:	October 22, 2018
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	00106197	ProdDoc signature date:	24 October 2019
Country:	South Africa	Date Project Manager hired:	August 26, 2020
Region:	Africa	Inception Workshop Date::	27/28 January 2020
Focal area:	Biodiversity	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	22 February 2023
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	Objective 3, Program 8: Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on ABS	Planned Operational Closure Date:	April 2023
Trust Fund [GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF TF	If revised, new closing date:	October 2024
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	United Nations Development Programme		
Other Executing Entities	Executing Partner: Department of Forestry Fishery and Environment Responsible Partners: Agricultural Research Council, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Science and Innovation, TRAFFIC		
Project financing		at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	At MTR (US\$)
[1] GEF Funding		6 210 046.00	376 366.42
[2] Government		35 870 563.00	3 795 442.79
[3] Co-financing		35 870 563.00	3 795 442.79
Total project costs [1+3]		42 080 609.00	4 171 809.21

1.2. Brief project description

The **objective of the project** is to strengthen value chains for products derived from indigenous plants' genetic resources in view of contributing to the equitable sharing of benefits and the conservation of biodiversity.

Outcome 1 - Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy.

Output 1.1 - R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner.

Output 1.2 - Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located 'Bioproducts Development Hub'

Outcome 2 - The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players.

Output 2.1 - The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.

Output 2.2 - Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported.

Output 2.3 - Community-based enterprises in honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region.

Output 2.4 - ABS implementation in Rooibos farming is strengthened, ensuring fairness, equity and sustainability in relevant relationships among TK holders and industry.

Outcome 3: Bioprospecting and value addition knowledge transfer is enhanced for equitable benefit sharing.

Output 3.1 - The National Recordal System for TK linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry.

Output 3.2 - A bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains.

Outcome 4: Lessons learned and the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework effectively contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning on ABS

Output 4.1 - National and international stakeholders supported to participate in the project M&E and to systematize lessons learned from its implementation.

1.3. Project Progress Summary

The project suffered from significant delays at the beginning of its implementation. As a result, at the moment of the MTR exercise, most activities are significantly behind schedule.

The implementation of activities related to Output 2.1 "The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders" are on track. The delivery of the output is very likely.

All other outputs are, instead, behind schedule. Engagement with TK holding communities in most cases has not yet started. Procurement processes related to contracting service providers are not yet finalized. Concerns about the actual delivery are well founded and justified.

1.4. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	The project strategy is well defined. It includes a thorough and articulated project Theory of Change and a clear Results Framework that has the vertical logic well structured, i.e. outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are logically related to and are expected to contribute to the project objective. Outcome 4, instead, is formally incorrect but its inclusion in the Results Framework is important as it pushes project management to strive to establish and manage an effective M&E system with gender-sensitive indicators. Finally, 14 out of 17 indicators included in the Results Framework are SMART. However, this does not constitute a problem for project implementation.

Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: Unsatisfactory	The rating is consistent with the rating of outcomes 1, 2 and 3.
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: Highly Unsatisfactory	The MTR raises serious concerns about the delivery of both outputs implemented under the component. Activities related to the African Ginger and to the establishment of a Northern Cape Research and Development (NC R&D) Hub are experiencing severe delays.
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: Unsatisfactory	The MTR raises serious concerns about the delivery of the outputs related to Honeybush and Aloe ferox. The outputs foresee the actual cultivation of the two species, which are currently harvested. The output related to Rooibos is experiencing delays but could be achieved during the remaining time, while the output related to Pelargonium does not raise any type of concerns: it is likely that it will be delivered.
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory	The MTR raises serious concerns about the delivery of the outputs related to the development of a certification scheme for five bio-trade value chains. No concerns are raised in relation to the national recordal system, whose implementation is mainly based on documentation activities, which do not imply difficult negotiations with stakeholders.
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory	The related output will be achieved. The output is about M&E activities, not about project implementation. As such, it does not cause concerns. Anyway, the low level of implementation may make unfeasible the generation of useful lessons learned to gain knowledge on implementation of ABS initiatives.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory	The rating takes into consideration the significant delays accumulated that pose a significant risk to the project outcomes being achieved. It also takes into consideration the work done by the PMU and project partner staff which is affected severely by the initial delays. In addition, the good work done in terms of project monitoring and evaluation (including the identification of environmental and social risks) and the candour and quality of project reporting that show the project progress in a rigorous way with exhaustive details.
Sustainability	Rating: Likely	The rating is justified by the nature of the project. In fact, its design is closely integrated into national policy and legislation to have the mechanisms for accountability and transparency in place in order to support a sustainable development of the bioprospecting and bio-trade sector. Sustainability concerns are raised only for those outputs that deal with deep involvement of communities at field level, i.e. the work with African Ginger, Aloe ferox, Honeybush and the establishment of a NC R&D Hub: time and efforts are required for these initiative to be sustainable once GEF assistance is over.

1.5. Concise summary of conclusions

C1: The project is well designed. The causal logic between activities, outputs, outcomes and objective is solid and plausible and risks are well identified.

C2: 14 Indicators out of 17 are considered SMART. Indicator number 8 is redundant as it is already included in indicator number 1; indicator number 11 is not SMART as the income is subject to market fluctuations both at national and international level. It has very little to do with project implementation and the outcome 2 does not include a dimension related to income generation; indicator number 12 is not entirely SMART. Cultivation of Honeybush is relevant only if it releases pressure on wild plant harvesting from the ecosystem, namely Fynbos. Cultivation without directly targeting the existing harvesting communities would not

alleviate the pressure on the wild population in the Fynbos, and, finally, indicator number. 17 is irrelevant: monitoring women and men participation in a project has nothing to do with its achievements.

C3: The target level of the indicator number 3 Area (ha) under landscape management systems that mainstream ABS principles has not been yet determined due to the delays in engaging with TK holding communities.

C4: The accumulated delays are regarded by the MTR as the main reason for which the project is likely not to deliver most of its outputs, and consequently achieve its outcomes and objective. The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent national lockdown contributed significantly to the delay. It is acknowledged that slow burn-rate is consistent with the low level of implementation of activities. Only 9.8% of project funds have been spent, and the development of an implementation plan that includes procurement support from UNDP, weekly meetings (PMU and UNDP) and learning and reflections sections amongst all Project Partners is considered a valid idea to fast track the implementation.

C5: The likelihood of not achieving outcome 1 is high.

Output 1.1 “R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner” may be not delivered. Scientific institutions may be seen as actors that have a direct interest in taking advantage of TK, therefore the building of trust between CSIR and communities is the main constraint.

Output 1.2 “Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located Bioproducts Development Hub” may be not delivered or may be characterized by difficulties especially in relation to delivering extension services to communities. If next planting season for Devil’s Claw Cancer Bush and *Sceletium tortuosum* in September/October 2023 is missed, the output cannot be delivered. Finally, the engagement with communities has not yet started and the tripartite MoU between ARC, DFFE and DAEARDLR (Northern Cape Province) is not yet signed.

C6: The likelihood of not achieving outcome 2 is high.

Output 2.1 “the implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders” and output 2.4 “ABS implementation in Rooibos farming is strengthened, ensuring fairness, equity and sustainability in relevant relationships among TK holders and industry” are likely to be delivered.

Output 2.2 “Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported” may be delivered. However, the quality of its delivery may be very low. In fact, the output is quite ambitious and involves the organization of an actual enterprise that after project closure should be handed over to communities and be fully operative and financially sustainable.

Output 2.3 “Community-based enterprises in Honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region” is very ambitious as it implies the transition of harvesters into growers. It is self-evident that such an ambitious process must be well thought and discussed through a deep consultation with communities involved in Honeybush harvesting. The remaining time is not enough to have this transition successfully in place.

C7: The risk of not achieving outcome 3 is high.

Output 3.1 “The National Recordal System for TK linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry” is likely to be delivered.

Output 3.2 “A bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains” is likely not to be achieved. There is the need to consult with producers and actors involved in existing agricultural-related certification schemes in the country and with actors of the 5 value chains in order to set up certification schemes. Costs associated must be affordable for communities involved in harvesting/cultivating relevant species and for the private sector, as well.

C8: Monitoring of the project progress is detailed and strictly based on activities progress. The project reporting reflects with candour and honesty the actual progress of the project and is compliant with GEF and UNDP requirements.

C9: The project Gender Action Plan does not contain elements to fully understand the implications on gender issues of the activities promoted by the project and whether the project may be considered as gender neutral, responsive or transformative being the latter the aspirations behind the projects implemented by UN agencies.

C10: Sustainable use of genetic resource and bioprospecting is promoted in all the project outputs and outcomes. The work with Tyefu community on *Aloe ferox* and the establishment of the North Cape R&D Hub may not be sustainable after project closure because a stable cash flow stemming from economic activities is needed to support them. All other outputs are instead closely integrated into policy and legislative requirement and no major risks for their sustainability are identified.

1.6. Recommendations Summary Table

#	Recommendation	Responsible Entity/ies															
1	<p>To modify the formulation of the following indicators:</p> <table> <tr> <th></th><th>Original formulation</th><th>Suggested formulation</th></tr> <tr> <td>Ind. 6</td><td>Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy</td><td>Number of new and assessed and, possibly, revised ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ind. 7</td><td>Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project</td><td>Number of registrations with SAHPRA based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ind. 10</td><td>Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing</td><td>Number of targeted TK holding community members involved in sustainable management and production of Aloe and Honeybush</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ind. 13</td><td> A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on threatened species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation </td><td> Certification standards developed to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation </td></tr> </table>		Original formulation	Suggested formulation	Ind. 6	Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy	Number of new and assessed and, possibly, revised ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy	Ind. 7	Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	Number of registrations with SAHPRA based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	Ind. 10	Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing	Number of targeted TK holding community members involved in sustainable management and production of Aloe and Honeybush	Ind. 13	A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on threatened species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation 	Certification standards developed to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation 	PMU and Project Board
	Original formulation	Suggested formulation															
Ind. 6	Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy	Number of new and assessed and, possibly, revised ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape’s Bioprospecting economy															
Ind. 7	Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	Number of registrations with SAHPRA based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project															
Ind. 10	Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing	Number of targeted TK holding community members involved in sustainable management and production of Aloe and Honeybush															
Ind. 13	A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on threatened species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation 	Certification standards developed to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species’ survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation 															
2	To revise the formulation of indicator 12 and its end of project target and plan activities accordingly.	PMU and Project Board															

3	To delete from the Results Framework of the following indicators:		Project Board
	Ind. 8	Increased score for implementation of Nagoya Protocol on ABS as per the GEF6 Tracking Tool BD Program 8, Section 2. ABS Pilots = X / max score 40 (10 x 4 pilots) -- PILOTS-- 2.1 Pelargonium - 2.2 Aloe ferox - 2.3 Honeybush -2.4 Rooibos ABS deal	
	Ind. 11	Total income (US\$/annum) derived from project pilots that focus on cultivation 2.1 Pelargonium - 2.2 Aloe ferox - 2.3 Honeybush	
	Ind. 17	Number/Percentage of women and men participating and benefiting from project interventions - 50% women/50% men	
4	To speed up the implementation of activities related to the support of Tyefu community to set up the cultivation and processing facilities for Aloe ferox.		PMU, DFFE and UNDP
5	To promote the decision making within the Tyefu community		PMU, and DFFE
6	To implement actions to better understand gender issues related to the delivery of project outputs		PMU, DFFE, ARC, CSIR and TRAFFIC
7	To support CSIR to gain the necessary trust with the communities involved in the African Ginger component.		PMU, DFFE
8	To determine the target (a) of of the indicator 3 “Area (ha) under landscape management systems that mainstream ABS principles”.		PMU, DFFE, TRAFFIC, ARC
9	To request a project extension of at least one year due to events that have caused delays in the implementation of project activities and, therefore, ensure a satisfactory delivery of all project outputs, thus contributing to the achievements of project outcomes and objective.		Project Board, UNDP, DFFE, ARC and CSIR

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose of the MTR and objectives

The MTR assessed progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document (ProDoc) and assessed early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR process involved stakeholder engagement and provided an opportunity to discuss with interested and affected parties to evaluate and maintain the continued relevance of the project objectives to the country's and beneficiaries needs. It further evaluated likelihood of achievement during the remaining implementation period, taking into account current government and sector priorities. The MTR incorporated lessons learned in the project, and further draw out decisions to strengthen progress, make recommendations to ensure ownership, commitment and long-term project sustainability moving forward. It provided an overview and update on progress, challenges and outcomes on project implementation activities; project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, stakeholder engagement; on the gender action plan; on gender-responsive measures and indicators. Findings and recommendations from the MTR are expected to be used to accelerate delivery, strengthen progress and ensure successful project implementation of the project within the remaining implementation period.

2.2. Scope & Methodology

The MTR Team carried out the following activities: (a) assessed progress towards achievement of the project outputs and outcomes as specified in the ProDoc; (b) assessed early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results; (c) reviewed project strategy and its risks to sustainability; and (d) applied a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Implementing Partner, Project Team and UNDP.

The MTR team assessed the following four categories of project progress:

1. Project Strategy

Project design:

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

Results Framework/Logframe:

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

2. Progress towards results

Progress towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

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

- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?
- Review the impact COVID 19 has had on project implementation. What more could have been achieved in terms of project implementation had it not been for the COVID 19 pandemic that restricted travel?

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

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

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

Stakeholder Engagement:

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

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

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

The project was assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

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

Communications:

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

4. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:
 - Financial risks to sustainability:
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?
 - Socio-economic risks to sustainability:
Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?
 - Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.
 - Environmental risks to sustainability:
Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions and recommendations

The MTR Team included a section in the report presenting the MTR's evidence-based conclusions in light of the findings. Recommendations are anchored on the findings and conclusions is presented as last section of the report.

Ratings

The MTR Team included its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in an MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table in the executive summary of the MTR report.

2.2.a. Principles of design and execution of the MTR

The MTR was executed through a participatory approach and presents a synthesis of the facts and opinions collected by the evaluators, identifying the findings through the triangulation of the information obtained from the different sources of information.

The exercise was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations”.

2.2.b. MTR approach and data collection methods

A theory-based and utilization-focused approach was used for the MTR.

A theory-based evaluation focuses on analysing a program’s underlying logic and causal linkages¹. Indeed, projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve the agreed results through the selected strategy; this set of assumptions constitutes the ‘program theory’ or ‘theory of change’. The MTR was based on the theory of change analysing the strategy underpinning the project, including objectives and assumptions, and assessed its robustness and realism.

A utilization-focused approach is based on the principle that evaluations and reviews should be judged on their usefulness to their intended users; therefore, they should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions².

To collect primary and secondary data, the research design of the MTR exercise made use of a ‘purposeful sampling³’ to identify stakeholders to consult through interviews.

The MTR exercise included the following research tools to collect relevant data:

- Review of project documents and reports
- Interviews
- Observations (Project site visits)

2.2.c. Limitations to the MTR

The MTR was carried out in three phases during the months of December 2022, January, February and March 2023.

Inception phase – Desk Review

Dates: 20 December 2022 – 9 January 2023

The MTR Team reviewed the Project documentation and delivered the inception report that was approved by UNDP. The data collection exercise was based on this report, as well as this MTR report.

Data collection phase

Dates: 16 – 30 January 2023

To carry out the data collection phase, the MTR Team worked closely with the PMU to define the schedule of meetings with the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project.

The detailed MTR mission schedule is included in annex 4. While annexes 5 and 6 report respectively the list of persons interviewed during the data collection phase and the list of documents consulted during the whole MTR exercise.

¹ Rossi, P., Freeman, H. & Hofmann, G., 1999. Evaluation. A Systematic Approach. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

² Patton, M. Q., 2008. Utilization-focused evaluation. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

³ “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.” Patton MQ. Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3rd Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002.

Reporting phase

Dates: 1 February – 7 March 2023

The MTR delivered the MTR Draft Report (February 8) and the MTR Report and the MTR audit trail form. (March 7). The MTR audit trail form display how the MTR addressed the comments received (February 15) on the MTR Draft Report from UNDP and its partners.

The MTR Team could necessarily interview only stakeholders who were aware of project activities. Due to the low level of implementation of the project, end beneficiaries of the project could not be involved in the exercise, as in many cases they were not yet involved in the project. The same problem applied to project site visits, i.e., the MTR could visit only sites where at least implementation started.

The low implementation level also made it difficult for the MTR to triangulate data, collected through interviews, coming from different stakeholders. The opinions of those in charge of the project implementation and execution PMU, UNDP, DFFE and partners became inevitably the main source of information for the exercise. In fact, other stakeholders were not yet identified or involved in activities and therefore they did not constitute a source of information useful for the MTR exercise.

Finally, recommendations of the MTR are necessarily linked to project design and implementation mechanisms and could not refer to thematic issues as most of the thematic work, i.e., on the actual issues addressed by the project, has not been yet implemented. In this regard, it is important to note that recommendations number 5 and 6 are the only ones that take into consideration the perspective of community as the MTR Team had the chance only to talk with the representatives of Tyefu community, i.e. the only community already engaged with the project.

2.3. Structure of the MTR report

The present MTR report consists of three core sections:

Project Description and Background Context

The section describes the project and the context in which it was designed and is being implemented in.

Findings

This section provides answers to the four categories of project progress, i.e. Project Strategy, Progress towards results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The section includes an evidence-based conclusion and offers key recommendations that are specific, achievable and relevant.

3. Project Description and Background Context

3.1. Development context

South Africa has made remarkable progress since its transition to democracy in 1994, but the complex nature of the country's development situation is evident from its ranking of 123 out of 187 on the Human Development Index. While extreme poverty has declined, there are significant disparities in levels of relative poverty across provinces. Income inequality (with a Gini coefficient above 0.7) and unemployment remains high, particularly among youth (at 34.5% for the 15-34-year-old age group) (ProDoc, 2019).

South Africa displays varied topography across a land area of 1.2 million sq. km with strong oceanic influence. The country harbours a wide range of climatic zones and vegetation types, some of which are unique in the world. From an evolutionary point of view, the combination of the afore-mentioned elements created ideal conditions for the diversification of species and habitats, placing South Africa among the 17 megadiverse countries in the world. The diversity of South Africa's biological resources is expressed both in terms of species richness and endemism (ProDoc, 2019).

The country is home to people of diverse origins, cultures, languages, and religions, many of which fall under the notion of “indigenous and local communities” – meaning that they embody traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (ProDoc, 2019). Those groups are known as bearers of traditional ecological knowledge and include various First Nations Indigenous groups.⁴ Among them, are tribes that are collectively known as Khoi-San and to whom knowledge on the use of Rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*) and Honeybush (*Cyclopia* spp.) e.g. has been established in the literature.⁵ If the aim is to assess gender issues, then you need to include a paragraph on women and indigenous knowledge, for example, traditional herbs, etc.

Traditional knowledge (TK) on the use of indigenous species has been an important component in the improvement of natural resource management in South Africa. When shared and combined with science-based Research & Development (R&D), TK cannot only provide valuable information on the sustainable use and protection of ecosystems and species, but it may also accelerate new scientific discoveries based on indigenous genetic resources (ProDoc, 2019).

South Africa ranks 30 among the 78 nations that spends more than US\$100 million (PPP) in R&D and has a vibrant academic community. Some of this R&D effort is aimed at carving out competitive niches for the country through nature-based and intellectual property business development, involving several of the country’s centres of excellence, universities and the private sector.

The approval by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010 of the Nagoya Protocol, on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, also known as Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), brought more legal certainty to otherwise unequal relationships between TK holders and the nature-based industry that exploits genetic resources.

With the current prospects for developing successful value-chains from the diversity of its genetic resources, the quest for South Africa in this context pertains to addressing both ABS issues and related conservation issues in the development of these value-chains.

3.2. Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted

South Africa’s floral diversity is under threat in various parts of the country due to a variety of causes. Within the bioprospecting value-chains based on indigenous plants, the most prevalent threat to biodiversity is linked to overharvesting (i.e. when specific species are harvested beyond their natural regeneration rate), but also due to extant factors vis-a-vis the bioprospecting segment namely, habitat shrinking, degradation and even climate change. (ProDoc, 2019)

Increased demand for bioprospecting products, fuelled by R&D and innovation, is a double-edged sword. It can certainly contribute to improving livelihoods, sustainable development and economic growth. New discoveries based on genetic resources can potentially improve the well-being of humanity at large. Yet, driven by market forces, bioprospecting economic actors within value chains will tend to exploit targeted species in the wild beyond their regeneration capacity. At the level of landscapes and depending on specific conditions that are contextual to each value-chain, individual species can be pushed into the extinction pathway. Overexploitation also leads to the degradation of species’ valuable gene pool and ultimately undermines the bio-trade activity that it supports. (ProDoc, 2019)

Although the country has a well-developed legal and policy framework for both ABS and biodiversity management, this has not immediately translated into compliance with ABS laws or sustainability across the different bioprospecting value chains.

The ProDoc identifies some of the root causes (or drivers) behind the degradation of biodiversity linked to bioprospecting value chains include: (1) Sub-optimal investments in sustainable and ABS-compliant R&D; (2) Value chains have a myopic view of what constitutes ‘value creation’, so economic players often overlook conservation concerns and the role of TK; and (3) Limited national capacity and inadequate institutional

⁴ From the website of International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) on South Africa, retrieved on 27 Apr 2017.

⁵ EA (2014): *Traditional Knowledge Associated with Rooibos and Honeybush Species in South Africa*. Report to the Department of Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa.

arrangements for ABS and conservation, which translates into incipient experience with ABS-compliance and sustainability.

Finally, the ProDoc identifies and targets three overarching barriers that stand in the way of advancing a long-term solution of infusing ABS compliance and sustainability into bioprospecting value chains:

- Barrier #1. Gaps in scientific knowledge on how to improve the benefits derived from bioprospecting.
- Barrier #2. Challenges in ways of working, management conditions and techniques within bioprospecting value-chains – in particular with respect to the sustainability of supplies (i.e. plant raw materials).
- Barrier #3. Gaps in national capacity for ABS-compliance
- Include some synopsis on the knowledge of women in the rural communities on traditional knowledge about species and their use, however, the dominance of males in the institutional and decision-making structures renders women and their knowledge invisible in the knowledge generation, management and decision-making processes.

3.3. Project Description and Strategy

Objective

To strengthen value chains for products derived from indigenous plants' genetic resources in view of contributing to the equitable sharing of benefits and the conservation of biodiversity.

Outcomes and expected results/outputs

Outcome 1: Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy.

Outputs:

1.1 - R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner.

1.2 Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located 'Bioproducts Development Hub'

Outcome 2: The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players.

Outputs:

2.1 The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.

2.2 Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported.

2.3 Community-based enterprises in honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region.

2.4 ABS implementation in Rooibos farming is strengthened, ensuring fairness, equity and sustainability in relevant relationships among TK holders and industry.

Outcome 3: Bioprospecting and value addition knowledge transfer is enhanced for equitable benefit sharing.

Outputs

3.1 The National Recordal System for TK linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry.

3.2 A bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains.

Outcome 4: Lessons learned and the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework effectively contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning on ABS

Outputs

4.1. National and international stakeholders supported to participate in the project M&E and to systematize lessons learned from its implementation.

3.4. Project Implementation Arrangements

The project is implemented following the National Implementation Modality (NIM), according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between UNDP and the Government of South Africa, and the UNDP Country Programme.

The Implementing Agency is UNDP, whereas DFFE is the Executing Agency. The Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) are responsible parties entering in contractual agreements with DFFE and UNDP. Instead, TRAFFIC, an international NGO, enters in contractual agreement only with UNDP through its South Africa-based branch.

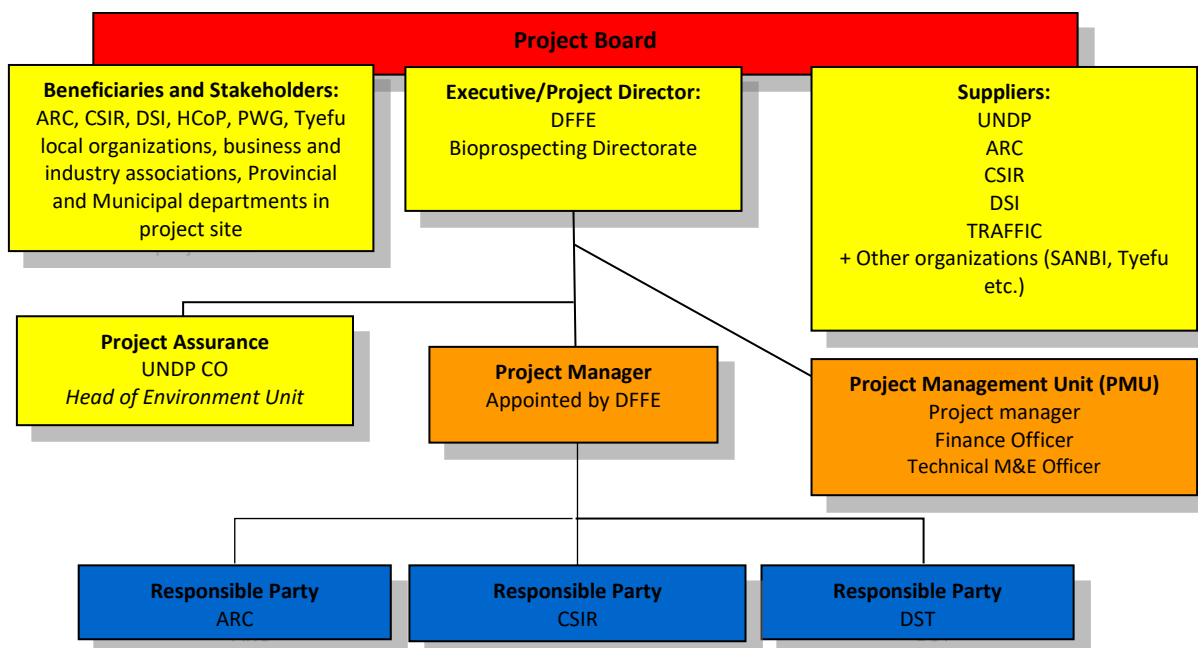


Figure 1- Project Organization Structure

The Project Board (or Project Steering Committee) is responsible for making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendation for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions.

3.5. Project timing and milestones

The review exercise took place between the third and fourth year of project implementation. Over a year of implementation remains before close out.

The MTR exercise represents the second milestones of the formal project evaluation process, which entails an inception report, the present mid-term review and a terminal evaluation. The annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) are also contemplated, and the use of GEF tracking tools to monitor the results of global environmental benefits.

No other specific milestones are described either in the Project Document or in the Results Framework.

3.6. Main stakeholders: summary list

The ProDoc identified the following stakeholders:

Stakeholders	Short description	Role
DFFE	The DFFE is mandated to give effect to the right of citizens to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing and to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations. To this end, the department provides leadership in environmental management, conservation and protection towards sustainability for the benefit of South Africans and the global community. With reference to biodiversity and conservation, DEA's purpose is to ensure the regulation and management of all biodiversity, heritage and conservation matters in a manner that facilitates sustainable economic growth and development. With regards to ABS, a strategic objective is to improve socio-economic benefits and improve access and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.	DFFE is the implementing partner for the overall project. The project will specifically support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) by focusing on the current use of indigenous plants' genetic resources and their potential, either in pharmaceuticals, personal care products, cosmetics and enzymes or similar non-food uses. It will address both conservation and Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) issues linked to their development.
ARC	ARC's core mandate is to act as the principal agricultural research institution in South Africa to conduct research, drive research and development, drive technology development and the transfer of information in order to: - Promote agriculture and related industries; - Facilitate/ensure natural resource conservation; - Contribute to a better quality of life; and - Alleviate poverty. Specifically, Medicinal Plant Research focuses on the propagation, cultivation and processing of South African medicinal plants, especially those species that are highly utilised.	The ARC's role is to implement Output 1.2: Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located 'Bioproducts Development Hub'.
CSIR	The objectives of the CSIR are, through directed and particularly multi-disciplinary research and technological innovation, to foster, in the national interest and in fields which in its opinion should receive preference, industrial and scientific development, either by itself or in co-operation with principals from the private or public sectors and thereby to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the people of the Republic. With reference to bioprospecting and ABS, Biosciences Unit has strong competencies in process and product development in agroprocessing, bioprocessing and biomanufacturing. These capabilities are positioned to support the creation of novel industries in biotechnology-based services and products, as well as translating these into new companies or supporting the competitiveness of the existing industries.	CSIR's role is to function as the responsible party for Output 1.1: R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (<i>Siphonochilus aethiopicus</i>) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner.

DSI	DSI seeks to boost socio-economic development in South Africa through research and innovation. To achieve its goals, the Department provides leadership, an enabling environment and resources for science, technology and innovation. Through its Programmes (Administration; Technology Innovation; International Cooperation and Resources; Research Development and Support; and Socio-economic Innovation Partnerships) and several entities that work alongside it, the Department is accomplishing ground-breaking science and enhancing the well-being of all South Africans.	DSI's role in the project is to implement Output 3.1: The National Recordal System for TK linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry.
SANBI	The mandate of SANBI is broad and is derived from the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (No10 of 2004), but also from other legislation and processes over the last decade. SANBI leads and coordinates research, and monitors and reports on the state of biodiversity in South Africa. With reference to bioprospecting and ABS, SANBI's role is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor and report regularly to the Minister on the conservation status of all listed, threatened or protected species and listed ecosystems; - Act as an advisory and consultative body on matters relating to biodiversity; - Coordinate and promote the taxonomy of South Africa's biodiversity; - Collect, generate, process coordinate and disseminate information about biodiversity and the sustainable use of indigenous biological resources and establish and maintain databases in this regard. - Undertake and promote research on indigenous biodiversity and the sustainable use of indigenous biological resources. 	The role of SANBI is to provide technical support to the project PMU as well as to the individual project outputs, particularly Output 3.2 A bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains.
TRAFFIC	TRAFFIC is an NGO that specialises in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigating and analysing wildlife trends, patterns, impacts and drivers to provide the leading knowledge base on trade in wild animals and plants; - Informing, supporting and encouraging action by governments, individually and through inter-governmental cooperation to adopt, implement, and enforce effective policies and laws; - Providing information, encouragement and advice to the private sector on effective approaches to ensure that sourcing of wildlife uses sustainability standards and best practices; and - Developing insight into consumer attitudes and purchasing motivation and guiding the design of effective communication interventions aimed to dissuade purchasing of illicit wildlife goods. 	The role of TRAFFIC is to provide support to the PMU specifically in Output 2.1: The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.
Pelargonium Working Group (PWG)	The PWG was established in 2007 and is represented by government, conservation, bioprospecting industries, public entities and research institutions. The responsibilities of the PWG include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring the implementation of the BMP for <i>Pelargonium sidoides</i>; - Ensuring that management of <i>P. sidoides</i> wild collection is supported by adequate and practical 	The role of the PWG is to provide support to the PMU in implementing the activities proposed in Output 2.1: The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.

	<p>resource inventory, assessment, and monitoring of collection impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that <i>P. sidoides</i> collection activities are carried out in a transparent manner with respect to management planning and implementation, recording and sharing information, and involving stakeholders. - Assist with establishing procedures for collecting, managing, and sharing information required for effective collection and management. - Contribute to the development of skills training for resource managers and collectors that will equip them to implement the provisions of the management plan. - Production of an annual report specifying progress in the implementation of the Biodiversity Management Plan as required by the Norms and Standards for BMP-S. - Drawing up proposals and fund raising for specific projects needed. - Implement the BMP for <i>P. sidoides</i>. 	
Tyefu Traditional Trust	<p>The Tyefu Traditional Trust represents the Tyefu community. Tyefu is an area situated within the jurisdiction of the Ngqushwa Local Municipality of the Amathole District in the Eastern Cape Province. The Tyefu community consists of 10 villages that are under jurisdiction of and part of Chief Sizwe Msutu's land.</p>	<p>The PMU and the Tyefu Traditional Trust are directly responsible for coordinating the implementation of Output 2.2: Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported. The Tyefu Traditional Trust is, as the legal entity representing the livelihood interests of the community, be the beneficiary of activities proposed in Output 2.2.</p>
Honeybush Community of Practice (HBCoP)	<p>The HBCoP was duly formed and launched by DEA on 4 November 2016. The role of the HBCoP is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address issues of governance - Legislation (Compliance and Permitting issues) - Sustainability & promotion of the industry - Community upliftment and address TK issues - Knowledge Sharing - Funding - Local value addition & geographic indicators - To add Accountability, Confidentiality - Incorporate the San and Khoisan 	<p>The role of the HBCoP in the project is to provide support to the PMU in the implementation of Output 2.3: Community-based enterprises in honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region.</p>

4. Findings

4.1. Project Strategy

4.1.a. Project Design

The project idea stems out from the acknowledgement that bio-prospecting industry may cause harm to the environment and biodiversity, because of over-exploitation of relevant species to the sector. The project aims at addressing some of the root causes behind the degradation of biodiversity linked to bioprospecting value chains, which include: (1) Sub-optimal investments in sustainable and ABS-compliant R&D; (2) Value chains have a narrow focus on profit, often overlooking conservation concerns and the role of TK; and (3) Limited national capacity and inadequate institutional arrangements for ABS and conservation, which translates into incipient experience with ABS-compliance and sustainability.

With its strategy, the project design ultimately aspires to promote growth in the bioprospecting industry that may have a significant positive impact on the national and local economy in South Africa, while contributing to national imperatives such as job creation, rural development and conservation of natural

resources. However, for the bioprospecting sector to achieve its full potential – and so that global biodiversity benefits are also generated – a strategic partnership between the state, private sector and communities is required.

The ProDoc does not mention any lessons learned from other projects implemented by UNDP or project partners that may have informed the project design and formulation phase.

The project is fully aligned with national priorities related to the biodiversity sector and specifically to the bio-prospecting sub-sector. The 14-year National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) launched in 2015 is the reference document upon which the project was designed.

The ProDoc also highlights the key national legislative and frameworks relevant to Nagoya Protocol implementation in South Africa: (1) Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources & the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation, (2) Constitutional mandate & National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), (2) Constitutional Concurrent Mandate, Provincial Ordinance, (3) White Paper on Conservation & Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity of 2007, (4) National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) and its Bioprospecting Access and Benefit Sharing (BABS) regulations; (6) Threatened Or Protected Species (TOPS) regulations; (7) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Regulations (8) Patent Amendment Act, (9) Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy.

No major externalities, such as effects of climate change, global economic crisis or change in national situation, relevant to the project strategy were identified in the ProDoc.

Six project-level risks were identified: the MTR considers five of them as pertinent for the implementation of the project. Instead, the risk “the project has a complex financial set-up and implementation arrangements, which may limit the production of results” cannot be considered pertinent. This is an intrinsic feature of the project and as such represents a challenge for those in charge of the management. It is about the managerial capacities to be up to the task and cannot be regarded as a risk.

The ProDoc identifies thoroughly environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP Environmental and Social screening procedure. It also outlines mitigation and management measures in order to minimize the risks.

During the PPG phase, a gender specialist was part of the project team. Stakeholder consultations have been conducted with institutions involved in the bioprospecting sector to query on relevant gender issues in this project. Gender issues were largely raised and addressed in the project design. A gender analysis was also undertaken using the UNDP Guide to Conducting a Participatory Gender Analysis and Developing a Gender Action Plan for projects supported by UNDP with GEF financing.

The ProDoc identifies a list of actions to be undertaken during the implementation of the project to effectively address gender issues and women empowerment. These actions should be conducted in a gender sensitive, promote women empowerment, take into consideration power balance at household level and provide gender based information related to the bio-prospect sector in the country. In the ProDoc, it is also stated that women representation will be pursued in the project governance structure.

As per the ProDoc a gender mainstreaming action plan is expected to be developed and implemented. This also envisaged the effective participation of the UNDP Gender Focal Point in the implementation of activities.

Finally, it is noted that the multidisciplinary team of consultants that support the formulation of the project did consult with all stakeholders, including TK right holders in order to design the project. It is noted that the engagement of SANBI as Responsible Partner as outlined in the ProDoc does not reflect what SANBI proposed to the team. The ProDoc foresaw SANBI to be in charge of developing a certification system to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector. The Institute does not possess that kind of expertise, which is not even part of its institutional mandate. This is the reason why SANBI did not take part in project activities as Responsible Partner.

4.1.b. Results Framework

The vertical logic of the Results Framework is constituted by four outcomes and an objective.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are logically related to each other and are expected to contribute to the project objective. They are anchored in the project's theory of change, which is well developed, and well explained and detailed, in the project document. This clearly defines the causes and barriers that the project intends to address.

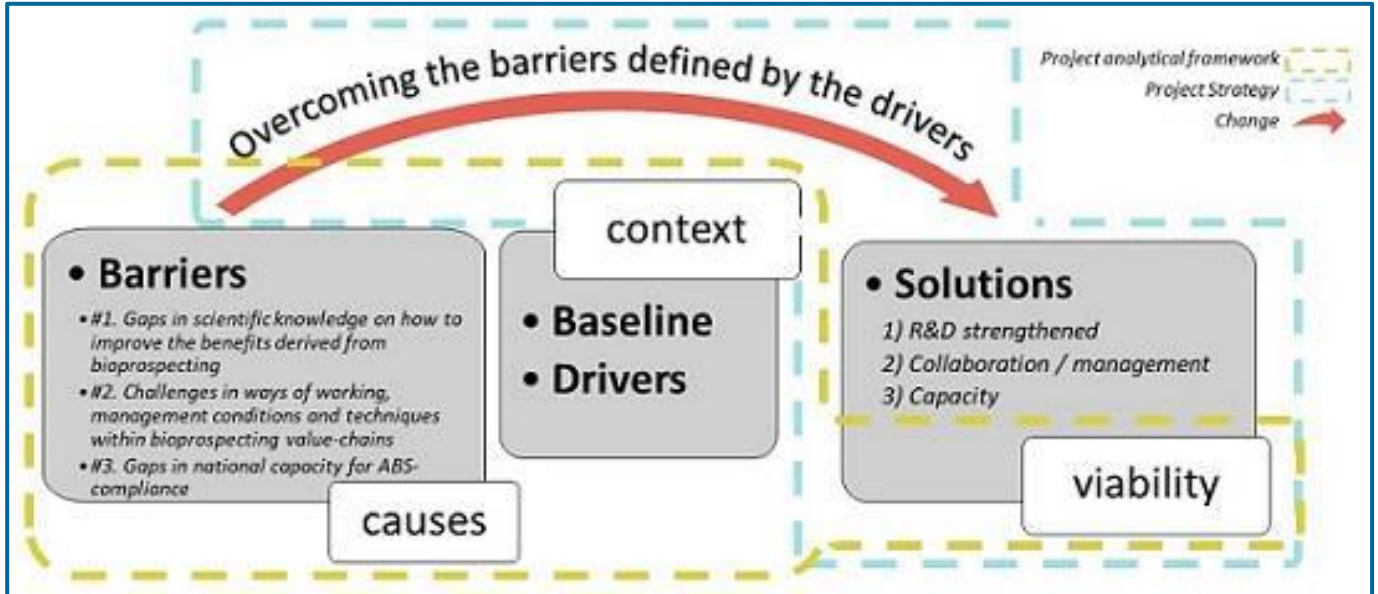


Figure 2 -Theory of change behind the project strategy: Logic

The MTR acknowledges the importance of Outcome 4. In fact, as a rule of thumb, all GEF projects should have a solid M&E system based on the participation of stakeholders, which includes the identification and dissemination of lessons learned. Outcome 4 is correctly not included in the Theory of Change of the project outlined in the ProDoc. Although formally Outcome 4 should not be considered as an outcome of the project, the MTR considers that the collection of lessons learned from any project constitutes valuable information worth of being accumulated and disseminated over the years to build a nationwide knowledge base to move ahead with the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. Furthermore, its inclusion in the Results Framework, at least in principle, may encourage the project management to dedicate prominent attention to M&E activities, it raises the bar of accountability of the project, which must be regarded as a positive element of the project design.

The following table presents the analysis of the indicators:

Indicator	Consideration of the MTR
Objective: To strengthen value chains for products derived from indigenous plants' genetic resources in view of contributing to the equitable sharing of benefits and the conservation of biodiversity.	
Ind.1 - Increase in capacity to implement the Nagoya Protocol on ABS, as measured by the GEF6 Tracking Tool (TT) BD Program 8: (a) TT Section 1 (max points = 38) (b) TT Section 2 x 6 pilots (max points per pilot = 10; all pilots = 60) ----- (c = a + b) TT max points total = 98	The indicator is a score calculated through the GEF6 TT. It is a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) indicator. The score is the summation of relevant GEF6 TT scores specifically developed for GEF 6: Objective 3, Program 8: Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 2 - Number of ABS monetary agreements negotiated for flagship products developed from genetic resources/derivatives of Rooibos and African Ginger	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 3 - Area (ha) under landscape management systems that mainstream ABS principles:	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.

(a) Direct (pilots targeted landscape) (b) An ABS and biodiversity conservation certification system in place for key value chains	
<p>Ind. 4 - Level of mainstreaming of gender considerations in project monitoring (measured through scoring on the state of advancement in gender disaggregated data collection and analysis in ABS pilots):</p> <p>1.1 African Ginger product registration 1.2 N Cape R&D hub 2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush 2.4 Rooibos ABS deal</p> <p>-----</p> <p>ALL PILOTS (max scoring for each pilot = 24 / sum for all pilots = 108, as of Scoring Matrix for composing Results Framework Indicator')</p>	<p>The indicator is a score calculated through the GEF6 TT. The score is the summation of relevant GEF6 TT scores specifically developed for gender mainstreaming. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target. The indicator has nothing to do with the measurement of the achievement of the objective. It is, however, important as it is of interest for the GEF.</p>
Outcome 1: Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy	
Ind. 5 - Number of ABS products developed as a result of Research & Development (R&D)	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 6 - Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape's Bioprospecting economy	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target. However, the word "strengthened" is generic and may be misinterpreted
Ind. 7 - Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Outcome 2: The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players	
<p>Ind. 8 - Increased score for implementation of Nagoya Protocol on ABS as per the GEF6 Tracking Tool BD Program 8, Section 2. ABS Pilots = X / max score 40 (10 x 4 pilots)</p> <p>--PILOTS--</p> <p>2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush 2.4 Rooibos ABS deal</p>	<p>The indicator is NOT SMART. It is a replication of a scores included in Ind.1. It is redundant and does not add any information about project performance.</p>
<p>Ind. 9 - Number of harvesters trained as per the sustainable harvester guidelines for the following pilots:</p> <p>2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush</p>	<p>The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.</p>
Ind. 10 - Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing	<p>The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target. Its formulation, however, is not exhaustive, i.e. other economic activities that may happen throughout the supply chain of Aloe ferox, which are currently not foreseen.</p>
<p>Ind. 11 - Total income (US\$/annum) derived from project pilots that focus on cultivation</p> <p>2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush</p>	<p>The indicator is not SMART. The income is subject to market fluctuations both at national and international level. It has very little to do with project implementation. In addition, the outcome does not include a dimension related to income generation.</p>
Ind. 12 - Cultivation area for Honeybush to mitigate the current impact of habitat destruction and overharvesting	<p>The indicator is not fully SMART. Cultivation of Honeybush is relevant only if it releases pressure on wild plant harvesting from the ecosystem, namely the Fynbos.</p>

Outcome 3. Bioprospecting and value addition knowledge transfer is enhanced for equitable benefit sharing	
Ind. 13 - A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on threatened species - securing species' survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 14 - Number of Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCC) registered in the CBD's ABS Clearing House Mechanism.	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 15 - A functional National Recordal System in place.	The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Outcome 4. Lessons learned and the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework effectively contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning on ABS	
Ind. 16 - Number of project lessons generated and disseminated to share knowledge on implementation of ABS initiatives	The indicator is SMART. The indicator is SMART. It has a midterm target and an end-of-project target.
Ind. 17 - Number/Percentage of women and men participating and benefiting from project interventions 50% women/50% men	The indicator is not SMART, as the participation and benefits of women and men from project interventions has nothing to do with the formulation of Outcome 4
An indicator measuring the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework would be missing to measure completely the achievement of Outcome 4 as per its formulation. However, it is not necessary: as mentioned, Outcome 4 is not included in the project Theory of Change. The Outcome 4 is not a result of the implementation of activities, it is, instead, about project M&E and specifically refers to the identification of lessons learned. The MTR considers that the collection of lessons learned from any project constitutes valuable information worth of being accumulated and disseminated over the years to build a nationwide knowledge base to move ahead with the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. Other indicators are not necessary.	

4.2. Progress towards Results

4.2.a. Progress towards outcomes analysis

Matrix of Assessing Progress towards Results

Indicator Assessment Key					
Green = Achieved		Yellow = On target to be achieved		Red = Not on target to be achieved	
Objective: To strengthen value chains for products derived from indigenous plants' genetic resources in view of contributing to the equitable sharing of benefits and the conservation of biodiversity.					
Indicator	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Ind.1 - Increase in capacity to implement the Nagoya Protocol on ABS, as measured by the GEF6 Tracking Tool (TT) BD Program 8: (a) TT Section 1 (max points = 38) (b) TT Section 2 (max points = 48) ----- (c = a + b) TT max points total = 86	(a) 33 out of 38 (b) 35 out of 48 ----- (c = a + b) 68 out of 86 <i>The PMU has revised the targets related to indicator n.1 included in the Results Framework of the original ProDoc. There were some mistakes in the calculation of the scores. The MTR agrees with the new calculations of score, which are the correct ones.</i>	(a) 34 out of 38 (b) 48 out of 48 ----- (c = a + b) 82 out of 86 <i>The PMU has revised the targets related to indicator n.1 included in the Results Framework of the original ProDoc. There were some mistakes in the calculation of the scores. The MTR agrees with the new calculations of score, which are the correct ones.</i>	(a) 32 out of 38 (b) 25 out of 60 Current Scores: For pilot 1.1) 4 For pilot 1.2) 3 For pilot 2.1) 2 For pilot 2.2) 7 For pilot 2.3) 1 For pilot 2.4) 8 ----- (c = a +b) 53 out of 86	U <i>Unsatisfactory</i>	The implementation of most project activities suffered a great delay. Activities implemented by DFFE, CSIR and ARC must be implemented in a year and half, the delivery of the relevant outputs is not likely to happen. This will be reflected in the overall TT scores.
Ind. 2 - Number of ABS monetary agreements negotiated for flagship products developed from genetic resources/derivatives of Rooibos and African Ginger	At least 1 ABS agreement	At least 2 ABS agreements for products derived from African Ginger and Rooibos	1 ABS Monetary mechanism within existing BSA negotiated from genetic resources of Rooibos. - Due to confidentiality restrictions, the agreement cannot be included as evidence. - ToR pending advertisement to support the development of a non-monetary complimentary mechanism 1 ABS Agreement on African Ginger work initiated, but effective engagement with communities not yet started	MU <i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i>	Effective engagement with communities has not yet started. Establishment of trust between communities and CSIR may result difficult: research institutions are not necessarily seen as trustworthy organization in the bio-prospecting sector, they may be perceived as potential competitor for the use of bio-resources.
Ind. 3 - Area (ha) under landscape management	(a) XX ha (to be determined at project inception)	(a) XX ha (to be determined at project inception)	Area of direct pilots have not been yet determined.	U <i>Unsatisfactory</i>	The rating reflects the concerns raised by the MTR because of delays in the implementation of activities at field level

systems that mainstream ABS principles: (a) Direct (pilots targeted landscape) (b) An ABS and biodiversity conservation certification system in place for key value chains	(b) An ABS and biodiversity certification system developed and being piloted	(b) An ABS and biodiversity conservation certification system approved and adopted.	It is noted that DFFE received €40 000 funding from the SA-EU Policy Dialogue 7th call to develop a Bio-trade Conservation and Sustainable use Standard for use by the abovementioned service provider to develop a Bio-trade Certification Scheme		(i.e. identification of and active engagement with communities). It also takes into consideration the delays in contracting a service provider to develop the certification system for selected bio-trade value chains. Due to the lack of engagement with communities, the target (a) has not been yet determined.
Ind. 4 - Level of mainstreaming of gender considerations in project monitoring (measured through scoring on the state of advancement in gender disaggregated data collection and analysis in ABS pilots): 1.1 African Ginger product registration 1.2 N Cape R&D hub 2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush 2.4 Rooibos ABS deal ----- ALL PILOTS (max scoring 66, as of Scoring Matrix for composing Results Framework Indicator' Pilot 1.1 = max 12 Pilot 1.2 = max 9 Pilot 2.1 = max 12 Pilot 2.2 = max 12 Pilot 2.3 = max 9 Pilot 2.4 = max 12)	At least 60% for the sum of all pilots <i>The PMU has revised the targets related to indicator n.4 included in the Results Framework of the original ProDoc. There were some mistakes in the calculation of the scores. The MTR agrees with the new calculations of score, which are the correct ones.</i>	Close to 100%	As mentioned in section 4.1.b "Results Framework", the indicator is a score calculated through the GEF6 TT. The score is the summation of relevant GEF6 TT scores specifically developed for gender mainstreaming. The indicator has nothing to do with the measurement of the achievement of the objective. It is just about monitoring project activities.	S Satisfactory	The achievement of the indicator has nothing to do with the delivery of outputs. Its achievement depends on the capacities of the PMU and project partners to monitoring the project. There are no concerns about their capacities.
Outcome 1: Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy					
Indicator	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating

Ind. 5 - Number of ABS products developed as a result of Research & Development (R&D)	1 ABS product developed	1 ABS product developed	Beneficiaries' communities have been identified in KZN, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. Discussions with municipalities and traditional leadership just began, but actual and in-depth consultation meetings in the three provinces and the commencement of negotiations on BSA did not happen yet.	U Unsatisfactory	The original work plan, as per the ProDoc, foresaw an implementation period of three years to develop the ABS product on African Ginger. A realistic attainment of the target is doubtful.
Ind. 6 - Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape's Bioprospecting economy	At least 1 new supply chain (for Kanna) and 1 strengthened supply chain (Rooibos)	At least 2 new supply chains (Kanna and Cancer Bush), and 2 strengthened Devil's Claw and Rooibos supply chains	<p>The Eiland Facility has been secured as the location of the NC Hub. The following activities have been initiated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder engagement for permit applications - Various procurement linked to the establishment of the hub <p>The following represent live drafts of which will be built upon during the remainder of the project cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft research plan for the hub - 3 x Best Management Practises for the harvesting, cultivation, agro-processing, grading and traceability of focal species - Website presence for the Hub hosted by ARC - Production Potential plan for NC <p>It is noted that ARC is focusing on three species: Devil's Claw, Cancer Bush and <i>Sceletium tortuosum</i>.</p>	U Unsatisfactory	<p>The original work plan, as per the ProDoc, foresaw an implementation period of three years and half. ARC has at its disposal about a year and half to deliver. The achievement of the target depends largely by the next planting season, i.e. September/October 2023. If the planting season of Devil's Claw, Cancer Bush and <i>Sceletium tortuosum</i> is missed, the NC Hub will be unsuccessful. The central idea of the hub is to have three plants. Other elements of concerns are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tripartite MoU between DFFE, ARC and DAEARDLR has not been yet signed; - The engagement with TK holder communities has not yet started. - The institution that will be in charge of the NC Hub after the project closure has not been yet identified.
Ind. 7 - Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	None	1 (for African ginger as a product for allergies and asthma)	<p>The ABS product has not yet been developed however the following are key targets achieved building towards this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procurement plan finalized - Identification and engagement with SA manufacturing companies - Identification and engagement with clinical research organizations <p>CSIR Ethics application</p>	U Unsatisfactory	<p>The original work plan, as per the ProDoc, foresaw an implementation period of three years to develop the ABS product on African Ginger. It is noted that cultivation of African Ginger to provide raw material for clinical studies did not start, yet. This problem, however, may be solved by using other source of African Ginger, its cultivation is not a key factor to attain the target. Although, not yet engaged with a clinical research organization, there is enough</p>

					time for the project to produce the relevant information, which may lead to the formulation of a complementary medicine. Instead, the MTR exercise cast serious doubts on the possibilities to find a company interested in the product and to register the product, as complementary medicine, within South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) within the remaining time of project implementation.
Outcome 2: The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players					
Ind. 8 - Increased score for implementation of Nagoya Protocol on ABS as per the GEF6 Tracking Tool BD Program 8 Section 2 --PILOTS-- 2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush 2.4 Rooibos ABS deal	Score = 24 out of 40 For pilot 2.1) 5/10 For pilot 2.2) 6/10 For pilot 2.3) 4/10 For pilot 2.4) 9/10 <i>The midterm target and e end-of-project target are wrongly calculated. They are already included in targets related to ind.1.</i>	Score = 32 out of 40 For pilot 2.1) 10/10 For pilot 2.2) 8/10 For pilot 2.3) 4/10 For pilot 2.4) 10/10 <i>The midterm target and e end-of-project target are wrongly calculated. They are already included in targets related to ind.1.</i>	Score = 18 out of 28 For pilot 2.1) 2/4 For pilot 2.2) 7/10 For pilot 2.3) 1/4 For pilot 2.4) 8/10	N/A	These scores are already included in the target related to Ind. 1 (refer to section 4.1.b "Results Framework" for details). The MTR recommends to delete this indicator from the official project Results Framework (refer to section 5.2. "Recommendations" for details).
Ind. 9 - Number of harvesters trained as per the sustainable harvester guidelines for the following pilots: 2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush	For pilot 2.1 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.2 = >50 For pilot 2.3 = t.b.d.	For pilot 2.1 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.2 = >50 For pilot 2.3 = t.b.d.	2.1: No harvesters trained yet. The project has developed draft harvesting guidelines. 2.2: No training yet as a project manager is yet to be appointed. The final ToR was advertised in august/September 2022 however no bids received. The process has been reinitiated - likely appointment early 2023. 2.3: No harvesters trained as service provider to develop grant system is yet to be appointed. The received bids have been evaluated and process for appointment is underway. Likely appointed in 2023.	MU <i>Moderately Unsatisfactory</i>	2.1 Pelargonium TRAFFIC is in contact with the major industry players in the country. The project aims at engaging with these players and to train harvesters in accordance to the actual training needs of the industry. The exact numbers of trainees has not been yet defined. At this point of implementation, however this is not considered as a problem. The strategy to train harvesters is clear and feasible. 2.2 Aloe Ferox The output manager is not yet appointed. Consequently, all related procurement activities did not yet start. Engagement

					with TK right holding communities did not yet start. 2.3 Honeybush The output manager is not yet appointed. Consequently, all related procurement activities did not yet start. Engagement with TK right holding communities did not yet started. The rating is justified by the delays that characterize the work plan for Aloe ferox and Honeybush. The rating is Moderately Unsatisfactory and not Unsatisfactory, because the component related to Pelargonium is proceeding well and it is expected to deliver the trainings according to the needs of the industry.
Ind. 10 - Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing	64 households	>80 households	A service provider has not been yet contracted.	HU Highly Unsatisfactory	The original work plan, as per the ProDoc, foresaw an implementation period of more than four years. Remaining time is just about a year and half.
Ind. 11 - Total income (US\$/annum) derived from project pilots that focus on cultivation 2.1 Pelargonium 2.2 Aloe ferox 2.3 Honeybush	For pilot 2.1 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.2 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.3 = t.b.d.	For pilot 2.1 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.2 = t.b.d. For pilot 2.3 = t.b.d.	For pilot 2.1 = no income generate yet For pilot 2.2 = no income generate yet For pilot 2.3 = no income generate yet	N/A	The MTR exercise considers the indicator as not SMART (refer to section 4.1.b "Results Framework" for details) and recommends to delete from the official project Results Framework (refer to section 5.2. "Recommendations" for details).
Ind. 12 - Cultivation area for Honeybush to mitigate the current impact of habitat destruction and overharvesting	300 ha	450 ha	0 ha A service provider to develop grant system is yet to be appointed. The received bids have been evaluated and process for appointment is underway. Likely appointed in 2023.	HU Highly Unsatisfactory	The original work plan, as per the ProDoc, foresaw an implementation period of more than four years. Remaining time is just about a year and half.
Outcome 3. Bioprospecting and value addition knowledge transfer is enhanced for equitable benefit sharing					
Ind. 13 - A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-	A certification system developed for 1-2 value chains	A certification system in place for at least 5 value chains	A national Biotrade standards framework has been developed. It is expected to have a service provider ready to work with DFFE by March 2023. In addition, a Bio-trade	U Unsatisfactory	It is very unlikely that, within the remaining time before project closures, 5 certification schemes may actually be developed. There is the need to consult

trade sector focusing on threatened species - securing species' survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation			Standards Framework has been developed under another project, i.e. SA-EU Dialogue Facility.		with producers and actors involved in existing agricultural-related certification schemes in the country and with actors of the 5 value chains in order to set up a certification schemes. In addition, it is self-evident that the overall certification scheme must be economically viable, affordable for communities involved in harvesting/cultivating relevant species
Ind. 14 - Number of Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCC) registered in the CBD's ABS Clearing House Mechanism	4-5 IRCCs by Mid-2020	At least 6 IRCCs by End-2023	The project has not yet directly contributed to IRCC's. Work is underway for this development under activities related to African Ginger and Rooibos	U <i>Unsatisfactory</i>	The rating reflects the achievements related to the work with African Ginger and Rooibos.
Ind. 15 - A functional National Recordal System in place.	The outline of the new National Recordal System is tested and approved by DST	The new National Recordal System is fully functional and under utilisation	The engagement with communities has not yet started. Procurement process about to be finalized.	MS <i>Moderately Satisfactorily</i>	Being a documentation activity, time left is not considered as a big constraint.
Outcome 4. Lessons learned and the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework effectively contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning on ABS					
Ind. 16 - Number of project lessons generated and disseminated to share knowledge on implementation of ABS initiatives	3 lessons documented and disseminated	6 lessons documented and disseminated	No lessons learned yet documented	MS <i>Moderately Satisfactorily</i>	It is an M&E activity that has no implication on the achievement of the project objective. The low level of implementation may have made unfeasible the generation of useful lessons learned to be gain knowledge on implementation of ABS initiatives
Ind. 17 - Number/Percentage of women and men participating and benefiting from project interventions 50% women/50% men	Women: t.b.d. Men: t.b.d.	Women: t.b.d. Men: t.b.d.	The number and percentage of women and men participating and benefiting from project interventions have not been yet determined and monitored, as the actual implementation of activities with communities did not started. Participants belonging to public institutions, NGOs and public sector are, instead	N/A	The MTR does not consider this indicator as SMART (refer to section 4.1.b "Results Framework" for details) and recommends to delete from the official project Results Framework (refer to section 5.2. "Recommendations" for details).

4.2.b. Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

The MTR exercise identified three specific barriers that may hamper the likelihood of achieving the project targets.

CSIR's engagement with community appears to be difficult, due to the fact that it is a scientific institution perceived as a possible threat by the communities involved. It has been reported to the MTR Team, that communities may fear the institution, which may later use information obtained from them for its own purposes.

The work on the *Pelargonium sidoides* BMP is not behind schedule. However, the actual discussion around it with sector stakeholders may require additional time. Indeed, few stakeholders reported that the work done so far did not bring in a lot of new knowledge, and there is no need, from their perspectives, to bring regulations in a subsector that is very small and able to self-regulate. The MTR recorded also a criticism about the actual potential of Pelargonium industry to actually contribute to the development of communities: the price negotiated between harvesters and buyers, the benefits accruing from the BSA mechanism are not enough to generate any relevant virtuous cycle that may eventually lead to rural development. Pelargonium represent a side income for these communities, and shared benefits are very little to have a real impact on TK holding communities.

The development of certification schemes for bio-trade value chain has to take into consideration the costs for implementing them. Due to the relatively small size of the sector, reducing costs is of paramount importance to have certification schemes in place.

No other barriers were identified. In fact, due to the low implementation of activities at field level, the MTR could not engage with stakeholders at field level, since they are not yet engaged with the project (refer to section 2.2.c. Limitations to the MTR for details).

The significant delay accumulated shortens considerably the period in which most of activities may take place. The MTR considers as very high the probability that this occurrence will limit the project achievements, and eventually make unfeasible the attainment of project targets, as per the Results Framework. In short, the main barrier to achieving project objective is the lack of time. Remaining time is likely to be not enough to deliver satisfactorily all project outputs.

4.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.a. Management Arrangements

The project is managed by a PMU who sits within DFFE. The PMU coordinates and oversees the work of four responsible partners, i.e. DSI, ARC, TRAFFIC and CSIR. Each organization is in charge of a specific output. Therefore, the division of tasks amongst partners is very clear and no overlaps or gaps in the delivery of the outputs are possible.

With the exception of TRAFFIC, which is an International NGO, all other entities in charge are governmental organizations and the project falls clearly under their institutional mandates. The work related to the development of a cultivation of *Aloe ferox* would fit better the mandate of other department of the Government of South Africa, such as, for example, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) or the Economic Development Department (EDD). In fact, the project intends to establish a cultivation and processing facility for the *Aloe ferox*.

Procurement processes within the DFFE suffered from two main problems:

1. A decision of the National Treasury to place a moratorium on public procurement
2. Specific skills requested that may be resulted as scarce within the environmental landscape of South Africa.

DFFE reporting is very well done. The quarterly reports are exhaustive as they include a great level of detail that allows the reader to have a good understanding of project progress. It is as well important to note that they are candid and do not include inaccuracies or misleading information. The quality of DFFE's reporting is reflected also in the UNDP's reporting, being the PIRs exhaustive and well-articulated.

Finally, the MTR highlights that mitigation and management of environmental and social risks are thoroughly addressed in the two main reports produced by the projects, i.e. the PIRs and the Quarterly Reports.

The project foresees the participation of communities, private sector and national institutions. The national and Government ownership of the project is unquestionable. The whole project is owned by government departments and its outputs are expected to be integrated into policy and legislative requirements. The project is aligned with institutional and departmental mandates and with the interests of the private sector.

The MTR assumes that the project is as well aligned with the needs and interests of TK rights holding communities. They are not yet involved in the project. The MTR Team could only confirm the high interest of the Tyefu community in setting up the Aloe ferox related activities.

Although characterized by significant delays in the implementation, the work done both by DFFE, through the PMU, and the technical support of UNDP to the Executing Agency, i.e. DFFE, is focused on the achievement of results. The support of UNDP to the PMU materialized with the decision of having an implementation plan to fast-track the implementation of the project.

*The MTR rates the **Adaptive Management** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.3.b. Work planning

DFFE and UNDP signed their contract on 18 October 2019 and the Inception Workshop Meeting was held on 27-28 January 2020. Contract between UNDP and TRAFFIC was signed on 2 June 2021. Instead, contracts between DFFE and Responsible Partners and letter of agreement between UNDP and responsible partners were signed at the end of 2020 and in the first half of 2021.

The Executing Agency DFFE appointed its Project Coordinator one year after the start of the project. During the first year of implementation, the Project Coordinator was in charge of the project and other tasks within DFFE, i.e. her work was only partially dedicated to the project. The Project M&E and Safeguards Specialist was, instead, appointed only after two years of project implementation. Therefore, the MTR acknowledges that the PMU was not fully operative during the first two years, and this has surely an impact on the actual implementation of the project.

Furthermore, DFFE experienced serious problems in its procurement processes. These problems related to Treasury Regulations that contained an unconstitutional procurement provision. The department, therefore, found itself in an impasse very difficult to overcome that ultimately was solved: DFFE got an exemption that allow the institution to move on with procurement for selected projects, mainly those financed by international donors. However, throughout all processes, the PMU at DFFE lost a considerable period of time of about 6 months.

COVID-19 lockdown contributed significantly to the delays of project implementation: internal processes related to recruitment and procurement could not take place smoothly with relevant officers working remotely. These processes, in fact, required the DFFE staff to work in the office as some manual work is needed. Internal communication was also hampered. In addition, the lockdown impacted DFFE bureaucratic process that are not always efficient. Nevertheless, the MTR considers that without the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment and procurement would have gone much faster and delay would have been considerable reduced.

Procurement issues related to contracting service providers to run activities related to the outputs under the direct responsibility of DFFE had a definitively negative impact on the implementation. The MTR acknowledges that now, as per the MTR exercise, there is a substantial agreement between DFFE and UNDP CO on how to fast track the implementation of the project. UNDP CO will support the procurement processes of DFFE, whenever it is needed. In addition, the PMU and UNDP decided to hold weekly meetings to verify the status of the project progress and identify corrective measures whenever relevant. This agreement in form of an implementation plan is now with the GEF Secretariat for formal approval. Periodic learning and reflection meetings are as well envisaged. Necessity to deliver outputs and achieve outcomes of the project

is the guiding element of PMU and UNDP. The MTR considers this agreement well justified and appropriate to move forward trying to catch the delays accumulated.

*The MTR rates the **Work Planning** of the project as **Highly Unsatisfactory**.*

4.3.c. Finance and co-finance

The project's disbursement rates up to the 2022 have been as follows:

Year	Budget (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Expenditure / Budget %	Balance (USD)
2020	29 428,47	29 415,03	99,9%	13,44
2021	571 644.00	298 268.77	52%	273 375,23
2022	1 695 254.00	285 985.05	16,8%	1 409 268,95
Project - Total	6 210 046.00	613 668.85	9.8%	5 596 377.15

The project still has to disburse 90.2% of its funds. This slow burn-rate is consistent with the low level of implementation of activities.

Due to the nature of the project, the control of financial expenditure is quite straightforward: expenses are related to the financial agreements of UNDP with DFFE and with the Responsible Partners and to the recruitment of service providers. No other major procurement actions are foreseen. The project has not registered any disbursement problems thus far, or any delays related to the timely flow of funds, and decisions about the course of implementation was never postponed because of financial issues.

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing Commitment Letter (ZAR)	Co-financing Actual at MTR (ZAR)	%
National Govt.	DFFE	In-kind	R324 331 233	R50 681 633	16%
National Govt.	DSI	In-kind	R10 000 000	---	---
National Govt.	CSIR	In-kind	R35 604 112	R1 125 809	3%
National Govt.	ARC	In-kind	R18 396 442	R7 662 200	42%
National Govt.	SANBI	In-kind	R6 700 000	R3 155 163	47%
	TOTAL		R395 031 787	R62 624 806	16%

Table 1 - Co-financing table

16% of committed co-financing was disbursed. The actual numbers may be higher: not all numbers are yet consolidated. Co-financing seems not to be a concern for the project.

*The MTR rates the **Finance and Co-finance** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.3.d. Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

The project monitoring and evaluation systems are in place.

Monitoring data is then passed to the PMU, namely to the Project M&E and Safeguards Specialist, who is in charge of consolidating the data into the quarterly reports, which also serve as the basis to write the PIRs.

Due to the low implementation of activities, M&E activities did not yet present any particular problems, i.e. the PMU was able to present to the MTR Team a quite complete picture of the progress of the project and the problems encountered so far. In other words, the information collected by interviewing PMU staff coincide largely with that collected by interviewing all other stakeholders.

The MTR acknowledges that the budget available for M&E is ensured by the budget allocated to outcome 4 and to the project management. There are no elements that suggest that the M&E budget is not sufficient to have a satisfactory monitoring of project progress, i.e. delivery of outputs, and achievements of outcome and objective.

PMU, responsible partners and relevant UNDP officers are well aware of the limited progress of the project. It was clearly explained to the MTR Team that major adaptive measures were not yet adopted to maximize the support provided by the present MTR exercise. Such a choice is regarded as logical and well thought.

Finally, the MTR acknowledges that work done by the PMU in identifying, and keeping updated, the environmental and social risks and related mitigation and management measures through the UNDP Environmental and Social screening procedure. The GEF Tracking Tool has been as well regularly updated.

*The MTR rates the **Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation System** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.3.e. Stakeholder engagement

The low level of implementation revealed an important aspect in relation to the partnerships chosen to actually implement activities. Heavy bureaucratic procedures imply the national public institutions are not necessarily the best suited to implement activities. They seem to be better positioned to work in a position of oversight and coordination to ensure that project activities are aligned with their interests. As a matter of fact, service providers are expected to be contracted to implement the vast majority of activities. Instead, non-state actors seem better equipped and more agile to implement actions on the ground. The component managed by TRAFFIC is the one that, at the moment of the MTR has the highest probability to be completed by the closure of the project, and it is expected to be completed on time. The MTR considers that this is due to the internal functioning of the different type of organizations and does not reflect any negative or positive judgements on the individuals involved in each organizations.

Due to the nature of the project that has much to do with negotiations and strict collaboration with its end beneficiaries, namely TK holding right communities and private companies operating in the bio-prospecting and bio-trade sector is self-evident that these stakeholders will have to take part actively in the project, which otherwise cannot be implemented. However, the actual involvement of communities in the delivery of outputs that foresee the actual implementation of activities at field level cannot be assessed by the present MTR.

Three elements are very critical for the success of the project in terms of delivery and sustainability:

1. The involvement of communities in the cultivation of honeybush is key. In fact, on one end the project is obliged to work with them: they cannot be left out because they rely on honeybush as a side source of income; on the other end their transformation from harvesters into growers is a quite ambitious target. This transformation, moreover, implies a great involvement of women, who represent the majority of harvesters as reported by stakeholders interviewed on the matter, and therefore implies a great deal of concern in terms of gender issues, which at the moment are not really identified (e.g. what does it mean to become growers in terms of balance between household chores and work, being growing activities more labor intense than harvesting? What are the capacities needed for such an ambitious transformation? These two important questions remain currently without an answer).
2. A deep involvement in the decision-making mechanism to set up the cultivation of *Aloe ferox* is as well an aspect that deserve attention. Gender issues must be considered and capacities must be in place to make the cultivation successful.
3. The tri-partite collaboration between DFFE, ARC and DAEARDLR has not yet materialized, i.e. the MoU not yet been signed. This may have serious implications for the project the months of September and October 2023 represent the last chance for the project to start the production of Devil's Claw, Cancer Bush and *Sceletium tortuosum*.

SANBI did not participate in the project as planned in the ProDoc. In fact, the institute does not have the capacity to develop a bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains. This kind of work is clearly not included in its institutional mandate. SANBI is, however, collaborating with the project: a representative is sitting in the

Project Board and its staff can collaborate with the project partners on ad-hoc basis, as it usually happen also for other initiatives.

The PMU developed with the support of the UNDP Gender Specialist developed A Gender Action Plan (GAP). The plan has a strong focus on women participation in project activities, it includes gender targeted indicators, but it does not contain elements to fully understand the implications on gender issues of the activities promoted by the project and whether the project may be considered as gender neutral, responsive or transformative, being the latter the aspirations behind the projects implemented by UN agencies.

*The MTR rates the **Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation System** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.3.f. Reporting

As already mentioned in section 4.3.d. “Project-level monitoring and Evaluation Systems”, no adaptive measures⁶ have been considered by PMU, DFFE and UNDP. Actually, it has been reported that the MTR was expected to be the relevant exercise to suggest adaptive measures to be applied in the continuation of the project. All reports therefore still refer to the original ProDoc and its Results Framework.

The reports available for the present MTR exercise are of very high quality. The quarterly reports related to year 2022 are exhaustive and candid: the work plans under each outputs made the reader easily understand the progress of the project.

*The MTR rates the **Reporting** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.3.g. Communications

Mixed evidence has been collected in relation to project’s internal communication. For some outputs communication is not optimal. The most prominent complaint is lack of feedback and delayed response to correspondence from DFFE. Stakeholders expressed frustration with not being informed about progress or lack of it of preparatory activities. On the other hand, other stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the level of communication.

To communicate progress, quarterly progress meetings have been arranged where each stakeholder present their work and shares experiences.

The MTR considers that, although some problems were communicated to the MTR Team, these did not play a major role in determining the delays that the project experienced so far.

Because project implementation is still limited, external communication of project activities is limited. The information on Bioprospecting Access and Benefit Sharing (BABS) is seemingly only available to internet users, and people in the know how. The PMU is in discussions with internal and UNDP communications departments towards socialising the project.. However, there are provisions in the BABS regulations for public participation. At this stage, it is difficult and premature to assess the effectiveness of external communication mechanisms to target audiences. Communication only happened with the Tyefu community in relation to the Aloe ferox activities.

Finally, it is noted that TRAFFIC has published articles to communicate their activities to the public. As part of communication of its activities, the ARC has also developed a website. Besides these examples, there is no evidence of communication material that has been developed.

The PMU has developed a draft communication plan which has yet to be approved. The development of a communication plan is a step in the right direction to communicate effectively.

*The MTR rates the **Reporting** of the project as **Moderately Satisfactory**.*

⁶ The Guidance for Conduction Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Project (2014) defined Adaptive Management as *The project’s ability to adapt to changes to the project design (project objective, outcomes, or outputs) during implementation resulting from: (a) original objectives that were not sufficiently articulated; (b) exogenous conditions that changed, due to which a change in objectives was needed; (c) the project’s restructuring because the original objectives were overambitious; or (d) the project’s restructuring because of a lack of progress.*

*The MTR rates the **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management** of the project as **Moderately Satisfactory**.*

4.4. Sustainability

4.4.a. Financial risks to sustainability

The project enjoys political support and commitment from government since it is expected to contribute to addressing poverty alleviation, sustainable development, economic inclusion and rural development.

The outcomes are strongly aligned with the development plans such as the National Development Plan (NDP), which outlines government's development priorities till 2030. The project is also aligned with the Department of Science and Innovation's Bio-economy strategy in which R&D and commercialisation of South Africa's biodiversity is one of the strategic focus areas.

However, it is important to highlight the difficult fiscal constraints that the country faces which is largely due to low economic growth. This might lead to budget cuts and reduced level of financial support.

Co-financing by other departments is further evidence of low risk of financial sustainability and shows the ability to pool resources. Many of the activities and objectives in the project are being carried out by well-established organisations such as CSIR, ARC, TRAFFIC that are likely to carry forward at least some of these activities in future.

The objective of some of the value chains is to be income generating from products. However, the sustainability of these value chain will depend on viable business models which are untested.

The creation of an enabling environment will require transparency, legal compliance, accountability and partnerships. It is important that the actors especially in government do not act in silos. A careful understanding of the constraints and obstacles in value chain is required to develop an enabling environment.

Financial and economic instruments such as benefit sharing, income generation mechanisms and training are being developed to ensure that benefits flow once GEF assistance ends. Other benefits such as non-monetary benefits are still to be developed. It is noted however that no benefits have accrued to communities yet due to the delays.

*The MTR rates the **Financial Sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

4.4.b. Socio-economic risks to sustainability

The Northern Cape Hub site has potential political risk due to the partnership with DAEARDLR. MOU in place to manage this for the next 3 years.

The Tyefu Project has potential social risk of community run enterprise not working out. Community cohesion and consultation is key to this and there is a need for strong focus on stakeholder engagement in Tyefu project. Since the project will be on communal land, this will also pose risks.

All outputs are very closely owned by government departments and are closely integrated into policy and legislative requirements. The project has been designed to align with institutional and departmental mandates.

The private sector is showing ownership through participation in working groups such as the Pelargonium Working Group. The project outcomes will, if successful, enhance the sustainability of their businesses.

There is awareness of this project by the private sector and some community businesses through their participation in some of the working groups. The Tyhefu community is one of the communities that is aware. Community awareness will happen once activities such as the Bio-cultural Community Protocol, National Registration System has been initiated and engagement occurs.

The programme has introduced progress review sessions in which implementing partners present their work and share experiences. However, there is no evidence to show that any lessons learnt are captured.

Finally, due to the low level of implementation, an assessment of how project's successful aspects are being transferred to appropriate parties is premature: there is no evidence of successful aspects yet.

*The MTR rates the **Socio-economic Sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

4.4.c. Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

No legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that may pose risks and jeopardize project benefits have been identified.

The project design has been closely integrated into national policy and legislation to have the mechanisms for accountability and transparency in place. For example, development of BSA's are linked to legislation and regulated. The harvesting and management of plants is linked to legislative requirements for permitting. Furthermore, the National Registration System and Certification Systems are expected to ensure ongoing accountability and transparency.

*The MTR rates the **Institutional Sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

4.4.d. Environmental risks to sustainability

There are no evident environmental factors that can undermine the projects outcome. On the contrary, the project was designed to reduce pressure on biodiversity resources.

*The MTR rates the **Environmental Sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

*The MTR rates the **Sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

Conclusion n. 1

The project is well designed. The causal logic between activities, outputs, outcomes and objective is solid and plausible and risks are well identified. Although formally Outcome 4 should not be considered as an outcome of the project, the MTR considers that the collection of lessons learned is a relevant activity worth of being disseminated over the years to build a nationwide knowledge base to move ahead with the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. In addition, its inclusion in the Results Framework raises the bar of accountability of the project, which is a positive elements of the project design.

Conclusion n. 2

14 Indicators out 17 are considered SMART. The following four are, instead, not SMART:

- Indicator n. 8 is redundant as it is already included in indicator n.1.
- Indicator n. 11 is not SMART as the income is subject to market fluctuations both at national and international level. It has very little to do with project implementation and the outcome 2 does not include a dimension related to income generation.
- Indicator n.12 is not fully SMART. Cultivation of Honeybush is relevant only if it releases pressure on wild plant harvesting from the ecosystem, namely the Fynbos. Cultivation without directly targeting the existing harvesting communities would do not alleviate the pressure on the wild population in the Fynbos.
- Finally, indicator n. 17 is irrelevant: monitoring women and men participation in a project has nothing to do with its achievements.

Conclusion n.3

The target level of the indicator n. 3 Area (ha) under landscape management systems that mainstream ABS principles has not been yet determined due to the delays in engaging with TK holding communities.

Conclusion n. 4

COVID-19 lockdown contributed significantly to the delays of project implementation: internal processes related to recruitment and procurement could not take place smoothly with relevant officers working remotely. The MTR considers that without the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment and procurement would have gone much faster and delay would have been considerably shorter. Once the Project Coordinator was on board, contracts with the Responsible Partners were signed. Finally, the procurement processes managed by DFFE suffered from two main problems: (1) the National Treasury decision to put on hold all public procurement processes for about six months; and (2) the relatively scarcity of actors in the country that have specific competence to run the activities under the different outputs falling under the direct responsibility of DFFE and difficulties to target them during procurement processes.

The accumulated delays are regarded by the MTR as the main reason for which the project is likely not to deliver most of its outputs, and consequently achieve its outcomes and objective.

Finally, it is acknowledged that the slow burn-rate is consistent with the low level of implementation of activities: only 9.8% of project funds have been spent.

The development of an implementation plan that includes procurement support from UNDP, weekly meetings (PMU and UNDP) and learning and reflections sections amongst all Project Partners is considered a valid idea to fast track the implementation by the MTR exercise.

Conclusion n. 5

The risk of not achieving outcome 1 “Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy” is high. The MTR considers the delivery by the end of the project of the two related outputs as follows:

Output 1.1 “R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner” may be not delivered. Scientific institutions may be seen as actors that have a direct interest in taking advantage of TK, therefore the building of trust between CSIR and communities is the main constraint.

Output 1.2 “Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located Bioproducts Development Hub” may be not be delivered or may be characterized by malfunctioning especially in relation to delivering extension services to communities. If next planting season for Devil’s Claw Cancer Bush and *Sceletium tortuosum*, i.e. September/October, the output cannot be delivered. Finally, the engagement with communities has not yet started and the tripartite MoU between ARC, DFFE and DAEARDLR is not yet signed. There is little time to have cultivation and production in place at the inland facilities and to set up of all support of extension activities to support communities engaged.

Conclusion n. 6

The risk of not achieving outcome 2 “The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players” is medium high. The MTR considers the delivery by the end of the project of the four related outputs as follows:

Output 2.1 “the implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders” is likely to be delivered successfully.

Output 2.2 “Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported” may be delivered.

However, the quality of its delivery may be very low. In fact, the output is quite ambitious and involves the organization of an actual enterprise that after project closure should be handed over to communities. This implies that all aspects of the business should be very well thought and implemented. It is particularly important that the cash flow that would be generated is enough to make the business itself financially sustainable. In addition, some trust issue between the stakeholders involved have been identified during the MTR mission in the country.

Output 2.3 “Community-based enterprises in Honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region” is very ambitious as it implies the transition of harvesters into growers. It is self-evident that such an ambitious process must be well thought and discussed through a deep consultation with communities involved in Honeybush harvesting. The MTR considers that the remaining time is not enough to have this transition successfully in place.

Output 2.4 “ABS implementation in Rooibos farming is strengthened, ensuring fairness, equity and sustainability in relevant relationships among TK holders and industry” is likely to be delivered.

Conclusion n. 7

The risk of not achieving outcome 3 “Bioprospecting and value addition knowledge transfer is enhanced for equitable benefit sharing” is high. The MTR considers the delivery by the end of the project of the two related outputs as follows:

Output 3.1 “The National Recordal System for TK linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry” is likely to be delivered.

Output 3.2 “A bio-trade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains” is likely not to be achieved. There is the need to consult with producers and actors involved in existing agricultural-related certification schemes in the country and with actors of the 5 value chains in order to set up a certification schemes. In addition, it is self-evident that the overall certification scheme must be economically viable, affordable for communities involved in harvesting/cultivating relevant species

Conclusion n. 8

PMU and project partners are well aware of the implementation problems. The monitoring of the project progress is detailed and strictly based on activities progress, as no delivery of outputs yet happen. The project reporting reflect with candour and honesty the actual progress of the project and is compliant with GEF and UNDP requirements.

Conclusion n. 9

A Gender Action Plan (GAP) has been drafted by the PMU in consultation with the UNDP Gender Specialist. The plan does not contain elements to fully understand the implications on gender issues of the activities promoted by the project and whether the project may be considered as gender neutral, responsive or transformative, being the latter the aspirations behind the projects implemented by UN agencies.

Conclusion n. 10

Sustainable use of genetic resource and bioprospecting is promoted in all the project outputs and outcomes. The work with Tyefu community on Aloe ferox and the establishment of the North Cape R&D Hub may not be sustainable after project closure because a stable cash flow stemming from economic activities is needed to support them. All other outputs are instead closely integrated into policy and legislative requirement and no major risks for their sustainability are identified.

5.2. Recommendations

Below are the 9 recommendations identified by the MTR:

Recommendation n. 1

→ To modify the formulation of the following indicators:

	Original formulation	Suggested formulation
Ind. 6	Number of new and strengthened ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape's Bioprospecting economy	Number of new and assessed and, possibly, revised ABS-compliant supply chains facilitated in the Northern Cape's Bioprospecting economy
Ind. 7	Number of patent registrations based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project	Number of registrations with SAHPRA based on home-grown R&D facilitated by the project
Ind. 10	Number of local community households for which members are employed in aloe cultivation, harvesting and processing	Number of targeted TK holding community members involved in sustainable management and production of Aloe and Honeybush
Ind. 13	A certification system in place to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on threatened species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species' survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation 	Certification standards developed to promote biodiversity conservation in the bio-trade sector focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - securing species' survival - protection of wild gene-pools - habitat management - sustainable transition towards cultivation

Rationale behind the recommendation:

Ind. 6	The word "strengthened" is not specific. The expression "assessed and, possibly, revised" instead defines more specifically how to measure the indicator
Ind. 7	The change acknowledges the strategy pursued by CSIR that intends to register African Ginger with SAHPRA, rather than having a patent registered. As a matter of fact, after the SAHPRA registration having the patent is just a decision that can be taken later, if considered as relevant to protect the rights of the TK holders.
Ind. 10	The reformulation includes Honeybush to be more comprehensive. With the expression "sustainable management and production" the reformulation intends to make sure that the measurement takes into consideration other activities within the value chain that may arise once sustainable management is in place.
Ind. 13	Due to the delays in the implementation, a certification system seems to be too ambitious for the project. Agreement on sound certification standards is, instead, more likely to happen. Finally, reference to threatened species is removed, since not all species targeted by the project are threatened. The new formulation is more adherent to the project reality. It is, however, acknowledge, that the standards will have to take into consideration whether the species are threatened or not.

How to operationalize the recommendation: PMU may have a discussion with relevant Responsible Partners and come up with the reformulated indicators, later the new indicators are discussed and, eventually approved by the Project Board. Being the recommendation an adaptive measure, the decision of the Project Board will have to be reported in the relevant yearly PIR.

Responsible entity: PMU and Project Board

Timeline: As soon as possible with formal approval during the next Project Board Meeting.

Recommendation n. 2

→ To revise the formulation of indicator 12 and its end of project target and plan activities accordingly.

Rationale behind the recommendation: As per its formulation the indicators is not specific, and consequently not SMART. The idea of the project is to release pressure on the Fynbos ecosystem so that Honeybush is not over-exploited. Therefore, the cultivation area should be under the management of the very same economic players, who harvest Honeybush from the ecosystem. It is highly likely that these players have contacts with buyers, otherwise they will not harvest. The cultivation should produce Honeybush so that the communities involved in its harvesting can supply the buyers and reduce the quantity of Honeybush harvested from the fynbos. It is a transition within an existing business relationship (harvesters/buyers) that ideally should, in the course of the year rely always more on cultivation rather than harvesting. It is very ambitious process as harvesters should turn into farmers. The approach, therefore, may also be double fold. On one hand, the project may opt for cultivation as an alternative, and on the other hand it can work on better management of the harvesting from the wild. This approach should be eventually leading to a new formulation of the indicator, with different targets.

How to operationalize the recommendation: DFFE, alongside with the service provider that will work on the Honeybush component, must reflect on how to implement activities having in mind that conservation of the species in its ecosystem is the aim of the component. A strategy that take into consideration harvesting management and introduction of cultivation within the harvesting communities should be developed and implemented. New indicators and target levels should be as well defined taking in consideration the high ambition of the transformation of harvesters into farmers. Being the recommendation an adaptive measure, the decision of the Project Board will have to be reported in the relevant yearly PIR.

Responsible entity: PMU and Project Board

Timeline: As soon as the service provide is contracted.

Recommendation n. 3

→ To delete from the Results Framework the following indicators:

Ind. 8	Increased score for implementation of Nagoya Protocol on ABS as per the GEF6 Tracking Tool BD Program 8, Section 2. ABS Pilots = X / max score 40 (10 x 4 pilots) --PILOTS-- 2.1 Pelargonium - 2.2 Aloe ferox - 2.3 Honeybush -2.4 Rooibos ABS deal
Ind. 11	Total income (US\$/annum) derived from project pilots that focus on cultivation 2.1 Pelargonium - 2.2 Aloe ferox - 2.3 Honeybush
Ind. 17	Number/Percentage of women and men participating and benefiting from project interventions - 50% women/50% men

Rational behind the recommendation:

Ind. 8	The indicator is NOT SMART. It is a replication of a scores included in Ind.1. It is redundant and does not add any information about project performance.
Ind. 11	The indicator is not SMART. The income is subject to market fluctuations both at national and international level. It has very little to do with project implementation. In addition, outcome 2 does not include a dimension related to income generation.
Ind. 17	The indicator is not SMART, as the participation and benefits of women and men from project interventions has nothing to do with the formulation of Outcome 4. <i>It is understood that as a good M&E practice the actual participation of men and women should be monitored</i>

Observation:

Deleting the indicators from the Results Framework is not simply a formality. It is an actual adaptive measure that should be taken for two reasons, in order of importance: (1) accountability - there is no longer the necessity to attain the target levels associated with the three indicators; (2) in practical terms, it makes the M&E activities more focused on the other achievement and makes the reports more readable because there is no longer the necessity to report against these indicators.

How to operationalize the recommendation: it is a simple decision of the Project Board that should be taken during a Project Board meeting and reported in the minutes. Being the recommendation an adaptive measure, the decision of the Project Board will have to be reported in the relevant yearly PIR.

Responsible entity: Project Board

Timeline: during the next Project Board meeting.

Recommendation n. 4

→ *To speed up the implementation of activities related to the support to Tyefu community to set up the cultivation and processing facilities for Aloe ferox.*

Rationale behind the recommendation: The engagement of DFFE with Tyefu community to support the establishment of Aloe ferox cultivation and processing facilities dated back to 2012. The engagement did not yet materialize into any actual progress on the ground. It is widely acknowledged that trust amongst communities and public institutions is a key factor to promote rural development. Tyefu community is progressively losing its trust in the Government because of the no-progress with Aloe ferox activities after 10 years. In addition, it has been reported that those in charge of leading and coordinating the intervention are losing their credibility with their peers within the community. It is, then, paramount to stop this sort of domino effect, which is detrimental for the project, the communities and the overall relationships amongst stakeholders.

How to operationalize the recommendation: it is necessary to prioritize the procurement of a service provider, which will be in charge of the activities. UNDP may step in to support the procurement process, if it is necessary.

Responsible entity: PMU, DFFE and UNDP

Timeline: as soon as possible.

Recommendation n. 5

→ *To promote the decision making within the Tyefu community*

Rationale behind the recommendation: It has been reported to the MTR Team, that a Steering Committee for the implementation of activities will be established. The MTR concludes that a Steering Committee may cause further delays for the implementation. In fact, misunderstandings and different points of view may always happen. It is then suggested to establish a Technical Pool of Experts that supports the service provider and the Tyefu community every time they require its support. i.e. a sort of trouble shooting pool of experts ready to intervene. Each expert may be contacted by the community and the service provider to act as a consultant, without the necessity to engage in a discussion with the rest of the pool of experts. Each expert will support whenever there is a problem that the service provider and the community cannot solve without external support. The service provider should work in close collaboration with the community and employ, whenever it is possible, members of Tyefu community in position of responsibility, not just as workers, to ensure ownership of the initiative since its beginning and put in place relevant capacity development activities to tackle problems and constraints that may hampered the sustainability of the Aloe ferox business within the Tyefu community in the long term.

How to operationalize the recommendation: the decision should be taken in consultation with the service provider that will be contracted. It is, then, suggested to discuss the possibility to implement the recommendation before the contract is formally signed.

Responsible entity: PMU, and DFFE

Timeline: as soon as possible along with the implementation of recommendation n. 5

Recommendation n. 6

→ *To implement actions to better understand gender issues related to the delivery of project outputs*

Rationale behind the recommendation: the Gender Action Plan includes gender-targeted indicators, however information on how the project activities and deliveries will affect gender issues is not explored.

How to operationalize the recommendation: a Gender Specialist could work with responsible partner to understand what are the implications in terms of women empowerment and gender issues in relation to each project outputs. Understanding whether the project is simply gender targeted or gender responsive/transformational is important for the bio-trade sector future development. Gender focused workshops may be held in selected communities involved in the project. The Gender specialist may belong to SANBI or DFFE so that no procurement process has to be launched.

Responsible entity: PMU, DFFE, ARC, CSIR and TRAFFIC

Timeline: as soon as possible along with the implementation

Recommendation n. 7

→ *To support CSIR to gain the necessary trust with the communities involved in the African Ginger component.*

Rationale behind the recommendation: research institute may be regarded as possible competitor, and hence not as impartial actor, in the use of bio-resource by the communities involved.

How to operationalize the recommendation: the presence of a staff member of DFFE/SANBI during meeting with communities members may support CSIR to gain the trust of community members, who may regard research institute with suspicion when it comes to work on bio-resources. The presence of an officer, who actually represents the Government, would play a sort of guarantor role that ultimately may ease the overall process related to the African Ginger component of the project.

Responsible entity: CSIR with support of PMU, DFFE and/or SANBI

Timeline: as soon as possible along with the implementation

Recommendation n. 8

→ *To determine the target (a) of the indicator 3 "Area (ha) under landscape management systems that mainstream ABS principles".*

Rationale behind the recommendation: the target should have been already set. It is a matter of accountability.

How to operationalize the recommendation: once the communities involved in the value chains are on board, it will be possible, through the use of Geographical Information Systems, to delineate the actual areas (ha) of interest of the project for each relevant value chain.

Responsible entity: PMU, DFFE, TRAFFIC, ARC

Timeline: 2023

Recommendation n. 9

→ *To request and approve a project extension of at least one year due to events that have caused delays in the implementation of project activities and, therefore, ensure a satisfactory delivered of all project outputs, thus contributing to the achievements of project outcomes and objective.*

Rationale behind the recommendation: COVID-19 lockdown contributed significantly to the delays of project implementation. The extension is important specifically for the components/outputs of the project that fall under the direct responsibility of CSIR, DFFE and ARC. It is needed in order to ensure a satisfactory delivery of project outputs. In fact, there should be enough time to discuss with TK holding communities and make sure that their concerns and interests are reflected in each deliverable. Moreover, it is of paramount importance to maximize the benefits for the TK holding communities, in accordance to the UN principle of

Leave No One Behind, and to make sure that biodiversity concerns are adequately addressed. In other words, the long term sustainability should represent the aim of the project. This concept is also well expressed in the project objective.

How to operationalize the recommendation: the extension request should be accompanied by relevant documentation related to each output. This documentation should include a work plan with clear milestones and the relevant re-organization of budget lines per output. Being the recommendation an adaptive measure, the decision of the Project Board will have to be reported in the relevant yearly PIR.

Responsible entity: Project Board, UNDP, DFFE, ARC and CSIR

Timeline: 2023. The recommendation is vital, in case the procurement issues face further delays and/or in case next planting season of Devil's Claw, Cancer Bush and *Sceletium tortuosum* is missed.

6. Annexes

Annex 1 - MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

UNDP-GEF: Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources Project Midterm Review Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

A. Project Title:

Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources in Compliance with the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy Project

B. Project Description

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled Support to the Development of Value Chains for Products derived from Genetic Resources Project (PIMS# 5686) implemented through the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), former Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), which is to be undertaken in 2022. As a result of COVID-19 and delayed appointment of the Project Manager in DFFE, the required implementation agreements with the project partners (Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, Agricultural Research Council, ARC, and IUCN-TRAFFIC) were concluded in Q2 2021, which enable release of funds for actual implementation. Thus, the project is in its second year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (<https://intranet.undp.org/unit/office/eo/SitePages/gef-evaluation-guidelines.aspx>) specifically: (COVID) UNDP-GEF-MTR-TOR-Template-June2020_ENGLISH_JobsSite (3)).

PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

South Africa is a megadiverse country, and this diversity is expressed in terms of both species richness and endemism. The conservation and sustainable use of South Africa's biological diversity is of strategic importance for the country. So is the maintenance of ecosystem services – now and in the future. This species richness and associated genetic diversity provides an important basis for economic growth and development which underpins the well-being of society.

Under leadership of the DFFE South Africa launched in 2015 its National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES). The Strategy is concerned with supporting the development of businesses and economic activities that are either directly dependent on biodiversity for their core business or that contribute to conserving biodiversity through their activities. An important segment of the NBES is 'bioprospecting', and under it 'biotrade'.

The project will specifically support the implementation of the NBES by focusing on the use of indigenous plants' genetic resources and their current and potential applications, either in pharmaceuticals, personal care products, cosmetics, enzymes or similar non-food uses. It will address both conservation and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) issues linked to the development of different bioprospecting value chains, while also helping key players overcome related barriers and challenges. The project will approach its core problem both through ABS pilots and ABS systemic measures that are relevant for the ABS-conservation nexus of the bioprospecting segment. More specifically, the project will focus on bioprocessing and product development, and on removing barriers through R&D and stakeholder collaboration. Overall, the project will foster innovation, equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, while contributing to both species and habitat conservation. Furthermore, the project will enhance South Africa's systemic capacity development for Nagoya Protocol compliance through gender-sensitive approaches.

The Project Objective is to strengthen the value chains for products derived from indigenous plants' genetic resources with a view to contributing to the equitable sharing of benefits and conservation of biodiversity.

The realization of the project Objective will eventually lead to the following changes (project's mid-term impact): (i) bioprospecting R&D focused on indigenous plants will make a more significant contribution to the national bioprospecting economy owing to at least 1 (one) new patent being registered and at least 4 (four) new market niches explored through sustainable and ABS-compliant value chains in the Northern Cape's Bioprospecting economy; (ii) the approach to ways of working, management conditions and techniques will change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, to the extent that they become examples of how conservation results (in particular through sustainable supplies of plant raw materials) and ABS-compliance can simultaneously be achieved through cooperation among bioeconomic players; and (iii) national capacity for the protection of traditional knowledge within the bioprospecting segment, as well as the general mainstreaming of both conservation and ABS compliance, will be gradually improved (as independently assessed). The project Objective will be achieved via three technical project Outcomes:

Outcome 1: 'Bioprospecting R&D that focuses on indigenous plants contributes to the national Bioprospecting economy' – this outcome aims at supporting the completion of critical steps in many R&D processes and overcoming context-specific barriers. One important output under the first Outcome will focus on the Northern Cape Province, where a support hub will be established. The component will also accelerate the registration – and transition to cultivation -- of the critically endangered *Siphonochilus aethiopicus* (African Ginger) as a medicinal product for asthma and allergies, while also considering what would be needed for conserving the diversity of the plant's gene pool in the wild. Under this Outcome an ABS monetary agreement will be negotiated between CSIR and the Traditional Healers Association for this medicinal product.

Outcome 2: ‘The ways of working, management conditions and techniques change within 5 (five) strategic value chains, and demonstrate how conservation and ABS-compliance can be simultaneously achieved through cooperation among Bioprospecting economy players’ – this outcome is focused on value-chain development. Both biotrade and landscape-level management are prominently featured among key activities under this outcome, where the goal is to ensure ABS compliance and the sustainability of supplies. Targeted species include *Pelargonium sidoides*, *Aloe ferox*, Honeybush (including at-least three species of *Cyclopia spp.* used in the industry) and Rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*). The government will specifically support extension services for the successful transition to cultivation for African ginger. Outcome will also facilitate the negotiation of a second ABS monetary agreement for a product derived from Rooibos.

Outcome 3: ‘National capacity for the protection of traditional knowledge within the bioprospecting segment, as well as the general mainstreaming of both conservation and ABS compliance within them, is improved (as independently assessed)’ – this outcome is aimed at building the national stakeholders’ capacity for understanding ABS issues, compliance with national and international legislation and for better handling the inherently complex relationships between providers and users of genetic resources, as well as the implications of their economic activity for conservation. More specifically, the national registration system for documenting and protecting traditional knowledge will be strengthened. Additionally, a biotrade certification system will be developed, safeguarding the biodiversity within bioprospecting value chains.

In addition to the three technical outcomes, the dissemination of project lessons – along with the application of appropriate M&E framework – will contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning through the active participation of all stakeholder groups in project implementation (**Outcome 4** - Lessons learned and the application of a participatory and gender sensitive M&E framework effectively contribute to institutional, community and corporate learning on ABS).

COVID-19 implications in South Africa and impact on project components

The project had a smooth start of its implementation in May 2019 and was expected to make good progress by June 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic significantly distorted the project’s 2020 work plan. This resulted in a shift of major work outputs to the following two years 2021 and 2022. Some tasks were also put on hold due to movement restrictions. Since the peak of COVID-19 cases in South Africa, very few field work trips were authorized in most of 2020 and 2021. Realizing that the impacts of COVID-19 will not go away soon, the project has learnt to work more efficiently through virtual means and in this regard has supported the stakeholders from the partners with procurement of internet data. Additionally, the project has to ensure that each international consultant hired during this period has a collaborating local consultant so that activities continue even with travel restrictions since most of the restrictions are around international travel. In light of the continuance of COVID-19 cases in the country, the project evaluations will follow a hybrid setting for conducting interviews.

Brief overview of the Institutional arrangements of the project, relevant partners and stakeholders

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE): DFFE is the implementing partner for the overall project. The project will specifically support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) by focusing on the current use of indigenous plants’ genetic resources and their potential, either in pharmaceuticals, personal care products, cosmetics and enzymes or similar non-food uses. It will address both conservation and Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) issues linked to their development.

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR): The CSIR’s role is to function as the responsible party for Output 1.1: R&D barriers linked to clinical studies and registration of African Ginger (*Siphonochilus aethiopicus*) as a bioresource to treat inflammatory and allergic diseases are systematically overcome in an ABS-compliant manner.

Agricultural Research Council (ARC): The ARC’s role is to implement Output 1.2: Bioprospecting R&D in the Northern Cape is supported, boosting the local Bioprospecting economy and establishing a strategically located ‘Bioproducts Development Hub’.

TRAFFIC Conservation International: The role of TRAFFIC is to implement Output 2.1: The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.

The DFFE Project Management Unit (PMU): The PMU is responsible for implementing Outputs 2.2-2.3, respectively. Output 2.2: Development of an *Aloe ferox* harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported. Output 2.3: Community-based enterprises in honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the *Cyclopia spp.* landscape in the Cape Region.

The DFFE-Directorate: Bioprospecting and Biodiversity Economy: The role of DFFE-Directorate: Bioprospecting and Biodiversity Economy is to implement Output 2.4: The ABS implementation in Rooibos farming is strengthened, ensuring, fairness, equity and sustainability in relevant relationships among TK holders and industry.

The Department of Science and Innovation (DSI): The role of the DSI is to implement Output 3.1: The National Recordal System for traditional knowledge linked to bioprospecting is supported for ensuring ABS compliance in current and future agreements between indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and industry.

The PMU in Partnership with South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI): The role of the DFFE-PMU and SANBI is to co-implement Output 3.2: A biotrade certification system for South Africa is developed in view of safeguarding biodiversity conservation within bioprospecting value chains.

Other key project stakeholders include the following:

Pelargonium Working Group (PWG): The role of the PWG would be to provide support to the TRAFFIC and the PMU in implementing the activities proposed in Output 2.1: The implementation of the Pelargonium Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) is supported in close collaboration between the Pelargonium Working Group, community businesses and CSO stakeholders.

Tyefu Traditional Trust: The PMU and the Tyefu Traditional Trust will be directly responsible for contributing to the implementation of Output 2.2: Development of an Aloe ferox harvesting, processing and trading hub in the Eastern Cape for promoting sustainable and equitable benefit sharing across the value chain is supported. The Tyefu Traditional Trust will, as the legal entity representing the livelihood interests of the community, be the beneficiary of activities proposed in Output 2.2.

Honeybush Community of Practice (HBCoP): The role of the HBCoP in the project is to provide support to the PMU in the implementation of Output 2.3: Community-based enterprises in honeybush farming are supported, ensuring conservation and equitable benefit sharing outcomes across the Cyclopia spp. landscape in the Cape Region.

Management

The Project Management Unit (PMU) is hosted in the DFFE. The PMU is comprised of a Project Manager (technical, strategic, managerial) and Technical M&E Officer. For the project implementation to follow as closely, the project reports through the various task teams of DFFE and a UNDP focal point. UNDP provides oversight and strategic guidance to the project.

The DFFE-PMU is responsible for making management decisions for the project when guidance is required by the Project Manager. Its roles include (i) to review the project progress, approve budgets and financial reports, and review and approve outputs as requested, (ii) to provide strategic guidance and policy directions to project implementation and to (iii) ensure the relevance of the project by making sure that the project is well aligned to national policies and priorities of the country.

C. MTR Purpose

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. Further, the MTR will assess the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the project and make recommendations on necessary changes in order for the project to still continue to make reasonable level of implementation progress even with the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

D. MTR Approach & Methodology

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

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach⁷ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts the GEF Operational Focal Point, the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiary and other key stakeholders. Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.⁸ Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Department of Science and Innovation, Agricultural Research Council, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), TRAFFIC, Pelargonium Working Group (PWG), Tyefu Traditional Trust and Honeybush Community of Practice (HBCoP); executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. In terms of relevant International Cooperating Partners, Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions in South Africa including the following project sites (Northern Cape and Tyefu Community in the Eastern Cape). If the field mission does not take place, stakeholders will assemble in selected places to interact virtually with the consultants in Pretoria.

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

⁷ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

⁸ For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

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

UNDP South Africa and DFFE will ensure that if all possible virtual meetings are arranged in case COVID-19 travel restrictions are still in place during the undertaking of the Mid-Term Evaluation. This will include interviews with key stakeholders at project sites to enable the MTR consultants to get an actual feel of the situation on the ground. This immediate implication of the COVID-19 situation is that the MTR consultants will need to do a lot of desk review. Additionally, the project management unit will need to submit all the necessary documents so that the consultants are able to form a clear picture about the progress made on the project from the documentation.

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

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach⁹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.)

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

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. COVID-19 restrictions have kept moving up and down, but is currently on level 1 which has less restrictions for travel. If it is not possible to travel to or within the project area for the MTR mission then the MTR team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the PMU Unit.

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

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

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

E. Detailed Scope of the MTR

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

1. Project Strategy

Project Design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design? Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
- Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- Review the impact COVID-19 has had on project implementation. What more could have been achieved in terms of project implementation had it not been for the COVID-19 pandemic that restricted travel?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommended for improvement.

⁹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

Results Framework/Logframe:

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

2. Progress Towards Results

- Review the log frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red). Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements

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

Work Planning

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

Finance and co-finance

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

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

TOTAL

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

Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

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

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks¹⁰ (in the SESP).
 - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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

Reporting

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

Communications & Knowledge Management

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

¹⁰ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

4. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

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

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR consultant/team will include a section in the MTR report for evidence-based **conclusions**, in light of the findings. Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make **recommendations** to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. The MTR consultant/team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See the TOR Annexes for the Rating Table and ratings scales.

F. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The MTR team shall prepare and submit:

- MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 1 week before the MTR mission. To be sent to the PMU Unit and project management. Completion date: (22nd December 2022)
- Presentation: MTR team presents initial findings to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission. Completion date: (1st February 2023)
- Draft MTR Report: MTR team submits the draft full report with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR mission. Completion date: (8th February 2023)
- Final Report: MTR team submits the revised report with annexed and completed Audit Trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft. Completion date: (15th February 2023)

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

G. Institutional Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is *UNDP South Africa Country Office (CO)*.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements to the project sites for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits. The Project team and DFFE will be responsible for arranging all virtual meetings to ensure that the MTR consultant have as much access to the project area as possible within the limitations of COVID-19.

H. Duration of the Work

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately *40 days* over a time period of *8 weeks* starting *11 July 2021* and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
10 December 2022	Inception meeting
14 December 2022	Inception Report Evaluation
9 January 2023	Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report - latest start of MTR mission
9 January 2023 (15 days)	MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits
23 January 2023	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings- earliest end of MTR mission (this includes presentation of preliminary findings to the PMU unit and commissioning Unit)
23-31 January 2023	Preparing draft report
8 February 2023	Comments incorporation
15 February 2023	Finalization of MTR report.
28 February 2023	Issue of Management Response

K. Ethics

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

Annex 2 - MTR evaluative matrix

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project strategy: to what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
<u>Project design</u> - Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document. - Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design? - Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country? - Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes? - Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design.	- Relationships established within project levels (long term goal, objective, outcomes and outputs) - Coherence project design vs implementation approach - Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in Project design - Perceptions of stakeholders as to whether Project responds to national priorities and existing capacities - Identification of gender issues raised	- Project documents - National policies and strategies - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries	- Review of project documents - Review of national policies or strategies - Review of websites - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction
<u>Results Framework/Logframe:</u> - Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary. - Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame? - Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis. - Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.	- Relationships established within the project levels (long term goal, objective, outcomes and outputs) - Quality of identified indicators and targets - Evidence of adjustment of activities during the implementation due to newly available information on challenges or concerns	- Project documents - National policies and strategies - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries	- Review of project documents - Review of national policies or strategies - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction
Progress Towards Results: to what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
<u>Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:</u> - Review the log frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).	- Results framework indicators - Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project achieves its intended outcomes	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction

<p>In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review. - Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project. - By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits. 			
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?			
<p><u>Management Arrangements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement. - Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement. - Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement. - Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how? - What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff? -What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board? - Review the impact COVID 19 has had on project implementation. What more could have been achieved in terms of project implementation had it not been for the COVID 19 pandemic that restricted travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities for operational and management structure - Degree of fulfilment of goals according to results framework - Stakeholder satisfaction with project staff: accessibility, capabilities & skills, expertise applicable knowledge, efficiency and timeliness - Identification of the COVID 19 impact on project implementation and assessment of what could have been achieved in terms of project implementation had it not been for the COVID 19 pandemic that restricted travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries
<p><u>Work Planning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved. - Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results? - Examine the use of the project's results framework as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of the use of the results framework as management tool - Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project activities are on track - Extent of compliance with the expected work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries
<p><u>Finance and co-finance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. - Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions. - Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions as to cost-effectiveness of program - Level of execution of program budget - Evidence of use of finance resources to make management decisions/adaptive management - Level of execution of program budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners

<p>- 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?</p>	<p>- Evidence of use of finance resources to make management decisions/adaptive management</p>		
<p><u>Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:</u></p> <p>- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?</p> <p>- 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?</p> <p>- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems.</p>	<p>- Evidence of use of M&E information to make management decisions/adaptive management, inform strategy and planning</p> <p>- Percentage of budget spent on M&E systems</p> <p>- Evidence of incorporation of gender issues in monitoring systems</p>	<p>- Project documents</p> <p>- Project staff</p> <p>- Project partners</p>	<p>- Review of project documents</p> <p>- ATLAS Project Management Module (project output indicator reporting)</p> <p>- Interviews with project staff</p> <p>- Interviews with project partners</p>
<p><u>Stakeholder Engagement:</u></p> <p>- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?</p> <p>- 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?</p> <p>- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?</p> <p>How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?</p>	<p>- Extent to which the implementation of the Project has been inclusive of stakeholders and collaboration with partners</p> <p>- Stakeholder satisfaction with the level of their engagement in project decision making mechanism</p> <p>- Identification of engagement with women and girls and barriers that may limit their participation in project activities and fruition of project benefits</p>	<p>- Project documents</p> <p>- Project staff</p> <p>- Project partners</p> <p>- Project beneficiaries</p>	<p>- Review of project documents</p> <p>- Interviews with project staff</p> <p>- Interviews with project partners</p> <p>- Focus group discussion with beneficiaries</p>
<p><u>Reporting:</u></p> <p>- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.</p> <p>- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)</p> <p>- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.</p>	<p>- Extent to which lessons learnt have been communicated to project stakeholders</p> <p>- Evidence of use of reporting information to make management decisions/adaptive management, inform strategy and inform planning</p>	<p>- Project documents</p> <p>- Project staff</p> <p>- Project partners</p>	<p>- Review of project documents</p> <p>- Interviews with project staff</p> <p>- Interviews with project partners</p>
<p><u>Communications:</u></p> <p>- 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?</p>	<p>- Project internal communication and feedback loops generating information useable in decision making</p> <p>- Project information, internal and external, is effectively managed and disseminated.</p>	<p>- Project documents</p> <p>- National policies and strategies</p> <p>- Project staff</p> <p>- Project partners</p> <p>- Project beneficiaries</p>	<p>- Review of project documents</p> <p>- Review of communication products</p> <p>- Interviews with project staff</p> <p>- Interviews with project partners</p> <p>- Focus group discussion with beneficiaries</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?) - For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits. 			
Sustainability: 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"> - Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. - In addition assess the following risks to sustainability: <p><u>Financial risks to sustainability:</u> What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?</p> <p><u>Socio-economic risks to sustainability:</u> Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?</p> <p><u>Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:</u> 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.</p> <p><u>Environmental risks to sustainability:</u> Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of funding for sustaining project's outcomes by the end of the project - Stakeholders' perceptions about social and political risks, which may harm project implementation and outcomes - Stakeholders' perception about the Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability - Evidence of relevant environmental risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - National policies and strategies - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with beneficiaries

Annex 3 – Ratings Scale

The table reports the MTR ratings as per the “Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects”.

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating::	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating::	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating::	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management		
Sustainability		

Progress Towards Results Rating Scale		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HI)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.

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

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

Annex 4 - MTR mission schedule

Monday, 16/Jan/2023

- Meeting in Pretoria with Mrs. Nokutula Mhene, Programme Specialist – UNDP Nature, Climate and Environment Unit, and Mr. Abraham Tumbay, Acting Programme Manager – Specialist, UNDP Nature, Climate and Environment Unit
- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. Frederick Shikweni, M&E Officer – UNDP

Tuesday, 17/Jan/2023

- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. Sechaba Bareetseng, Indigenous Knowledge System Programme Manager - CSIR
- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. Ntambudzeni Nepfumembe, Biodiversity Control Officer – DFFE
- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. Joseph Mülders, Project M&E and Safeguards Specialist – DFFE and Mr. Bandile Mkhwanazi, Intern – DFFE

Wednesday, 18/Jan/2023

- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. David Newton, Regional Director – TRAFFIC
- Meeting (on-line) with Mrs. Lemone Sebastian, Project Assistant – TRAFFIC
- Meeting (on-line) with Mrs. Preshanthie Naicker, Project Coordinator – DFFE

Thursday, 19/Jan/2023

- Meeting (on-line) with Mr. Neil Crouch, Programme Lead: Bioprospecting Economy – SANBI
- Meeting (on-line) with Mrs. Katrin Mole, Project Manager – TRAFFIC

Friday, 20/Jan/2023

- Meeting (on-line) with Mr. Hannes Gerber, Scientific Manager – DAEARDLR
- Meeting in Pretoria with Mr. Joseph Mülders, Project M&E and Safeguards Specialist – DFFE
- Meeting (on-line) with Mrs. Kedi Aphane, Deputy Director: Indigenous Knowledge Systems – DSI and Mrs. Shumikazo Pango, Deputy Director: Advocacy & Policy Development – DSI
- Meeting (on-line) with Mr. Onesimus Muhwezi, Regional Technical Advisor Ecosystems and Biodiversity – UNDP, and Mrs. Mahlet Ambachew – Regional Associate Ecosystems and Biodiversity – UNDP

Monday, 23/01/2023

- Meeting in Tyefu with Mr. Max Madlingozi, Tyefu community member, Zihle Wababa, Tyefu community member
- Meeting in Bhisho with Mrs. Noluthando Bam, Biodiversity Officer – DEDEAT
- Meeting in East London with Mr. Lwazi Marawu, CEO – Mazoyi Group (Pty) Ltd

Tuesday, 24/Jan/2023

- Meeting (on-line) with Mr. Richard Gowar, Director – Gowar Enterprises (Pty) Ltd
- Meeting (on-line) Mr. Ulrich Feiter, CEO – Parceval (Pty) Ltd

Wednesday, 25/Jan/2023

- Meeting (on-line) with Mrs. Nelly Mwaka, Gender Specialist – UNDP

Thursday, 26/Jan/2023

- Meeting (on-line) with Mr. Steve Hurt, Owner – Afrigetics Botanicals (Pty) Ltd

Friday, 27/Jan/2023

- Meeting in Pretoria with Dr. Hintsu Araya, Senior Researcher Prof. Stephen Amoo, Principal Research and Project Leader, ARC, and Dr. M.M. Mafokeng, Senior Researcher, ARC

Monday, 30/01/2023

- Wrap-up meeting and presentation of initial findings in Pretoria

Annex 5 - List of persons interviewed

1. Mrs. Nokutula Mhene, Programme Specialist, UNDP Nature, Climate and Environment Unit
2. Mr. Abraham Tumbay, Acting Programme Manager, Specialist, UNDP Nature, Climate and Environment Unit
3. Mr. Frederick Shikweni, M&E Officer, UNDP
4. Mr. Sechaba Bareetseng, Indigenous Knowledge System Programme Manager, CSIR
5. Mr. Ntambudzeni Nepfumembe, Biodiversity Control Officer, DFFE
6. Mr. Joseph Mülders, Project M&E and Safeguards Specialist, DFFE
7. Mr. Bandile Mkhwanazi, Intern, DFFE
8. Mr. David Newton, Regional Director, TRAFFIC
9. Mrs. Lemone Sebastian, Project Assistant, TRAFFIC
10. Mrs. Preshanthie Naicker, Project Coordinator, DFFE
11. Mr. Neil Crouch, Programme Lead: Bioprospecting Economy, SANBI
12. Mrs. Katrin Mole, Project Manager, TRAFFIC
13. Mr. Hannes Gerber, Scientific Manager, DAEARDLR
14. Mrs. Kedi Aphane, Deputy Director: Indigenous Knowledge Systems, DSI
15. Mrs. Shumikazo Pango, Deputy Director: Advocacy & Policy Development – DSI
16. Mr. Onesimus Muhwezi, Regional Technical Advisor Ecosystems and Biodiversity, UNDP,
17. Mrs. Mahlet Ambachew, Regional Associate Ecosystems and Biodiversity, UNDP
18. Mr. Max Madlingozi, Tyefu community member
19. Mr. Zihle Wababa, Tyefu community member
20. Mrs. Nolutando Bam, Biodiversity Officer, DEDEAT
21. Mr. Lwazi Marawu, CEO – Mazoyi Group Pty (Ltd)
22. Mr. Richard Gowar, Director, Gowar Enterprises
23. Mr. Ulrich Feiter, CEO, Parceval (Pty) Ltd
24. Mrs. Nelly Mwaka, Gender Specialist, UNDP
25. Mr. Steve Hurt, Owner, Afrigetics Botanicals (Pty) Ltd
26. Dr. Hintsa Araya, Senior Researcher, ARC
27. Prof. Stephen Amoo, Principal Research and Project Leader, ARC
28. Dr. M.M. Mafokeng, Senior Researcher, ARC
29. Mr. Khorommbi Matibe, Chief Director: Biodiversity and Economy and Sustainable Use, and Project Board Chairman, DFFE (met on-line during the reporting phase)

Annex 6 - List of documents consulted

Documents

- ⇒ Draft Communications Plan
- ⇒ Draft Gender Action Plan (GAP)
- ⇒ Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- ⇒ Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Appendix A: Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)
- ⇒ Inception Report (27-28 Jan 2020)
- ⇒ Progress reports
 - Q1 2022
 - Q2 2022
 - Q3 2022
 - Q4 2022
- ⇒ Project Identification Form
- ⇒ Project Implementation Report (2021)
- ⇒ Project Board minutes
 - 15 August 2022
 - 17 January 2022
 - 20 July 2021
 - 12 February 2021
- ⇒ Project Document

Webpages:

- ⇒ www.thegef.org
- ⇒ <https://www.za.undp.org>

Annex 7 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

Independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence or pressure by any party (including the hiring unit) and providing evaluators with free access to information on the evaluation subject. Independence provides legitimacy to and ensures an objective perspective on evaluations. An independent evaluation reduces the potential for conflicts of interest which might arise with self-reported ratings by those involved in the management of the project being evaluated. Independence is one of ten general principles for evaluations (together with internationally agreed principles, goals and targets: utility, credibility, impartiality, ethics, transparency, human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacities, and professionalism).

Evaluators/Consultants:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of the International Evaluator: Giacomo Morelli

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

Signed on 1 December 2022

Signature:



Name of the National Evaluator: Dr Mziwandile Madikizela

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

Signed on 20 December 2022

Signature:

