Midterm Review of 'Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES)' project.

Mid Term Review Report
Final Version

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Project title: Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES)	**UNDP PIMS ID number:** 6089 **GEF ID number**: 9787
Evaluation timeframe: April-May 2023	GEF focal area: Climate Change Mitigation
Executing agency: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Project start date: Nov 12, 2020, End date Nov 12, 2024
GEF funding: USD 2,639,726– Co-finance target: USD 16,525,531	The objective of the SPIRES project is facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands

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Disclaimer

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1 Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ACSE	Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy
APR/PIR	Annual Project Report/Project Implementation Review
ADB	Asia Development Bank
BOT	Build operate and transfer
BAU	Business-as-usual
CSO	Civil society organization
CDM	Clean development mechanisms
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Australia
EE	Energy Efficiency
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
GESI	Gender Equality Social Inclusion
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
SIG	Government of Solomon Islands
GHG	Greenhouse gases
IRRs	Implementing rules and regulations
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDC SIDS	Least developed country, Small Island developing state
LED	Light emitting diode
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
MW	Megawatt
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
$MtCO_2$	Million tons CO_2
MCILI	Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination
MEHRD	Ministry of Education Human Resources Development
MECDM	Ministry of Environment Climate Change Disaster Management and Meteorology
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
MID	Ministry of Infrastructure Development
MMERE	Ministry of Mines Energy and Rural Electrification
MPGIS	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MWYCA	Ministry of Women Youth and Children's Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NEPF	National Energy Policy Framework
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NAMAs	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFP	Operational Focal Point
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PALS	Pacific Islands Labeling and Standards Project
PIREP	Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project
PV	Photovoltaic (Solar)
PMU	Project Management Unit
RE	Renewable energy
RESCOs	Renewable Energy Service Companies
SHS	Solar home systems

SIEA	Solomon Islands Electricity Authority
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SIWIBA	Solomon Islands Women In Business Association
SP	Solomon Power
SPIRES	Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons
TWG	Technical Working Group
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WARA	West Are'are Rokotanikeni Association

1. Executive summary

1.1 Project information table

Project Title:	Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES)			
GEF Project ID:	9787		*at endorsement (US$)*	*at MTR (US$)*
UNDP Project ID:	6089	GEF financing:	US$ 2,639,726	US$ 1,324,296 (spent)[1]
Country:	Solomon Island	IA/EA own:	USD 100,000	USD 25,000
Region:	Pacific	Government:	US$ 16,425,531	USD 5,110,000
Focal Area:	Climate Change Mitigation	Other:	US$ 00	US$ 00
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	CCM1 for GEF 6: Promote Innovation, Technology Transfer, and Supportive Policies and Strategies	Total co-financing:	US$ 16,525,531	US$ 5,135,000
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification	Total Project Cost:	US$ 19,165,257	US$ 6,459,296
Other Partners involved:	Government of Solomon Islands	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		Nov 12, 2020
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: Nov 12, 2024	Actual: Nov 12, 2024

1.2 Project Description

The SPIRES Project's goal is reduced annual growth rate of GHG emissions in the energy and energy end use sector of the Solomon Islands. Its objective is the facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the country. The project is meant to operate in four components a) Review, improvement, approval and enforcement of appropriate policy, planning and regulatory frameworks that supports enhanced and accelerated electrification of the off-grid areas in the country; (b) Development and enforcement of suitable institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification in the country; (c) Development and implementation of cost-effective demonstrations of various schemes for rural electrification in the off-grid areas involving the private sector, CSOs, NGOs and local communities; and, (d) Design and conduct of information communication and education activities to improve levels of awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and citizenry on climate resilient and low carbon development of off-grid areas.

It is expected that all the SPIRES project's outputs are collectively contributing to the realization of the following outcomes: a) Enforcement of approved policies, and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands; b) Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas; c) Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas; d) Increased

[1] Until the end of the 2022 financial year.

confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas; and e) Enhanced awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and communities on the cost-effective application of RE and EE technologies/ practices.

The SPIRES project started on 12 November 2020 and is due to end on 12 November 2024, and it is implemented following the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM) by the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification (MMERE). The policy and regulatory components of the project are implemented at the national level and demonstration activities are implemented at the provincial level across the Solomon Islands.

1.3 Progress Summary and main conclusions

Overall, there has been limited progress towards MTR targets, 14 out of 18 MTR targets are assessed to be off track The SPIRES project efforts have been largely focused on the delivery of the demonstration activities and very little achievements done so far to deliver the incremental values of the GEF project, particularly in relation to supporting policy, regulatory and strategic planning reforms (outcome 1), financial and institutional mechanisms (outcome 2) and capacity building (outcome 4). It should be understood that the SPIRES success lies in the incremental value achieved by removing barriers identified in the project design, and the project demonstration pilots are one piece, among many others, in achieving the project objectives.

The current project management does not consider the additionality of the GEF project in removing the barriers. This is based on the fact that project delivery has been largely focused on delivering the demonstration activities without addressing other regulatory, financial, and technical barriers in the same momentum. Also, the implementation of partnership strategy was not effective enough to facilitate removing the barriers. For example, there is no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications. Further, other factors that affected the delivery towards MTR targets include: 1) logistics difficulties in accessing remote rural areas not well-serviced with transportation means, this affected the project team mobility as well as transportation of goods and equipment; 2) COVID and associated impacts which led to shift in Government policy orientation and focus as well as restrictions on movements; and 3) delays in recruitments and procurements, particularly in sourcing solar technology.

The SPIRES is coherent in its design that holistically addresses root causes and identified the key barriers towards facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands. The project is relevant to the needs of Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and communities, and it is directly aligned with the national agenda, Paris commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project document is generally well-written and offers detailed guidance to the project management on the project problems to be addressed, theory of Change (ToC) supported with a very detailed elaboration on the project activities.

The SPIRES project has made limited efforts to develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to stimulate progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES). For example, there has been no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications, and limited engagement with the institutions that could influence the regulatory reforms. The stakeholders engagement strategy of the SPIRES needs to be based on the role of the SPIRES as an enabler and facilitator to achieve the

project objectives and targets, and this means SPIRES activities should be achieved through coherent partnerships with stakeholders.

The SPIRES project is designed to stimulate the replication of the RE/EE application in rural are electrification through the careful selection and implementation of demonstration activities that will showcase the pronged barrier removal approach of the project in terms of reforms in policy and planning, improvement of technical performance and reliability of RE facilities, institutional strengthening, sustainable financing arrangements, and information and awareness.

The financial sustainability of the installed demonstration facilities to maintain the RE systems has not yet been agreed with the communities nor finalized, and the MoUs signed with the communities, in their current form, don't define terms of the pricing and fee collection and process to collect and use the fee, and this poses a sustainability concern shall those terms are not agreed upon. Also, financing the scale-up and replication and this has not been addressed by the project at this point.

1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	The SPIRES is coherent in its design that holistically addresses root causes and identified the key barriers towards facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands. The project is relevant to the needs of Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and communities, and it is directly aligned with the national agenda, Paris commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project document is generally well-written and offers detailed guidance to the project management on the project problems to be addressed, theory of Change (ToC) supported with a very detailed elaborations on the project activities. The Theory of Change for the SPIRES Project involves the facilitation of the achievement of the energy objectives of the country focusing on rural electrification as the country pursues its low carbon development path. It illustrates how the realization of Solomon Islands' contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change as stated in the NDC is enabled and facilitated.
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU))[2]	Overall, there has been limited progress towards objective level MTR targets. The SPIRES project efforts have been largely focused on the delivery of the demonstration activities and very little achievements done so far to deliver the incremental values of the GEF project, particularly in relation to supporting policy, regulatory and strategic planning reforms (outcome 1), financial and institutional mechanisms (outcome 2) and capacity building (outcome 4). It should be understood that the SPIRES success lies in the incremental value achieved by removing barrier identified in the project design, and the project demonstration pilots are one piece, among many others, in achieving the project objectives.
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The Solomon Islands National Energy Policy (SINEP) was updated in 2019 by the MMERE but the SPIRES had no direct engagement in the update of the SINEP as it started before the project started. There has been no progress in developing the implementing rules and regulations (IRRs) on EE & RE technology applications for rural electrification; the electricity generation regulatory framework and its necessary organizational structure and

[2] MU = The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.

		standards; and the rural electrification plans at the national and local levels. All MTR targets (3/3) under outcome 1 are assessed to be off track.
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The SPIRES project started the discussion around the institutional and financial arrangements, but the models remain primitive and not matured enough in terms of institutional and financial arrangements and no agreed plan for maintenance. Also, engaged communities expressed concerns over the ambiguities around institutional and financial terms. In order to perfect these models, the SPIRES should clearly document the model in writing, socialise the model with targeted communities, improve based on the feedback, finalise, and formally agree on the key terms with the communities. The financial and institutional models are instrumental sustainability element of the SPIRES and creates avenue for achieving additionality by attracting other development agencies and banks to adopt the models.
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Despite the fact that two demonstration pilots are almost complete in terms of installation, there is no evidence that these demos s are set for replication and up-scaling, the demos s are not fully 'demonstratable' at this stage and not ready to be presented as successful working model that build confidence for replication and attract investment packages as anticipated by the project design mainly because of they are not fully operated yet and no final agreement on the financial arrangements and maintenance. The demos have faced challenges in terms of meeting the quality standards of the Solomon Power to be able to connect the beneficiaries to the systems. There has been no formal approval from the Solomon Powers obtained prior to installations and some beneficiaries were unable to connect to the systems because of not meeting the standards of Solomon Power. A formal approval should have been obtained on the demo design prior to the procurement and installations stages Also, the demos lack the sustainability element at this point given that financial mechanism and future maintenance are not finalised and no linkage with policy and regulatory components. Also, the SPIRES has been unable to assess RE opportunities and risk through the DREI or techno-feasibility studies until this point. In total 4 out of 6 targets are assessed to be off track under outcome 3.
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There has been limited progress on this component overall, no capacity assessment done so far, and subsequently no training programme established and implemented. Also, no data base system developed yet to monitor and report on the supply and consumption. Also, no trainings or capacity building activities implemented for the RESCOs under this outcome The SPIRES has launched its website as knowledge exchange platform among stakeholders and with the public. The website offers information about the project and its activities, news, and events.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)[3]	Project implementation has been Moderately Satisfactory (MS) in consideration of actual progress, the effectiveness of the adaptive management and stakeholders, engagement strategy. The project board needs to be convened more actively and more frequently to enable effective project oversight, and project reporting and planning need to be results-base. The M&E framework follows the standard M&E template for projects of this size and complexity, the project reports progress, and challenges regularly through

[3] MS = Implementation of some of the key components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action

		quarterly reports and annual PIRs, but no follow-up actions have been implemented on underperforming milestones. The SPIRES project has made limited efforts to develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to stimulate progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES). For example, there has been no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications, and limited engagement with the institutions that could influence the regulatory reforms. The stakeholders, engagement strategy of the SPIRES needs to be based on the role of the SPIRES as an enabler and facilitator to achieve the project objectives and targets, and this means SPIRES activities should be achieved through coherent partnerships with stakeholders.
Sustainability	Financial: Moderately Unlikely (MU). Institutional framework and governance: Moderately Likely (ML). Socio-economic: Likely (L) Environmental: Moderately Likely (ML).	The SPIRES project is designed to stimulate the replication of the RE/EE application in rural are electrification through the careful selection and implementation of demonstration activities that will showcase the pronged barrier removal approach of the project in terms of reforms in policy and planning, improvement of technical performance and reliability of RE facilities, institutional strengthening, sustainable financing arrangements, and information and awareness. The financial sustainability of the demonstration facilities to maintain the RE systems has not yet been agreed with the communities nor finalised, and the MoUs signed with the communities, in their current form, these don't define terms of the pricing and fee collection and process to collect and use the fee. This situation poses a sustainability concern in case those terms are not agreed upon. Also, financing the scale-up and replication and this has not been addressed by the project at this point. The project sustainability is also anchored in the commitment of the SIG to reform the policies in favour of integrated energy policy and planning that will include economic, social, technical, and environmental sustainability parameters in the choice of RE technologies for application in rural electrification. As discussed earlier in this report, outcome 1 (policy and regulatory reforms) has not progressed as anticipated until this point, and this component need to be strengthened in the second half of the project timeframe. The fact that the SPIRES project is totally hosted within, and operated by, the MMERE creates important grounds for the Solomon Government ownership. The MMERE staff seemed engaged and involved across the project developments. At the local level, the Rokera and Hunanawa communities expressed full ownership of the RE systems subject to finalising the institutional and financial terms on how to maintain the systems. However, the issue of maintenance is not yet resolved in terms of financing and capacities to deliver in cooperation with RESCOs. Despite the impact of SPIRES project to reduce conventional energy consumption and GHG emissions, environmentally safe waste disposal of used old lamps and potential waste generation from the demonstration activities and recycling practices need to be addressed.

1.5 Recommendations Summary

Details are available in section 5.2.

Rec#	Recommendations	Responsibility
A.	Project objective: Facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands	
A.1	Emphasize and reinforce the role of the SPIRES project as a facilitator and enabler to increase access to electricity in rural communities in the	UNDP and PMU

	Solomon Islands by removing the policy, regulatory, capacity, institutional and financial barriers	
B.	Outcome 1: Enforcement of approved policies and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands Outcome 2: Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas Outcome 3.2: Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas.	
B.1	Pause on the delivery of new demonstration activities for the next 10-12 months after finalizing installation of the two demos in Rokera and Hunanawa	PMU
B.2	Reactivate the UNDP's flagship De-risking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) activity again or, at minimum, expand the ongoing 'technical and economic feasibility assessment' to include risk and barrier assessment and suggest measures to mitigate or transfer whatever risks that need to be addressed to facilitate investments, particularly private sector investment, in the rural electrification program of the government	PMU with support of the regional hub
B.3	Develop and implement a new partnership strategy where stakeholders and their potential role in removing barriers should be mapped and engagement strategy identified	PMU
C.	Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	
C.1	Reactivate the role of the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) to serve the strategic orientation of the SPIRES project and provide overall project advisory services and technical backstopping to the PMU	PMU with UNDP support
C.2	Seek Solomon Power's formal approval on the design of the demonstrations prior to construction and installation to ensure full compliance with their standards and accordingly manage the expectations of the beneficiaries.	PMU
C.3	Revamp and expand the existing communication strategy to aDevelop and implement a include a gender -sensitive and targeted communication actions	PMU
C.4	Establish data collection systems to keep track of project indicators and co-financing.	PMU
C.5	Consider requesting a project implementation period extension for 6-12 months to allow project activities completion.	PMU and UNDP
C.6	Increase the frequency of the board meeting to be every 6 months to strengthen the oversight and strategic guidance role	PMU and UNDP

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the MTR

The MTR assessed progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and 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. The MTR also reviewed the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The aims of the MTR were the following:

- Assess the progress towards the achievements of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document
- Assess the extent of barrier removal that has been achieved as of the mid-term, and the prospects of full barrier removal by end-of-project.
- Assess early signs of project success or failure, and recommend corrective and adaptive measures
- Assess the progress towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.
- On the basis of the MTR findings, identify and propose the necessary changes to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results[4].
- Review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The MTR team assessed the main four categories of project progress, namely the project strategy; progress Towards Results; project Implementation and Adaptive Management; and sustainability.

2.2 The primary audience and users of the review are the project board and team. The report and recommendations aim at guiding the project team to streamline activities so as to accelerate implementation and achieve project objectives. Methods

The MTR process followed the guidance outlined in the document Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (MTR Guidance)[5]. The MTR was conducted based on evaluation best practices and principles including 1) Evidence-based, 2) Theory of change (ToC) -based Evaluation, 3) Participatory approach, 4) Utilization-focused, and 5) Mixed Methods to ensure robustness of the findings.

a. Data collection methods

To strengthen the robustness of the evaluation evidence, a mix qualitative-quantitative approach was used to best describe project results based on the on the results framework as outlined in the project document. The evaluation used methods of document review and interviews for data collection to obtain answer all of the evaluation questions outlined in the TOR. The evaluation had two levels of data collection and validation of information:

[4] The MTR is expected to provide guidance on how to expedite the implementation the delayed project activities and those that are planned for implementation during the PIR 2023 reporting period, as well as guidance to the PMU on how to put back the project implementation on track, and how to carry out the planned project activities to be able to generate the necessary data/information that will be used in gauging the level of achievement of each Outcome indicator in each project component.

[5] Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects. Available here.

- A desk review of project documentation
- Independent data collected by the evaluators through interviews with key stakeholders.

An evaluation matrix was developed as a base for gathering of qualitative inputs for analysis. The evaluation matrix (Annex 2) defined the objective for gathering non-biased, valid, reliable, precise, and useful data with integrity to answer the evaluation questions.

Engaging stakeholders has been critical for the success of the evaluation. The project involved multi-stakeholders and teams in different capacities and the MTR engaged with various stakeholders to cover different perspectives taking into account the principle of gender responsive. Gender responsiveness has been integrated throughout the evaluation process including gender balance during the engagement with stakeholders, assessing the gender integration in the project design and delivery, and ensuring that data collection and analysis are gender-sensitive. Throughout the evaluation process, the main stakeholders have been engaged and interviewed using semi-structured interview6 method. Interviews relied on a targeted and self-selecting sampling strategy to include a diversity and balance of perspectives from each stakeholder category.

Additionally, the MTR team conducted field missions to Solar PV system demonstration sites, including the following project sites: Hunanawa Community and Rokera Provincial Secondary School, Malaita Provinces.

b. Data analysis methods

Data analysis was based on observed facts, evidence, and data. Findings are specific, concise, and supported by quantitative and/or qualitative information that is reliable, valid, and generalizable.

The data analysis method involved 1) descriptive analysis to understand and describe its main components, including related activities; partnerships; modalities of delivery; etc. 2) Content analysis of relevant documents and the literature conducted to identify common trends and themes, and patterns for each of the key evaluation issues (as the main units of analysis), and 3) thematic analysis of responses collected from semi-structured interviews and observations.

c. Ethical Considerations

The MTR consultants were held to the highest ethical standards and was required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'[7]. The evaluators ensured to 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 evaluators also ensured security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process has been solely used for the evaluation and will not be used for other purposes without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

[6] A semi-structured interview is a method of research used most often in the social sciences. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which does not allow one to divert, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored.

[7] UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020, available here.

d. Limitations

The timeframe for collecting MTR data has been challenging and relatively short. In response, the MTR team was split into two teams, one for meeting with project stakeholders in Honiara and another engaging with the community benefiting from the demonstration sites in Malaita to gather MTR data in parallel. Also, due to the low level of implementation of the project in component 1, 2 and 4. The MTR Team could necessarily interview only stakeholders who were aware of project activities. Regardless, the MTR team has made every effort to understand the Project and present a fair and a well-balanced assessment of the Project. Any gross misrepresentation of the Project has been resolved through discussions with the Project team.

e. Structure of the Report

The MTR report follows the format suggested by the UNDP-GEF MTR guidelines, with a description of the methodology, a description of the project and findings organized around: Project Strategy, Progress towards results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learnt complete the report. Consistently with requirements, certain aspects of the Project are rated, according to the rating scale of the Guidelines. Co-financing information is presented in the chapter under financial management.

3. Project Description

3.1 Development context

Solomon Islands is a least developed country, small Island developing state (LDC SIDS) that contributes to a very minimal degree for the unfolding climate change catastrophe, yet it is highly vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change. It is estimated that in 2015, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions level from Solomon Islands is approximately 20 $MtCO_2e$/year. This is extremely small, i.e., representing approximately just 0.01 % of global emissions. In terms of per capita emissions, it has a very low level merely at just 1.2 tCO_2 per person. This is fourteen times less than the average per capita emissions of Australia (16.5tCO_2/capita), and less than the estimated level required to stay below 1.5 ^oC (as compared to 2^oC) of warming, of around 1.5tCO_2e/capita[8].Thus, any contribution from Solomon Islands is more than fair, and must be considered ambitious, given Solomon Islands national circumstances. Nevertheless, the country is pursuing an aggressive RE/EE program to address the energy needs of rural population for their electrification requirements.

While the country is endowed with some renewable energy resources, e.g., geothermal, hydro, solar, ocean, and biomass, most of these (except for solar and hydro) have not yet been tapped. The country is almost entirely dependent on imported petroleum fuels for electricity generation, for transport (land, sea, and air) and for modern energy services at household level. It is heavily dependent on fossil fuel for its commercial energy demand, but biomass still accounts for about 61% of gross national energy production, petroleum products for 34%, and hydropower and solar about 5%.

Biomass remains the main source of national energy source especially in the rural areas[9] and that all urban centers are being provided energy using fossil fuel, hydropower, and solar energy. Renewable energy is increasingly

[8] **World Bank (2011); http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx**

[9] A PIREP Report **(**Pacific Regional Energy Assessment 2004) estimated 2001/2002 petroleum demand of 78 million liters (ML) or 68 kilo

becoming the crucial source of energy particularly in the rural areas where solar energy as an important source of light for the households, albeit still very limited if matched with the demand for it.

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address

The main basis of the SPIRES Project is the Solomon Islands' National Energy Policy adopted in 2014 (SINEP 2014) and the National Development Strategy 2011 – 2020 where the country has initially set its targets on electricity access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency in line with the development objectives. However, there are various barriers and gaps that prevent the country in achieving these targets, and these must be adequately addressed. While the country has carried out baseline initiatives, the presence of these interrelated barriers hampers the timely realization of the set renewable energy and energy efficiency targets. From the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) Workshop that was conducted in January 2018, the core problem that must be addressed is the limited access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands[10].

With the current strategy on awareness raising and information dissemination, the current rather low level of public awareness of cost-effective RE technology applications not only for power applications, and the idea of conserving energy, using renewable energy, and using energy efficiently will continue as in the past. The immediate causes of the core problem include the following:

1) Inadequate enforcement of policies and plan to support application of cost-effective RE Technologies for electricity access in the off-grid areas.
2) Limited financial and institutional support in terms of integrated plans on the implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in off grid areas.
3) Low level of confidence in and application of RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas.
4) Limited applications of climate resilient and low carbon technologies in providing electricity access in off-grid areas.
5) Low level of awareness and knowledge of the SIG, private sector & communities on cost-effectiveness applications of RE and EE technologies.

3.3 Project Description and Strategy

The SPIRES Project's goal is reduced annual growth rate of GHG emissions in the energy and energy end use sector of the Solomon Islands. Its objective is the facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the country. The project is meant to operate in four streams a) Review, improvement, approval and enforcement of appropriate policy, planning and regulatory frameworks that supports enhanced and accelerated electrification of the off-grid areas in the country; (b) Development and enforcement of suitable institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification in the country; (c) Development and implementation of cost-effective demonstrations of various schemes for rural electrification in the off-grid areas involving the private sector, CSOs, NGOs and local communities; and, (d) Design

tonnes of oil equivalent (ktoe), with transport accounting for 56%, electricity 28%, commerce and industry 15% and direct household use (mostly cooking and lighting) one per cent. About 89% of all households rely mainly on biomass for cooking. Fuel wood burning probably totals about 110 ktoe, with additional biomass used for copra and cocoa drying.

[10] UNDP-Solomon Islands, Proceedings of the SPIRES Logical Framework Analysis Workshop Report, 30 Jan 2018.

and conduct of information communication and education activities to improve levels of awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and citizenry on climate resilient and low carbon development of off-grid areas.

The project's expected outcomes are the following: a) Enforcement of approved policies, and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands; b) Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas; c) Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas; d) Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas; and e) Enhanced awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and communities on the cost-effective application of RE and EE technologies/ practices.

Building on the ongoing and planned rural electrification and RE/EE technologies application projects in the country, the project involves incorporation of relevant enhancements or modifications to enhance the realization of not only national benefits but also global environmental benefits through a barrier removal process. For the overall project design, the gaps are addressed by the project under the different groups of barriers identified. Regarding the policies and regulations, necessary government enactments and guidelines are to be pursued. For institutional and financial support, integrated plans that optimize partnerships and co-financing are to be developed and adopted. Regarding RE/EE technology applications, pilot demonstrations are being conducted to introduce delivery and market mechanisms to accelerate adoption and sustain operation and maintenance of RE and EE technologies that are applicable to the SOI needs and long term national objectives in energy and environment, For capacity building and awareness, the needs of the stakeholder to be validated and the corresponding training and information programs are developed and implemented based on needs in line the project's capacity building and knowledge management plans.

The project comprises components that specifically address each major group of barriers to enhanced rural electrification to support climate resilient and low carbon development of rural communities in the Solomon Islands. Specifically, these components comprise the interventions to enable increased installation of feasible RE-based power generation systems in the country to facilitate rural electrification and stimulate energy efficiency applications to reduce electricity demand in the major end use sectors. The expected outcomes from each project will be realized through the implementation of the project's major strategies.

The SPIRES project focus is on the enhanced application of low carbon technologies, techniques, and practices to support Solomon Islands' rural electrification program, particularly in achieving the set target of 35% electricity access in rural areas in line with the following major strategies:

1. Review, improvement, approval, and enforcement of appropriate policy, planning and regulatory frameworks that will support enhanced and accelerated electrification of the off-grid areas in the country.
2. Development and enforcement of suitable institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification in the country.

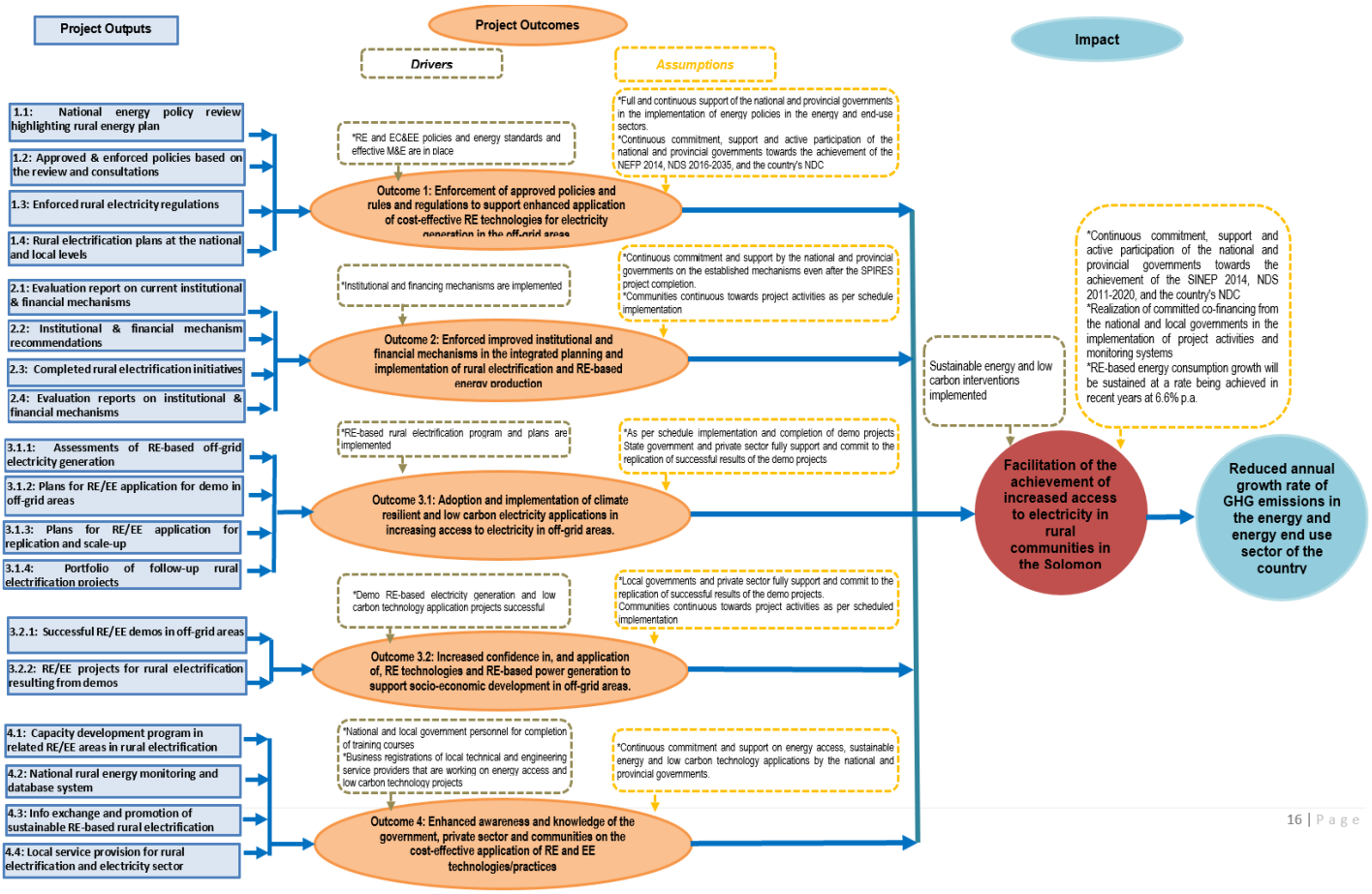
3. Development and implementation of cost-effective demonstrations of various schemes for rural electrification in the off-grid areas involving the private sector, CSOs, NGOs and local communities.
4. Design and conduct of information, communication, and education activities to improve levels of awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector, and citizenry on climate resilient and low carbon development of off-grid areas.

These four barrier removal strategies are by large based on the UNDP's flagship De-risking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) methodology, which in this project involves quantitative analysis of the barriers and risks for sustainable off-grid rural electrification in the Solomon Islands. As a tool for the barrier removal activities, this methodology is expected to be applied to come up with the most cost-effective interventions to mitigate or transfer whatever risks that need to be addressed to facilitate investments, particularly private sector investment, in the rural electrification program of the government. The SPIRES project also contributes to the achievement of the country's RE and EE targets and NDC commitments.

3.4 Project theory of change

The Theory of Change for the SPIRES Project involves the facilitation of the achievement of the energy objectives of the country focusing on rural electrification as the country pursues its low carbon development path. It illustrates how the realization of Solomon Islands' contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change as stated in the NDC is enabled and facilitated. With the assistance of the GEF, the SPIRES Project facilitates the application of appropriate policy, institutional, financial, technological, and information-oriented strategies that would enable the removal of the current gaps in the widespread application of EE and RE technologies in the electricity sector in Solomon Islands that is designed to realize the achievement of the country's rural electrification target. The project Outputs under each Component results to the corresponding expected Outcomes that are collectively contributing to the achievement of the project objective. These Outputs include, among others, those that demonstrate the commercial applications of RE-based power generation units in off-grid areas that are currently being studied and planned (e.g., solar home systems (SHS) for individual houses such as decentralized solar PV mini-grid systems serving villages and micro-hydro units and energy efficiency technology application to lower energy demand. Moreover, several activities are designed to address the barriers concerning technology, policy, capacity development and awareness. For each of the Outcomes, the proposed changes in the Alternative Scenario takes into consideration the Assumptions, which refer to the situations and/or requirements that the project should happen and/or be in place to realize these outcomes. Several Drivers are important to realize since these will necessarily push the achievement of the desired results and project impacts in terms of energy savings and GHG emission reductions.

Figure 1: SPIRES theory of change



3.5 Project Implementation Arrangements

The SPIRES project is implemented following the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM). The responsibility for the implementation of this project is with the MMERE, that is supported by MECDM and other partner SIG ministries to carry out activities within a NIM project organizational structure and day-to-day project management and reporting lines.

SPIRES is governed by a Project Board. This board constitutes MMERE, MECDM, MDPAC, UNDP-SOI and other partner SIG ministries and invited representatives from beneficiary groups such as civil society and local communities, as may be relevant or applicable. MMERE established a Project Management Unit (PMU) that is based in the MMERE. The MMERE recruited the PMU personnel such as the Project Manager (PM) who then will work on the day-to-day management of project activities. The PM is the head of the PMU and provides administrative, technical, management and coordination roles in collaboration with MMERE, MECDM, and other partner SIG ministries.

3.6 Project timing

The SPIRES project officially started on 12 November 2020 and is due to be closed in November 2024. The MTR was due in November 2022 but delayed for nearly 6 moths. The MTR was conducted between April and May 2023.

3.7 Project stakeholders

The following stakeholders were identified as having interest, experience, capacity, networks, and potential benefits corresponding to the goals and objectives of the SPIRES Project:

Table 1: SPIRES project stakeholders

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities in Project Implementation
Ministry Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification (MMERE)	Provide support and technical advice on design, energy specifications and installation of energy systems (solar and mini-hydro) and responsible for implementation of the demonstration pilots. MMERE shall be the Responsible Party and Co-Chairman of the Project Board and lead the formation and working arrangement of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) on consultation and decisions on the policy, financial, technical, and capacity building aspects of the project.
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management (MECDM)	Provide support for the technical design, energy system specifications and installation of energy systems (solar and mini-hydro) and responsible for the implementation of demonstration pilots to achieve the required reduction in GHG emission. MECDM is also responsible for monitoring of the execution and implementation of the project by key implementer and project partners.
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR)	Provide support for the establishment, operation and maintenance of demo commercially-operated solar PV power generation and supply system for fishery centres operations and for village electrification.
Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)	Provide support for the establishment, operation and maintenance of demo commercially-operated solar PV power generation and supply system for health centres operations and for village electrification.
Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration	Provide support for the establishment, operation and maintenance of demo commercially-operated solar PV power generation and supply system for small-scale rural industrial estate electricity supply.
Ministries of Education Human Resources Development (MEHRD)	Provide support for the establishment of the demonstration site for school-based solar PV/Diesel power generation and distribution demos, monitor activities at the site, provides support and advice on the sustainability of the installed energy system.
Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA)	Provide support for gender mainstreaming using Gender Focal Points with MECDM and MMERE for gender-disaggregated reporting against the Gender Action Plan. MWYCFA is responsible for gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation and member of TWG

Ministry of Infrastructure and Development (MID)	Support the role of MMERE and shall be a member of the TWG
Ministry of Finance and Treasury	Support the role of MECDM and shall be a member of the TWG
Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)	Provide support to TWG by ensuring that Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) are observed, and critical social economic conditions are enhanced
Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC)	Provide institutional support to MECDM in reporting and accessing international finance through climate change financing platforms
Solomon Power (SP)	Provide support on technical aspects of solar PV power generation design and installation and micro hydro systems. Support demo on solar PV/Diesel hybrid system load optimization and supply for productive and social uses. SP shall be part of the TWG and Project Board to provide technical advice to the project.
Solomon Islands National University (SINU)	Provide support for the capacity development activities for communities, women, and ToT in RE
SINU Marine Studies	Provide seafood value-added trainings to coastal communities to enhance community livelihood
CSO, NGO, community-based social/civic groups (e.g., churches)	Provide support for promotion of RE, EE and EC awareness to communities and end-users. CSO is responsible for design of value-added initiatives to support livelihood initiatives for communities.
Private sector RE technology suppliers	Provide technical expertise in areas of design, energy specifications, supply, distribution, installation, maintenance, diagnoses, monitoring, and training for end-users. Private Sector is responsible for quality and reliable technology adoption for communities/end-users.
Village/Community leaders: Hunanawa Community leaders and Women's Group	Provide support for community good governance, gender participation and inclusion in decision making at the community level, ownership of the project and sustainability of the project in the long term. Community leaders are responsible for ensuring the ESMP is implemented, and communities are protected and safe from adverse impacts of the project.
Community Utilities Committee (CUC) and Community-based RESCO	CUCs and Community-Based RESCO provide service and support that forms and backbone for sustainability of the energy production and maintenance through establishing strong and effective governance and right financial mechanism in the project localities.

West Are'are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA)	Support community women's technical champions to acquire relevant skills through trainings in repair and maintenance and encourages community-community learning symposiums and implementation of RE financing models on solar home systems and solar freezers.
Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA)	Support livelihood training including sewing, baking, floral arts, cooking and reading.

4. Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

Project Design

The SPIRES is coherent in its design that holistically addresses root causes and identified the key barriers towards facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands. The project is relevant to the needs of Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and communities, and it is directly aligned with the national agenda, Paris commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The project document is generally well-written and offers detailed guidance to the project management on the project problems to be addressed, theory of Change (ToC) supported with a very detailed elaborations on the project activities. The Theory of Change for the SPIRES Project involves the facilitation of the achievement of the energy objectives of the country focusing on rural electrification as the country pursues its low carbon development path. It illustrates how the realization of Solomon Islands' contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change as stated in the NDC is enabled and facilitated. A ToC based on the current SPIRES design in the ProDoc is illustrated on Figure 1.

Based on the initial formulation of the SPIRES PIF which was approved on 29 November 2017 and the UNDP GEF project development procedures, the SIG with the assistance of UNDP has come up with the full project design for GEF-funding on facilitating the development and utilization of feasible renewable energy resources and application of energy efficiency technologies for achieving realistic energy targets in the Solomon Islands.

The SPIRES project design is well-grounded on an incremental analysis that determined the developmental gaps in the RE/EE program in the country vis-à-vis the current state of development in pursuing the rural electrification targets to support national socio-economic and environmental goals.

The gaps were identified during the design stage to be addressed by the project, and these included barriers related to policies and regulations, institutional and financial, capacity building and awareness, and RE/EE technology applications (pilot demonstrations) to accelerate adoption and sustain operation and maintenance of RE and EE technologies that are applicable to the SOI needs and long-term national objectives in energy and environment.

The project comprises components that will specifically address each major group of barriers to enhanced rural electrification to support climate resilient and low carbon development of rural communities in the Solomon Islands. Specifically, these components comprise the interventions to enable increased installation of feasible RE-based power generation systems in the country to facilitate rural electrification and stimulate energy efficiency applications to reduce electricity demand in the major end use sectors. The expected outcomes from each project will be realized through the implementation of the project's major strategies.

The project document identified and incorporated relevant baseline projects and defined linkages and potential partnerships. The project design has also considered specific findings and recommendations from relevant assessments, evaluations, and experiences from other energy projects in the country at various stages of implementation such as electrification projects of boarding schools, which follows the same scheme that were earlier implemented by GIZ and funded by European Governments (Italy, Turkey).

Relevance: The main basis of the SPIRES Project is the Solomon Islands' National Energy Policy adopted in 2014 (SINEP 2014) [11]and the National Development Strategy 2011 – 2020[12] where the country has initially set its targets on electricity access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency in line with the development objectives. SPIRES will facilitate the realization of the 2020 rural electrification and 2030 %RE electricity targets of the country.

The project design is directly relevant to these strategic frameworks and aligned with the objectives defined in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2018 that sets out the vision, mission, and strategic directions the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification intends to take in accordance to the Ministry's mandate as advocated by the National Development Strategy 2011-2020 and Democratic Coalition for Change Government's (DCCG) policy direction. The strategy defines regulatory reform, capacity building and partnerships with the private sector among key priorities to advance the energy sector in Solomon Islands and ensure that renewable energy sources are utilised for power generation.

National Development Plan 2016-2035[13] defines rural electrification policy by focusing on solar and hydropower. The plan's policy on energy aims to increase the supply and coverage of electricity in rural areas using renewable energy resources, focusing on hydro-power in larger islands and solar power on water short atolls and outer islands whilst evaluating other renewable resources and adopting both appropriate technologies and institutional arrangements including community management, PPP and IPP, and this is where SPIRES is highly relevant to these priorities.

The SPIRES is also directly relevant to the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Solomon Islands. In its revised NDC, Solomon Islands has increased its emission ambition by targeting a net zero emission by 2050 as compared to 45 % emission reduction by 2050 in its initial NDC and further reduce its emissions by 27% by 2025; and 45% by 2030. In its effort to achieve its long-term mitigation targets, Solomon Islands is embarking on applying renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in the energy sector; in short, we are committed to low-carbon technologies to support sustainable development. This includes electricity generation through the application of Solar PV and hydro-power and other clean technologies in both urban and rural areas of the country.

Governance: The responsibility for the implementation of this project is with the MMERE, that is supported by MECDM and other partner SIG ministries to carry out activities within a NIM project organizational structure and day-to-day project management and reporting lines.

The SPIRES project is implemented following the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM). The responsibility for the implementation of this project is with MMERE. This role is reflected in a Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) signed by UNDP with the Government of Solomon Islands and the Country Programme. SPIRES is governed by a project board.

The board constitutes MMERE, MECDM, partner SIG ministries and invited representatives from beneficiary groups such as civil society and local communities, as may be relevant or applicable, and UNDP-SOI. Senior government officers at the levels of permanent secretaries, undersecretaries and the UNDP-SOI Country Manager may be represented in the Board. This Board is specifically established by the project to provide management

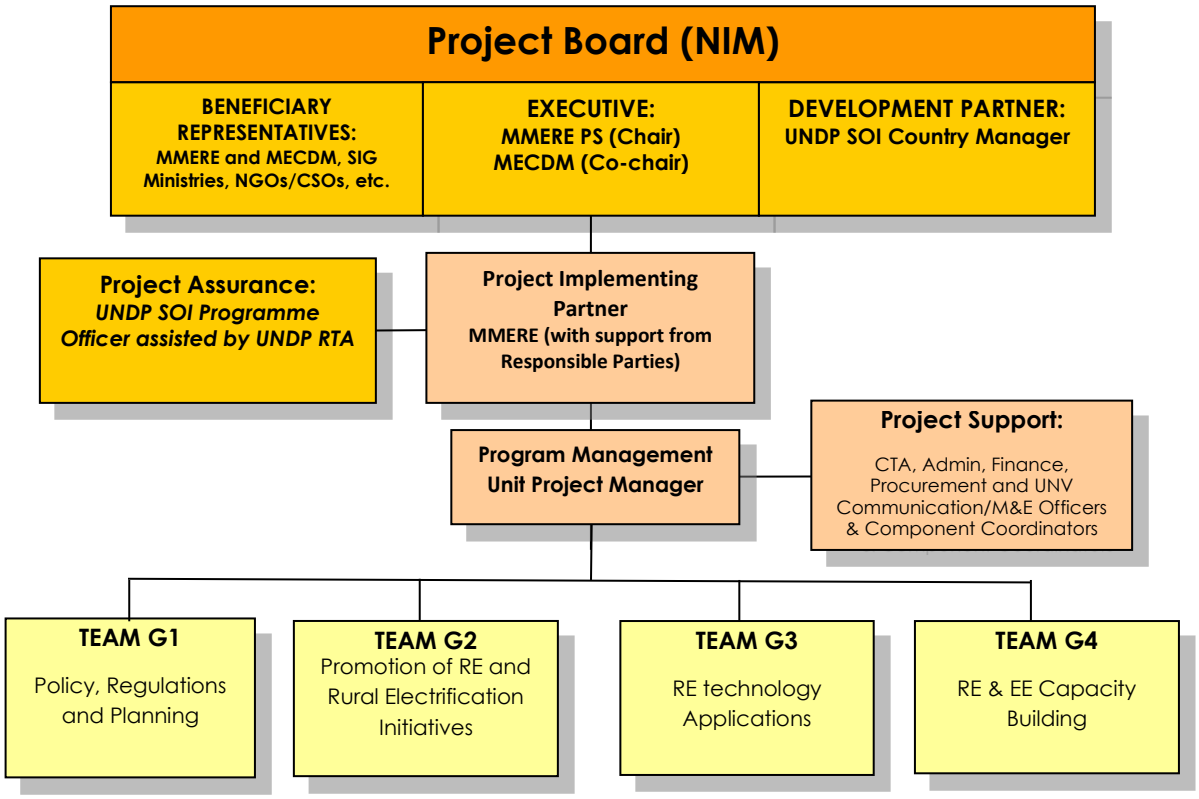
[11] National Energy Policy Framework, available here.

[12] Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, Corporate Plan 2016 – 2018. Available here

[13] National Development Plan 2016-2035, available here.

oversight of project activities and is to be chaired by MMERE. The Board reviews progress and evaluation reports, and approves programmatic modifications to project execution, as appropriate and in accordance with GEF/UNDP procedures. The Project Board is responsible for making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendations for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions, and addressing any project level grievances.

Figure 2: SPIRES project structure



Risks and assumption: Underlying drivers and assumptions of each activity towards their contribution to achieving the overall Project results was covered in the ToC and PRF. This includes assumptions such as ''State government and private sector fully support and commit to the replication of successful results of the demo projects" which is a critical assumption that underpins the SPIRES theory of change to achieve the long-term goal beyond the SPIRES available funding. Also, the project document identified the assumption that there will be continuous commitment and support by the national and provincial governments on the established mechanisms even after the SPIRES project completion.

The project document provided a comprehensive assessment of the risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved are listed in the detailed table of the Risk Log, a total of 12 risks have been identified, assessed based on impacts and probability scale from 1-5 and countermeasures identified.

Social and Environmental Screening: Further risk assessment was done for the SPIRES project using the UNDP Social and Environmental Social Screening Template (SESP)**.** There are four risk factors Identified with moderate

risk rating or having an above average probability of occurring and a medium level of impact on people and the environment. These include:

- Risks associated with occupational health and safety standards
- Risks associated with release of pollutants into the environment
- Risks related to land issues
- Risks related to social and climate factors

The Social and Environment Management Plan (SEMP) has been prepared adequately for the SPIRES Project to address the risks identified in the screening process to fall under the category of moderate to high risks. The SEMP discusses the mitigation measures, monitoring, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement and implementation action plan based on the Social and Environmental Screening Template.

Gender Equality and Empowering Women: A Gender Equality Analysis was conducted as part of the SPIRES project design, and specific gender actions are recommended to reduce some of the existing inequalities and comply with national and international gender regulations and best practices. Details of the recommended gender actions are provided in the Gender Action Plan (GAP) with specific budget attached to this gender assessment.

Gender equality is one of the important aspects of this proposed GEF project, particularly in the context of village life in the off-grid areas. Among the issues that are covered by the project design are those that relate to gender equity and women's role, and cover potential barriers posed by gender equity issues, and barriers to: (1) Supporting gender equity and women empowerment in the promotion and implementation of low carbon development; (2) Enhancing opportunities to enhance the role and influence of women in the deployment of low carbon technologies and climate change mitigation options, and, (3) The development of gender-sensitive policies in the electricity sector and the electricity end-use sectors of the country. The project is designed to give adequate recognition of the important contributions of women in the management and implementation of such measures, and in the supply as well as in productive and social uses of electricity in the villages.

The project, by design, considered the potentials for the involvement of women working in both management and technical departments of the SIG agencies/institutions who can play important roles in the design, development, and implementation of this proposed UNDP-GEF project. Furthermore, the design and preparation of this project will consider the contributions, impacts and benefits of community based sustainable energy and low carbon technology applications, including children and indigenous people.

The Project Results Framework

This section provides a critical assessment of the Project Results Framework (PRF) in terms of clarity, feasibility and logical sequence of the project outcomes/outputs and their links to the project objective. It also examines the specific indicators and their target values in terms of the SMART criteria[14].

Majority of the indicators clearly links with the outcomes they are supposed to measure. However, the MTR notes the following comments and improvements to the PRF:

Table 2: MTR comments on the PRF

Project result	Indicator	MTR comments

[14] Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

GOAL: Reduced annual growth rate of GHG emissions in the energy and energy end use sector of the country.	National electric energy consumption index, ktoe/US$ GDP	As this indicator is obviously a consumption-based, the MTR notes it measures broader efficiency gains from the EE interventions. As far as the SPIRES is concerned, changes in this indicator may not be directly attributed to the SPIRES considering: 1) The project impact at the national scale is currently minimal and may continue to be limited by the end of the project (i.e November 2024). 2) The SPIRES demonstration activities have been largely off-grid solutions, so the impact on the grid-based consumption may not be relevant. 3) The impact of EE interventions by the SPIRES are minimal and mostly in off-grid areas. Therefor achieving the target of 5.87 ktoe/US$ GDP at the national level (down from 6.42) should be understood in the context of the overall spill-over effect resulting from policy-level interventions and replication and upscaling activities by other partners not necessarily directly attributed to the project activities.
OBJECTIVE: Facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands	No. of new jobs created due to enhanced electricity access in off-grid areas in the country	It is fair to assume that jobs will be created directly or indirectly as a result of enhanced electricity access in off-grid areas, however, it is noted that this indicator is not directly relevant to SPIRES's theory of change as it is defined in the project document. Also, the indicator is not measurable and attributable in the current environment as there is no tracking system in place for the number of jobs created due to enhanced electricity access in off-grid areas in the country. In addition to the fact that the end of the project target (200 new jobs) is way too ambitious to be achieved by the project during the project timeframe particularly considering the status of the project progress at this point.
Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas	No. of planned and implemented rural electrification projects in both on-, and off-grid areas that are based on the findings are recommendations of conducted DREI [15] assessments of RE-based electricity generation options.	The indicator should be understood in the broader context to measure the No. of planned and implemented rural electrification projects as a result of achieving outcome 3 and increasing the confidence in RE-based power generation and not necessarily limited to those directly arising based on the DREI. The DREI is primarily a systematic identification and assessment of risks and barriers, and new projects can be fairly expected when the risks are actually mitigated. .
Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power	No. of follow-up rural electrification, sustainable energy, and low carbon technology application projects (demo replications and	The indicator statement doesn't specify the status of the follow-up projects to be considered. It is unclear if this indicator measures the 'designed' projects, 'financed' projects, and/or 'fully implemented' projects. Needs to be more specific as to what level of maturity a certain project can be counted under this indicator.

[15] UNDP's flagship Derisking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) methodology will be used to quantitatively analyze the barriers and risks for sustainable off-grid RE-based power generation options in the Solomon Islands.

generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas.	scale-ups) in on-, and off-grid areas.	The MTR suggests that for a project to be accounted for under this indicator, it should, at minimum be, 1) influenced by the SPIRES activities, 2) with approved design, and 2) financed
Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas.	Percentage of successful maintenance or repair work on demonstrations by MMERE and all RE-based rural electrification projects in the country	The indicator specifies that maintenance to be done by MEMRE, and that is not necessarily to be the case, in fact, it is more likely that local recipients of the demonstration projects would be the primary responsible for the maintenance services in cooperation with specialised RESCOs.
Outcome 3.2: Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas.	Percentage of women in community-based RESCO morally supported by village men to build their confidence in leadership	There are number of flaws identified in this indicator based on SMART criteria: - The measurability of the indicator is not practical and methodologically undefined. - The indicator doesn't define what qualifies as 'morally-supported' - The relevance of the indicator to the project activities and theory of change is not established, the project has no specific activity that would lead to increase the confidence in women leadership. - The baseline was assumed to be (0), and this is not supported by evidence as it was not measured at the baseline simply because there was no community-based RESCOs established at the baseline. The MTR suggest reporting on the Composition and representation of women and men in a gender balanced (M50:F50) community-based RESCO membership and local committee membership.
	No. of local firms that can capably provide technical, engineering and maintenance services for rural electrification and low carbon technology application projects.	There is a need to set the criteria to determine when local firms can be considered as 'capable' to provide the services. The MTR suggests defining the criteria under activity 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 to determine when local firms can be considered as 'capable' to provide the services in consultation with the working group.

The Project Results Framework (PRF) of the SPIRES Project generally meets the "SMART" criteria[16] with few improvements defined above. Nonetheless, the PRF is appropriate to effectively monitor Project progress with few exceptions. Descriptions of the Project objective and outcomes are concise and easily understandable with clear numeric targets and time frames for SMART indicators, the project design defined annual targets to help the project planning process.

[16] Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

The overall Project design and Project results framework was well formulated, exhibiting clear linkages amongst activities, outputs, and outcomes. The overall SPIRES Project design and formulation is rated as satisfactory.

4.2 Progress Towards Results

Progress towards outcomes analysis

Overall, there has been limited progress towards MTR targets, 14 out of 18 MTR targets are assessed to be off track. The SPIRES project efforts have been largely focused on the delivery of the demonstration activities and very little achievements done so far to deliver the incremental values of the GEF project, particularly in relation to supporting policy, regulatory and strategic planning reforms (outcome 1), financial and institutional mechanisms (outcome 2) and capacity building (outcome 4). It should be understood that the SPIRES success lies in the incremental value achieved by removing barrier identified in the project design, and the project demonstration pilots are one piece, among many others, in achieving the project objectives.

Further, other factors affected the delivery towards MTR targets include: 1) logistics difficulties in accessing remote rural areas not well-serviced with transportation means, this affected the project team mobility as well as transportation of goods and equipment; 2) COVID and associated impacts which led to shift in Government policy orientation and focus as well as restrictions on movements; and 3) delays in recruitments and procurements, particularly in sourcing solar technology.

Progress towards results is provided on below tables against the MTR targets in the SPIRES PRF. Ratings and comments are provided in the following paragraphs. For these Tables, the "achievement rating" is color-coded according to the following colour coding scheme:

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved

Project objective level targets:

Cumulative incremental GHG emission reduction from the electricity sector in rural areas, tons CO2

With regards to the target of "6,376 tCO2eq incremental GHG emission reduction from the electricity sector in rural areas, tons CO2" at the mid-term point of the Project, the SPIRES has not reached a stage to report GHGs. The SPIRES project has been effective in making progress in the setup and deployment of the first two (out of five) demonstration pilots. At the time of writing of this MTR, none of these pilots is up and running (i.e., not operational yet), thus no GHGs can be reported from pilots. Also, there is no GHGs, at this point, that can be reported as incremental emission reduction due to weak delivery on the policy components so far (see discussion under outcome 1). To this end, it is worth noting that the first two demonstration pilots are the final stage of installation and due to get into the operational stage by the end June 2023, from that point onward, GHGs can be calculated and reported.

% electricity access in rural areas

The project contribution to this indicator is conceptually through the formulation and adoption of the national energy policy, rural electricity regulatory framework and develop and implement the rural electrification plans at the national and local levels and based on the limited progress that the project made towards the implementation of policy instruments, there is no evidence to suggest that changes in this indicator may be attributed to the incremental support by the SPIRES.

There is no accurate source of date at the moment, and the PMU was unable to source reliable evidence on the status of this indicator for the PIR and MTR, however, it is estimated to be around 5% (no change from the baseline). Generally, as per the 2019 SINEP, the target remains to increase access to electricity in rural households to 40% by 2035.

National electric energy consumption index, ktoe/US$ GDP

In addition to the MTR comments on the appropriateness of the indicator mentioned in section 4.1, there is no accurate source of data at the time of MTR to report on this, nonetheless, it is believed that there is no major changes from the baseline.

Cumulative incremental fossil fuel savings due to sustainable energy and low carbon interventions implemented, toe.

Cumulative incremental fossil fuel savings due to sustainable energy and low carbon interventions implemented, toe. For the same reasons explained above for GHGs, this indicator is reported Zero at the MTR.

No. of new jobs created due to enhanced electricity access in off-grid areas in the country.

No jobs have been created. It should be noted that even though rural electrification projects may potentially create jobs directly or indirectly, this indicator is not directly relevant to SPIRES activities and theory of change as defined in the project document. In addition to the fact that the end of the project target (200 new jobs) is way too ambitious to be achieved by the project during the project timeframe.

Project Strategy	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				MTR assessment	MTR rating
	Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Mid-term Target	End-of-Project Target		
GOAL: Reduced annual growth rate of GHG emissions in the energy and energy end use sector of the country.	Cumulative incremental GHG emission reduction from the electricity sector in rural areas, tons CO_2	0	6,376	19,147	Zero. SPIRES has not reached a stage to report GHGs yet. Demonstration projects are not operational yet, and no incremental emissions can be reported at this point.	
	National electric energy consumption index, ktoe/US$ GDP	6.42	6.20	5.87	No data available. It is believed to be no change from the baseline yet.	
OBJECTIVE: Facilitation of the achievement	Cumulative incremental fossil fuel savings due to sustainable energy and low carbon	0	697.6	2,095	Zero. Same as reported above for GHGs indicator	

of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands	interventions implemented, toe					
	% electricity access in rural areas, %	5%	15%	25%	5% (estimated)[17]	
	No. of new jobs created due to enhanced electricity access in off-grid areas in the country.	10	60	200	No jobs have been created.	

Component 1: Renewable Energy and Rural Electrification Policies, Regulations and Planning Improvements

Outcome 1: Enforcement of approved policies and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands.

The SPIRES project is meant to address the weak enforcement of the rather limited policies and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in the country. This component is meant to set the groundwork for enforcement of the formal national master plan and local provincial rural electrification policies, plans and regulatory framework for the country.

Progress: The Solomon Islands National Energy Policy (SINEP) was developed in 2014, and the SPIRES project was born in alignment with the SINEP. The SINEP is considered as a live document to be reviewed every 4 years. In 2019, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification in consultation with Government and non-governmental organization and the foreign development partners started a review and update process the SINPEP. The SINEP aimed to increase access to electricity in rural households to 40% by 2035 and increase the use of renewable energy sources for power generation in urban and rural areas to 50% by 2035[18].

The SINEP sets out to pursue the development aspirations of the people of Solomon Islands. Energy policies are critical to job creation and socio-economic development through electricity access, reducing oil imports, energy balance , energy security, improving the reliability of the electric grid, lowering energy prices, and addressing climate change and air pollution. The 2018/2019 SINEP is intended to guide energy sector planning over the next ten years (2020–2035) and is expected to contribute to the achievement of Solomon Islands' national vision: 'Improving the Social and Economic Livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders'.

It is worth noting that SPIRES project had no direct engagement in the update of the SINEP as the review started in 2019 well before the SPIRES project commenced.

The implementing rules and regulations (IRRs) on EE & RE technology applications for rural electrification also have not been developed until now. This involves the drafting of the necessary national energy policy, legal and regulatory framework, and realistic targets for RE and EE and the related legislations into the proposed Bill.

[17] There is no accurate source of date at the moment, and the PMU was unable to source reliable evidence on the status of this indicator for the PIR and MTR, however, it is estimated to be around 5% (no change from the baseline).

[18] The Solomon Islands National Energy Policy (SINEP), 2019.

As part of the MTR team engagement with stakeholders, there seems to be genuine willingness to review the existing Electricity Act of 1969 with a vision to unlock the electricity sector and open the doors for effective partnership with the private sector. The stakeholders engaged in the MTR have also pointed out that the role of Solomon Power as regulator and service providers may pose a case of conflict of interest and needs to be reviewed to enhance the institutional arrangements and governance of the power sector in Solomon Islands.

The review of the Electricity Act of 1969 is a significant avenue for SPIRES project to lead or at least to effectively participate in to help achieving the SPIRES objective by facilitating the achievement of the energy objectives of the country focusing on rural electrification as the country pursues its low carbon development path.

There is no significant progress to report on the development of the electricity generation regulatory framework and its necessary organizational structure and standards to implement the regulatory framework and policies on pricing, market development and other related areas, and also policy pilots (activity 1.3.3) have not been designed nor implemented.

Also, the rural electrification plans at the national and local levels have not been developed yet. These plans were meant to be inclusive of rural energy development investment schemes; follow-up for enhancement of rural energy and EE technology application policies, regulations, and plans; and consistent commitments by SIG, private sector, donor agencies and local communities to shape a national master plan and provincial level plans on RE-based rural electrification including EE technology application.

The indicators under this component are primarily measuring the number of projects and pilots resulting from the policy reform actions under outcome 1, and based on the limited progress achieved so far, there is no rural electrification projects or pilots facilitated by the new policy settings.

Project result	**Objectively Verifiable Indicators**				**MTR assessment**	**MTR rating**
	Indicator	**Baseline (2017)**	**Mid-term Target**	**End-of-Project Target**		
Outcome 1: Enforcement of approved policies and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in	No. of implemented off-grid rural electrification projects facilitated by the approved and enforced energy access, RE and EC&EE policies	0	2	5	0, the new policy framework is not developed yet, and therefore no off-grid rural electrification projects facilitated by the SPIRES project so far.	
	No. of designed and implemented pilots on the implementation of applicable policy and regulatory framework for rural electrification	0	1	2	0, the electricity generation regulatory framework is not developed and no pilots designed or implemented so far.	

the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands	No. of formulated, approved and implemented rural electrification plans.	5	7	9	0, rural electrification plans at the national and local levels have not been developed yet	

Component 2: Promotion of RE and Rural Electrification Initiatives

Outcome 2: Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas.

This component involves the design, implementation and establishment of the institutional and financial mechanisms that will facilitate the enhancement of current financing systems that are already in place in the communities and schools in the off-grid and rural areas of the country.

The SPIRES project identified and assessed two existing models implemented so far in Solomon Islands that can be used for the sustainability of the Renewable Energy installation by SPIRES. These are: 1) the sinking fund model which came about as one of the interventions for the sustainability of the Photovoltaic (PV) system that was installed in Selwyn College, and 2) the standard utility model that utility companies use where most people are familiar with.

The assessment concluded that these models will be adopted for the SPIRES sites and will undergo an Assess, Plan, Action, and Monitor (APAM) principle whereby the Business Models will be assessed overtime based on its performance; Plan action measures should there be a need for change, Action the necessary changes that needs to be made and again Monitor the results of the model until a suitable model can be reached. Once that is finally reached then it will become the model for the site.

The solar farm in Selwyn college was established before SPIRES began. It was a project installed by the Ministry of Environment, Climate change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM). It is the first of its kind and SPIRES to learn from and adopt its design and how it is operated, the technical aspects and the governance of the system. However, there was some flaws in the system design, the idea of a having a RESCO was never implemented and poor governance lead to some major issues.

1. During the design, the capacity, and the age of the genset that was operational at the school was overlooked which resulted in system having battery problems not long after it went into operational. The Genset ran into problems, batteries were not properly equalised, a couple batteries started to leak, and the system could not operate at its full potential.
2. There was not RESCO in place to distribute the power to the nearby communities. Selwyn College did not approve of the idea of having a RESCO running the system.
3. The governance and the institutional and financial management were not totally agreed, thus when the system ran into problems, no funds was available to replenish the damage batteries and replace the genset.

The SPIRES project came in to help by mobilising its stakeholders and partners to look at the ways we could get a new genset. SPIRES, however, is focusing more in getting the institutional and financial management financial

system. Spires initiates some discussions, is still waiting for a response from School and Church. This is assumed as an important source of co-financing.

A committee is assigned to ensure that the business models work together with a clear TOR which should be able to determine their roles and responsibilities and also vision and statement of the investment. SPIRES as a project and initiating partner for this intervention has signed a Memorandum of Understandings with different stakeholders such as the province to ensure that the investment is recognised and so is the committee that was initially set up for the installed system. While a committee is in place, trainings will be delivered by SPIRES project to the committee on basic booking keeping and basic business administration to ensure that records can be kept about the revenues of the service provided by the system.

The SPIRES project signed three MoUs with Hunanawa, Nangu and Rokera communities to set the terms and identify a framework for cooperation, partnership and cohesion between the SPIRES project as implementing partner on behalf of MMERE and community partners and committees. The MoUs don't define terms of the pricing and fee collection and process to collect and use the fee, and this poses a sustainability concern shall those terms are not agreed upon.

The gender balance in three established committees varies, in case of Hunanawa 9 females to 31 males, Rokera 0 females and 8 males, and Nangu 3 females and 7 males. The gender need to be further mainstreamed into the community communication and engagement.

Hunanawa and Rokera communities have been engaged by the MTR and raised the following concerns in relation to the financial and institutional mechanisms:

- There has been limited consultation on the future financial and institutional arrangements so far, and there is need to intensify those discussions with the committees and community members.
- Key elements of the institutional and financial arrangements are not yet totally agreed such as the pricing and the fee collective system, maintenance procedures and others.
- Two people have been identified in each community to be trained on maintenance, but the training has not been completed yet and they were not involved in the installation process as an important learning opportunity.

In conclusion, the SPIRES project started the discussion around the institutional and financial arrangements, but the models remain primitive and not matured enough and no agreed plan for maintenance. Also, engaged communities expressed concerns over the ambiguities around institutional and financial terms. In order to perfect these models, the SPIRES should clearly document the model in writing, socialise the model with targeted communities, improve based on the feedback, finalise, and formally agree on the key terms with the communities. The financial and institutional models are instrumental sustainability element of the SPIRES and creates avenue for achieving additionality by attracting other development agencies and banks to adopt the models.

Project Result	**Objectively Verifiable Indicators**				**MTR assessment**	**MTR rating**
	Indicator	**Baseline (2017)**	**Mid-term Target**	**End-of-Project Target**		

Outcome 2: Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and	No. of formulated and recommended institutional and financing mechanisms that support the enhanced implementation of rural electrification initiatives.	0	2	2	0 finalized and recommended. Two models are proposed but not mature enough to be recommended.	
implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas	No. of rural electrification initiatives facilitated by adopted and enforced institutional and financial mechanisms.	0	2	2		

Component 3. RE Technology Applications for Supporting Rural Socio-Economic Development

Outcome 3.1: Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas, and

Outcome 3.2: Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas.

The project design is cantered around removing barriers related to policies and regulations, institutional and financial, capacity building and awareness, and RE/EE technology applications (pilot demonstrations) to accelerate adoption and sustain operation and maintenance of RE and EE technologies that are applicable to the SOI needs and long-term national objectives in energy and environment.

These barriers are primarily based on the UNDP's flagship De-risking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) methodology, which in this project involves quantitative analysis of the barriers and risks for sustainable off-grid rural electrification in the Solomon Islands.

The SPIRES project is meant to apply the DREI as a tool for the barrier removal activities, this methodology is expected to come up with the most cost-effective interventions to mitigate or transfer whatever risks that need to be addressed to facilitate investments, particularly private sector investment, in the rural electrification program of the government.

The SPIRES project was unable to source the right expertise for undertaking the DREI, as a result a decision was made by the project management to implement a techno- economic assessment of renewable energy technologies instead, this study is underway at the time of this MTR.

There are 2 sets of techno-economic feasibility evaluations that will be carried out under this proposed techno-economic assessment assignment. The first one is the evaluation of the various RE-based rural electrification technology applications that needs to be done to establish the various least cost options that the SIG can consider

in its rural electrification program. The second one is the evaluation of the potential RE-based energy generation technologies that will be implemented under the project as proposed in the project design and suggest improvements.

While the MTR supports the new study, it doesn't agree that the new proposed study will suffice the need for DREI, as the DREI identifies the barriers and associated risks which can hold back investment in renewable energy. It then assists policymakers to put in place packages of targeted public interventions to address these risks. The DREI will have direct contribution to achieve the additionality of the SPIRES project by addressing the RE development from barriers removal and risk mitigation point of view.

Therefore, the MTR recommends reviving the DREI activity and seek UNDP regional hub' assistance to source the right expertise for implementing the DREI.

Demonstration projects

The SPIRES project completed the engineering design of the first two demonstration projects in Hunanawa and Rokera, the designs were done by the project engineers and supported by the project CTA. And installation of these projects has almost been completed and may be operationalised soon (expected in July 2023).

Figure 3: Solar panels mounted in Rokera

The SPIRES project signed total of 4 MoUs (out of 7 planned) to facilitate the implementation of the demonstration projects with Garanga, Rokera, Hunanawa and Nangu, but no maintenance agreement in place yet.

The SPIRES project conducted an assessment to improve the sourcing of equipment and components of RE-based power generation systems, and EE technology applications, as a result of the assessment, it was recommended to follow the Australian quality standards for the RE equipment to enable quality control. The SPIRES project identified the sourcing channels for RE technology application equipment but faced logistic challenges mainly related to the transportation and interim storage of the equipment in the targeted areas.

Hunanawa and Rokera communities have been engaged by the MTR and raised the following concerns in relation to the financial and institutional mechanisms:

- Limited consultations with the community and inadequate communication about the nature of the RE project, Solomon Power standards for connects, its scale and cost and logistics for transportation and storage of the equipment.
- Changes in the plan without consulting or informing the community, for example, in Hunanawa, there was a reduction of proposed setups especially streetlights from 78 to 28, solar panels (56 to 54) and 70+ houses were supposed to be connected in the initial study but only 35 houses were wired. Also, returning project materials while the project is still not complete to them is not acceptable especially when no reason was explained.
- Some houses (including a classroom) were not able to meet the standards of Solomon Power and accordingly not able to connect to the system.
- Sub-contractors from the community in Rokera were not fully paid on time as per the agreement with SPIRES.
- The Hunanawa community noted that the arrival of materials at night and the lack of communication warning of their arrival and because of the concern over stealing the materials at the port, the community decided to transport them at night, this caused a serious accident between two boats, and as a result, eight (8) of the solar batteries have to be retrieved from the sea as the boat transporting them sank.
- In addition to points mentioned under outcome 2 in relation to ambiguities around the future financial and institutional arrangements for maintaining the systems.

Currently, and based on the above, there is no evidence that the demonstration projects are set for replication and up-scaling, the demonstration projects are not fully 'demonstratable' at this stage and not ready to be presented as successful working model that build confidence for replication and attract investment packages as anticipated by the project design mainly because of they are not fully operated yet and no final agreement on the financial arrangements and maintenance. The demonstration projects have faced challenges in terms of meeting the quality standards of the Solomon Power to be able to connect the beneficiaries to the systems. There has been no formal approval from the Solomon Powers obtained prior to installations and some beneficiaries were unable to connect to the systems because of not meeting the standards, engagement with Solomon Powers happened only after the design and installation stages, at which point, some beneficiaries realised that they are not able to connect because not meeting the Solomon Powers standards. A formal approval should have been obtained on the demo design prior to the procurement and installations stages.

Also, the demonstration projects lack the sustainability element at this point given that financial mechanism and future maintenance are not finalised and no linkage with policy and regulatory components. As a result, no RE and EE technologies application projects designed and financed for implementation as influenced by the results and outcomes of the demonstrations.

Project Result	**Objectively Verifiable Indicators**				**MTR assessment**	**MTR rating**
	Indicator	**Baseline (2017)**	**Mid-term Target**	**End-of-Project Target**		
Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE	No. of planned and implemented rural electrification projects in both on-, and off-grid areas that are based on the findings are	0	2	5	0, the DREI has not been implemented and no projects emerged subsequently.	

technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas	recommendations of conducted DREI assessments of RE-based electricity generation options.					
	No. of follow-up rural electrification, sustainable energy, and low carbon technology application projects (demo replications and scale-ups) in on-, and off-grid areas.	0	4	6	0, the projects are not ready yet to be presented as replicable models.	
	Percentage of successful maintenance or repair work on demonstrations by MMERE and all RE-based rural electrification projects in the country	0	50% support	100% MMERE with no external support	No maintenance agreements	
Outcome 3.2: Adoption and implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas.	No. of successfully installed and operational systems of the implemented demonstrations of RE-based electricity generation and low carbon technology application in the off-grid areas.	0	2	5	2 almost complete in terms of installation and operation. Noting that the financial mechanisms and maintenance contract are yet to be finalized.	
	No. of RE and EE technologies application projects designed and financed for implementation as influenced by the results and outcomes of the demonstrations	0	4	9	0, the projects are not ready yet to be presented as replicable models.	
	Percentage of women in community-based RESCO morally supported by village	0	25%	50%	Please refer to the project strategy section notes in regard to the laws with the indicator itself.	

	men to build their confidence in leadership				Nonetheless, it can be reported that there is no community-based RESCO at all, however the local committees were established with women participation.	

Component 4: RE & EE Capacity Building

Outcome 4: Enhanced awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector, and communities on the cost-effective application of RE and EE technologies and practices.

The SPIRES project is meant to design and implement a comprehensive capacity building and training program for relevant agencies and responsible personnel in national energy development, planning and implementation, establish a national data base system to monitor and report on the supply and consumption, and establish local service provision industry that supports the rural electrification program and the rural electricity sector.

There has been limited progress on this component overall, no capacity assessment done so far, and subsequently no training programme established and implemented, though some of the Ministry staff were sponsored for training on ad hoc basis. Also, no data base system developed yet to monitor and report on the supply and consumption.

A team of six (6) from the PMU and MMERE were registered on an online course with Global Sustainable Energy Solutions (GSES). This training enables the officers to be able to design a system and be equipped to carry out the necessary capacity building in the communities for RE/EE Technology application, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of the system.

The SPIRES project established a website as knowledge exchange platform among stakeholders and with the public. The website offers information about the project and its activities, news, and events. The website was launched online recently and can be accessed here https://spires.gov.sb/news/ .

In terms of establishing local service provision industry that supports the rural electrification program and the rural electricity sector, the SPIRES project has been attempting to support the establishment of an association of RE service providers, but this has not materialised yet, and no trainings or capacity building activities implemented for the RESCOs.

Project Result	**Objectively Verifiable Indicators**				**MTR assessment**	**MTR rating**
	Indicator	**Baseline (2017)**	**Mid-term Target**	**End-of-Project Target**		

Outcome 4: Enhanced awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector, and communities on the cost-effective application of RE and EE technologies and practices	No. of trained national and local government personnel that can ably plan and evaluate energy access, sustainable energy, and low carbon technology application projects.	0	2	4	0, no trainings organized by the SPIRES yet.	
	No. of local firms that can capably provide technical, engineering and maintenance services for rural electrification and low carbon technology application projects.	1	1	3	The project engaged with a number of firms in the supplier capacities, but no specific capacity building activities do so far.	

Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

There are barriers to the full achievement of targets in the SPIRES Project, especially considering the current EOP is November 2024, nearly 18 months from the time of writing of this report. These barriers include:

- The current project management does not consider the additionality of the GEF project in removing the barriers, this is based on the fact that project delivery has been largely focused on delivering the demonstration projects without addressing other regulatory, financial, and technical barriers in the same momentum.
- The implementation of partnership strategy was not effective enough to facilitate removing the barriers, for example no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications. See more details on stakeholders' engagement under section 4.3.
- The CTA role has not been effectively utilised to serve the strategic orientation of the SPIRES project and provide overall project advisory services and technical backstopping to the PMU.
- Logistics difficulties in accessing remote rural areas not well-serviced with transportation means, this affected the project team mobility as well as transportation of goods and equipment.
- COVID and associated impacts which led to shift in Government policy orientation and focus as well as restrictions on movements.
- Delays in recruitments and procurements, particularly in sourcing solar technology.
- Some of the outcome level targets are challenging to achieve such as '200 jobs to be created' and all other targets that are based on the spill over effects of the project after barriers removal.
- Ending the project activities by the planned date, i.e., November 2024 sounds challenging given the slow progress particularly on outcomes 1, 2 and 4. A project extension at no cost for 6-12 months may be justified, based on the above, and needed. The exact duration of the extension is to be determined during the 2024 PIR reporting cycle.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements

The responsibility for the implementation of this project is with the MMERE, that is supported by MECDM and other partner SIG ministries to carry out activities within a NIM project organizational structure and day-to-day project management and reporting lines. The SPIRES project is implemented following the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM). The responsibility for the implementation of this project is with MMERE. This role is reflected in a Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) signed by UNDP with the Government of Solomon Islands and the Country Programme. SPIRES is governed by a project board.

The Board reviews progress and evaluation reports, and approves programmatic modifications to project execution, as appropriate and in accordance with GEF/UNDP procedures. The Project Board is responsible for making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendations for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions, and addressing any project level grievances.

The project board convened only twice since the project started, the first meeting took place in August 2021 and the second in May 2022. Although the project document didn't define the frequency of the board meeting, it is normally convened every 6 months. It is particularly needed in case of the SPIRES to increase the frequency of the board to be convened every 6 months to keep the strategic orientation, provide oversight on the delivery and early identification and resolving of issues and challenges.

The PMU is composed of 7 employees, two females & five males, the third female has accepted an offer to work overseas just before the MTR. The team includes a project manager, an engineer, project assistant, procurement officer, M&E officer and 2 provincial officers.

Understandably, and in line with the NIM modality, the UNDP had little engagement in the day-to-day management of the project, however, the oversight role seems to have been limited to progress reporting and participation in the board meetings. The UNDP oversight role needs to be strengthened to track underperforming activities and support PMU to find solutions.

There is adequate level of ownership of project activities and outcomes by the MMERE, however, the ownership of the demonstration pilots by the targeted communities needs to be strengthened by stronger communication and more consultation throughout the pilot process. Also, the ownership becomes more critical when it comes to agreeing on the pricing and the financial terms for maintaining the system.

Risk management: The project document provided a comprehensive assessment of the risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved are listed in the detailed table of the Risk Log, a total of 12 risks have been identified, assessed based on impacts and probability scale from 1-5 and countermeasures identified. Only 1-2 risks have been updated regularly in the quarterly progress report whereases the rest were not updated regularly.

The Social and Environment Management Plan (SEMP) has been prepared adequately for the SPIRES Project to address the risks identified in the screening process to fall under the category of moderate to high risks. The SEMP discusses the mitigation measures, monitoring, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement and

implementation action plan based on the Social and Environmental Screening Template. However, no updates are available on the status of the social and environmental risks identified in the design stage.

Work planning

The project document was signed in November 2020, but the project witnessed delays in recruitment of project management unit, resulting in late implementation of project activities. The project manager recruited on June 2021, the rest of the team in August/September 2021, CTA recruited in March 2022.

Delays in procurement of renewable energy systems, as suppliers have to procure outside of the country, due to non-availability of most equipment and components within the country.

As discussed earlier in this report, the focus on the demonstration projects at the expense of other components reflects the fact that the work-planning processes have not been fully results-based. The project work planning needed to be driven by outcomes and targets to ensure the right results at the right time based on the PRF.

Finance and co-finance

The total cost of the project is USD19,165,257. This is financed through a GEF grant of USD2,639,726, and USD100,000 in cash co-financing to be administered by UNDP and USD16,425,531 in parallel co-financing (of which USD$ 0.96 mil in kind and the rest is grant). UNDP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, is responsible for the execution of the GEF resources and the cash co-financing transferred to UNDP bank account only.

In terms of co-financing, the project has no established system to track co-financing systematically and was only able to collect co-financing data from MMERE at the time of this MTR, hence the data below represents co-financing from MMERE and UNDP only.

The MMERE co-financing has been reported to be total of USD $5.11 million so far, with USD 3.8 million grant and 1.31 million as in kind. This represents the contributions for the development of two electrification sites and also supporting transportation and office space.

The UNDP has pledged USD $ 100K, of which USD$25K has been allocated and spent so far.

In total, the project reported total of 5,135,000 of secured co-financing out of the USD 16,525,531 pledged at the design stage, this is 31% of the target at the MTR stage.

There are multiple reasons why the co-financing targets have not been achieved, these include 1) the additionality of the SPIRES project to influence implementation of electrification projects (the main source of co-financing) through barrier removal has not progressed as explained in section 4.2, and 2) co-financing has not been tracked properly which may lead to potentially unreported co-financing cases.

Table 3: Co-finance summary table

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US$)		Government (mill. US$)		Partner Agency (mill. US$)		Total (mill. US$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants	0.1	0.025	$15.4	3.3			15.5	3.325

Loans/Concessions			0	0.5			0	0.5
• **In-kind support**			0.96	1.31			0.96	1.31
• **Other**								
Total	**0.1**	**0.025**	**16.4**	**5.11**			**16.5**	**5.135**

In terms of financial delivery, the project spent 51% of its budget allocations by the end of December 2022, although this sounds suitable at the MTR stage, the MTR notes that it is concerning percentage given the limited progress made so far and the fact that only 2 out of 5 plot demonstrations are done. This means that remaining funds need to be planned carefully in the second half of the project.

Table 4: Financial delivery table.

Component	Budget allocation US$	Accumulative Expenditures US$ 2021	Accumulative Expenditures US$ 2022	Remaining amount US$
Component 1	$125,000	$34,538	$63,030	$61,970
Component 2	$275,000	$ 30,277	$147,296	$127,704
Component 3	$1,464,025	$224,616	$794,703	$669,322
Component 4	$650,000	$122,658	$251,295	$398,705
PMU	$125,701	$27,685	$67,971	$57,729
Total	**2,639,726**	**$439,774**	**$1,324,296**	**$1,315,430**

Financial control: The project has been audited according to UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules. The SPIRES project has been audited for the 2022 financial year by an independent third party (Ernst and Young Global Limited). The audit concluded with only one finding related to the under/over utilisation of budget at the outcome level. The root cause for this, based on the audit report, may be attributed to inadequate budget management or poor activity implementation and planning.

Financial approvals, budget revisions and procurement follow the regulations and are supported by the RTA. Management tools utilized are those used by UNDP such as Atlas and result tracking is kept through a simple quarterly progress report.

Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

The M&E Framework was described in detail in Section 7 of the Project Document. It comprises of standard M&E items for UNDP-GEF project such as the Inception Workshop (IW), meetings of the project board, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), audit, the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the Terminal Evaluation (TE) and the final report.

The design of M&E framework follows the standard M&E template for projects of this size and complexity. Overall, the evaluator found the M&E design adequate for monitoring the project results and tracking the progress toward achieving the objectives. The M&E design is backed with adequate resources (a total of US$ 87,000 allocated for M&E activities including data collection on key indicators) and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

It is worth noting that data collection on the indicators and targets has not been happening regularly, this evident in the PIR report where key indicators were not reported on due to lack of data, particularly the objective-level indicators. Also, beneficiaries-based indicators, such as the 'number of jobs created', is not disaggregated by gender.

Stakeholder engagement

The SPIRES project has made limited efforts to develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to stimulate progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES). The implementation of partnership strategy was not effective enough to facilitate removing the barriers, for example no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications, and limited engagement with the institutions that could influence the regulatory reforms.

The MTR engaged with wide spectrum of stakeholders and observed significant opportunities to establish partnerships to help achieving the project objectives. For example, there has been limited engagement with international development partners such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank whose representatives were interviewed during the MTR and expressed strong interest in learning more about the demonstration project for potential replications.

Another example of strategic 'engagement and partnerships for SPIRES is to engage with the ongoing review of the electricity law by Solomon Power and World Bank, this is a genuine opportunity to mainstream SPIRES into the new law, especially by promoting for enabling the environment for private sector investment and participation in the rural electricity sector.

The Ministry of Rural Development is clearly mandated to achieve development in rural area in the Solomon Islands and can bring to the table its network and funding to support the replication of the demonstration models. The ministry has not been engaged in the SPIRES in the first half of the project and it is recommended to include the ministry in both the TWG and possibly in the board.

At the local level, the SPIRES project successfully established local committees as a main institutional platform to engage with the community.

The stakeholder's engagement strategy of the SPIRES should be based on the role of the SPIRES as an enabler and facilitator to achieve the project objectives and targets, and this means SPIRES activities should be achieved through coherent partnerships with stakeholders and not limited to those activities directly implemented by the PMU, therefore, the partnership strategy needs to be expanded and activated in the second half of the SPIRES project.

Reporting

Reporting: There has been only one PIR submitted as the project started in November 2020, it was PIR-exempt for the 2021 PIR reporting cycle and the first PIR was submitted mid of 2022. In addition, quarterly progress

reporting has been regularly happening, but no follow-up actions have been implemented on underperforming milestones. The board was informed of the progress and challenges, but the PIR was never shared with the board.

An inception report was developed after the 2-day inception workshop was conducted firstly with the technical stakeholders on 23 March 2021 followed by an external session on 24 March with wider stakeholder groups. The inception report confirmed the validity of the project document and made no major changes to the project activities, outputs, outcomes, and targets.

Adaptive management: GEF evaluations assess adaptive management in terms of the ability to direct the project design and implementation to adapt to changing political, regulatory, environmental, and other conditions outside of the control of the project implementing teams. The adaptive approach involves exploring alternative ways to navigate the projects towards meeting the planned objectives using one or more of these alternatives.

The SPIRES project has been going through a number of operational hiccups in the initial year that required immediate adaptive management measures to be taken effectively. However, in many cases, it has taken the project management so long to respond to the emerging challenges, for example, the inability to recruit a DREI consultant on time to undertake the DREI assessment, and this resulted in putting this activity on hold until this point. As an adaptive measure to the inability to source a DREI consultant, the project narrowed down the scope to assess the technical feasibility of RE solutions in Solomon Islands, the MTR disagrees with this change as the DREI was initially envisaged to inform broader regulatory and financial reforms which the technical feasibility would be not satisfy. It is therefore recommended that the DREI is revived again on the project agenda.

The absence of effective utilization of the CTA role has influenced the drift in the strategic orientation of the project, and the existing CTA contract expired in March and PMU intends not to backfill the role. The MTR also disagrees with the decision and recommends bringing back the CTA role with specific tasks/deliverables to drive the removal of barriers.

Communications & Knowledge Management

The SPIRES launched its website as a knowledge sharing platform and Facebook page[19] to communicate with the public, but no data base system developed yet to monitor and report on the supply and consumption as per component 4, SPIRES has been collecting and storing data of project works in the shared drive that can only be accessed by SPIRES team and the Ministries.

The communities in Rokera and Hunanawa expressed some concerns with the SPIRES communication in regard to the steps of implementing the demonstration projects, the nature of the system and its specification and logistics details around when and how a=the equipment will arrive the sites and be collected. The SPIRES needed more ongoing communication with the community in keeping them up to date with all steps and details to ensure their full ownership.

A knowledge management strategy is not established yet and it is indeed needed for the SPIRES project to enable the capturing, creation, sharing, disseminating, and application of this knowledge to build the project's platform and foundation in delivering results related to renewable energy and energy efficient pathways to the government and people of Solomon Islands.

[19] Facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/SPIRES2022/

4.4 Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged by the commitment of the project benefits to continue and replicate beyond the project completion date. The evaluation identifies key risks to sustainability and explains how these risks may affect continuation of the project benefits after the project closes. The assessment covers institutional/governance risks, financial, socio-political, and environmental risks.

Financial risks to sustainability

The SPIRES project is designed to stimulate the replication of the RE/EE application in rural are electrification through the careful selection and implementation of demonstration projects that will showcase the pronged barrier removal approach of the project in terms of reforms in policy and planning, improvement of technical performance and reliability of RE facilities, institutional strengthening, sustainable financing arrangements, and information and awareness.

As far as financial risks are concerned, there are two financial elements need to be addressed to ensure financial sustainability of the project:

1) the financial sustainability of the demonstration projects to maintain the RE systems, and this has not yet been agreed with the communities nor finalised, and the MoUs signed with the communities, in their current form, don't define terms of the pricing and fee collection and process to collect and use the fee, and this poses a sustainability concern shall those terms are not agreed upon; and

2) financing the scale-up and replication and this has not been addressed by the project at this point, understandably not before regulatory and technical barriers are removed along with demonstration projects are proven to be successful. The project has not established strategic partnerships/activities to address financing of scale up at this point. It is envisaged that knowledge in the financing options for RE and EE, and understanding in the overall market potential, will stimulate adoption of the financial schemes by local banks, private entrepreneurs and institutional users will ensure a long-term sustainability of the proposed financial schemes. Based on this, the financial sustainability is rated Moderately Unlikely (MU).

Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

This project involves, among others, the establishment of the required enabling conditions (formulation of policies and investment plans) that will be supportive of actions that would contribute to increased rural electrification. This will ensure the sustainability of whatever policies/regulations, institutional and financial mechanisms to facilitate increased investments in RE-based power generation facilities in the off-grid areas of the country to contribute to the achievement of the country's rural electrification and %RE electricity targets.

The project sustainability is also anchored in the commitment of the SIG to reform the policies in favour of integrated energy policy and planning that will include economic, social, technical, and environmental sustainability parameters in the choice of RE technologies for application in rural electrification. As discussed earlier in this report, outcome 1 (policy and regulatory reforms) has not progressed as anticipated until this point, and this component need to be strengthened in the second half of the project timeframe. The long-term sustainability of institutional and coordination structures with regards to implementation and enforcement the National Energy Act and its implementing rules and regulations, and SPIRES project contribution is critically important in this area.

The project is linked and is complementing the national development strategy; the proposed rural electrification and RE and EE investment plans and the NDCs of the country over the long term, the project's set of impacts are sustained. Institutional and governance sustainability is rated Moderately Likely (ML).

Socio-economic to sustainability

The fact that the SPIRES project is totally hosted within, and operated by, the MMERE creates important grounds for the Solomon Government ownership. The MMERE staff seemed engaged and across the project developments.

At the local level, the Rokera and Hunanawa communities expressed full ownership of the RE systems subject to finalising the institutional and financial terms on how to maintain the systems. However, the issue of maintenance is not yet resolved in terms of financing and capacities to deliver in cooperation with RESCOs.

The SPIRES launched its website as a knowledge sharing platform and Facebook page to communicate with the public to raise awareness, but more work to be done removing the capacity barriers and investing in building the individual and institutional capacity in dealing with the RE-based electrification projects.

The socio-economic sustainability is rated Likely (L).

Environmental risks to sustainability

Despite the impact of SPIRES project to reduce conventional energy consumption and GHG emissions, environmentally safe waste disposal of used old lamps and appliances and recycling practices need to be addressed.

The potential waste generation from the demonstration projects and ensuring proper disposal of wastes from the various stages of construction, operation and disposal need also to be addressed. Issuances of policies and sanctions in case of violations on improper disposal of wastes or hazardous substances, such as mercury in used lamps that are being replaced by EE lights, should be of the requirements of the site-specific environmental and social impact assessment that will be conducted for each of demo a replication project. The environmental sustainability is rated Moderately Likely (ML).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Project strategy: The SPIRES is coherent in its design that holistically addresses root causes and identified the key barriers towards facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands. The project is relevant to the needs of Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and communities, and it is directly aligned with the national agenda, Paris commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The project document is generally well-written and offers detailed guidance to the project management on the project problems to be addressed, theory of Change (ToC) supported with a very detailed elaborations on the project activities. The Theory of Change for the SPIRES Project involves the facilitation of the achievement of the energy objectives of the country focusing on rural electrification as the country pursues its low carbon development path. It illustrates how the realization of Solomon Islands' contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change as stated in the NDC is enabled and facilitated.

The project design is directly relevant to these strategic frameworks, and aligned with the objectives defined in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2018 that sets out the vision, mission and strategic directions the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, the Solomon Islands' National Energy Policy adopted in 2014 (SINEP 2014) and the National Development Strategy 2011 – 2020 where the country has initially set its targets on electricity access, renewable energy and energy efficiency in line with the development objectives. SPIRES is also aligned with the National Development Plan 2016-2035 that defines rural electrification policy by focusing on solar and hydropower. The SPIRES is also directly relevant to the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Solomon Islands.

The Project Results Framework (PRF) of the SPIRES Project generally meets the "SMART" criteria with few improvements. Nonetheless, the PRF remains appropriate to effectively monitor Project progress with few exceptions. Descriptions of the Project objective and outcomes are concise and easily understandable with clear numeric targets and time frames for SMART indicators, the project design defined annual targets to help the project planning process.

Progress towards results: Overall, there has been limited progress towards MTR targets, 14 out of 18 MTR targets are assessed to be off target. The SPIRES project efforts have been largely focused on the delivery of the demonstration activities and very little achievements done so far to deliver the incremental values of the GEF project, particularly in relation to supporting policy, regulatory and strategic planning reforms (outcome 1), financial and institutional mechanisms (outcome 2) and capacity building (outcome 4). It should be understood that the SPIRES success lies in the incremental value achieved by removing barriers identified in the project design, and the project demonstration pilots are one piece, among many others, in achieving the project objectives.

The current project management does not consider the additionality of the GEF project in removing the barriers. This is based on the fact that project delivery has been largely focused on delivering the demonstration activities without addressing other regulatory, financial, and technical barriers in the same momentum. Also, the implementation of partnership strategy was not effective enough to facilitate removing the barriers. For example, there is no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications. Further, other factors that affected the delivery towards MTR targets include: 1) logistics difficulties in accessing remote rural areas not well-serviced with transportation means, this affected the project team mobility as well as transportation of goods and equipment; 2) COVID and associated impacts which led to shift in Government policy orientation and focus as well as restrictions on movements; and 3) delays in recruitments and procurements, particularly in sourcing solar technology.

At the policy level, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification in consultation with Government and non-governmental organization and the foreign development partners reviewed and updated the SINPEP in 2019. The SINEP aimed to increase access to electricity in rural households to 40% by 2035 and increase the use of renewable energy sources for power generation in urban and rural areas to 50% by 2035.

The implementing rules and regulations (IRRs) on EE & RE technology applications for rural electrification and electricity generation regulatory framework have not been developed until now. This involves the drafting of the necessary national energy policy, legal and regulatory framework, and standards to implement the regulatory framework and policies on pricing, market development and other related areas, and also no policy pilots have not been designed or implemented.

As for the institutional and financial mechanisms, the SPIRES project started the discussion around the institutional and financial arrangements, but the models remain primitive and not matured enough. Also, engaged communities expressed concerns over the ambiguities around institutional and financial terms and no agreed plan for maintenance. In order to perfect these models, the SPIRES should clearly document the model in writing, socialize the model with targeted communities, improve based on the feedback, finalize, and formally agree on the key terms with the communities. The financial and institutional models are instrumental sustainability element of the SPIRES and creates avenue for achieving additionality by attracting other development agencies and banks to adopt the models.

As for demonstration pilots, despite the fact that two demonstration pilots are almost complete in terms of installation, there is no evidence that the demonstration projects are set for replication and up-scaling, the demonstration projects are not fully 'demonstratable' at this stage and not ready to be presented as successful working model that build confidence for replication and attract investment packages as anticipated by the project design mainly because of they are not fully operated yet and no final agreement on the financial arrangements and maintenance.. The demonstration projects have faced challenges in terms of meeting the quality standards of the Solomon Power to be able to connect the beneficiaries to the systems. There has been no formal approval from the Solomon Powers obtained prior to installations and some beneficiaries were unable to connect to the systems because of not meeting the standards. Also, the demonstration projects lack the sustainability element at this point given that financial mechanism and future maintenance are not finalized and there is no linkage with policy and regulatory components. Also, the SPIRES has been unable to assess RE opportunities and risk through the DREI or techno-feasibility studies until this point. In total 4 out of 6 targets are assessed to be off track under outcome 3.

As for capacity building, the SPIRES has launched its website as knowledge exchange platform among stakeholders and with the public. The website offers information about the project and its activities, news, and events. There has been no capacity assessment done so far, and subsequently no training programme was established and implemented. Also, no data base system was developed yet to monitor and report on the supply and consumption. Also, there were no trainings or capacity building activities implemented for the RESCOs under this outcome.

Project implementation: Project implementation has been Moderately Satisfactory (MS) in consideration of actual progress, the effectiveness of the adaptive management and stakeholders engagement strategy. The project board needs to be convened more actively and more frequently to enable effective project oversight, and project reporting and planning need to be results-base.

The M&E framework follows the standard M&E template for projects of this size and complexity, the project reports progress, and challenges regularly through quarterly reports and annual PIRs, but no follow-up actions have been implemented on underperforming milestones.

The SPIRES project has made limited efforts to develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to stimulate progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES). For example, there has been no effective engagement with the institutions who are likely to adopt the demonstration pilot models nor to set up the policy and regulatory framework to support RE applications, and limited engagement with the institutions that could influence the regulatory reforms. The stakeholders engagement strategy of the SPIRES needs to be based on the role of the SPIRES as an enabler and facilitator to achieve the

project objectives and targets, and this means SPIRES activities should be achieved through coherent partnerships with stakeholders.

Sustainability: The SPIRES project is designed to stimulate the replication of the RE/EE application in rural are electrification through the careful selection and implementation of demonstration projects that will showcase the pronged barrier removal approach of the project in terms of reforms in policy and planning, improvement of technical performance and reliability of RE facilities, institutional strengthening, sustainable financing arrangements, and information and awareness.

The financial sustainability of the installed demonstration facilities to maintain the RE systems has not yet been agreed with the communities nor finalized, and the MoUs signed with the communities, in their current form, don't define terms of the pricing and fee collection and process to collect and use the fee, and this poses a sustainability concern shall those terms are not agreed upon. Also, financing the scale-up and replication and this has not been addressed by the project at this point.

The project sustainability is also anchored in the commitment of the SIG to reform the policies in favor of integrated energy policy and planning that will include economic, social, technical, and environmental sustainability parameters in the choice of RE technologies for application in rural electrification. As discussed earlier in this report, outcome 1 (policy and regulatory reforms) has not progressed as anticipated until this point, and this component need to be strengthened in the second half of the project timeframe.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, and in line with some of the lessons learned, this section proposes some recommendations mainly focused to inform the second half of the SPIRES project:

Rec#	Recommendations	Responsibility
A.	Project objective: Facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands	
A.1	**Emphasize and reinforce the role of the SPIRES project as a facilitator and enabler** to increase access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands by removing the policy, regulatory, capacity, institutional and financial barriers to the widespread and sustainable application of RE-based power generation technologies in these communities. This can be done by developing and implementing a result-based work plan (i.e., based on the project results framework or log frame) focused on expediting the delivery on component 1, 2 and 4 to be at the same momentum as outcome 3.1 and 3.2. below recommendations also help to achieve this recommendation.	UNDP and PMU
B.	Outcome 1: Enforcement of approved policies and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands Outcome 2: Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas Outcome 3.1: Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas Outcome 3.2: Adoption and	

	implementation of climate resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas.	
B.1	**Pause on the delivery of new demonstration activities for the next 10-12 months** after finalizing the two already implemented demos in Rokera and Hunanawa or, at minimum, slow down the delivery on the demonstration activities until other components are progressed so the demonstration projects can be presented as a comprehensive successful model. This will allow SPIRES project resources and time to be focused on expediting the work on underperforming components (recommendation #1) and integrate lessons learned from the first two demos and based on the techno-economic feasibility. This also gives the project the opportunity to present the demos as an integrated solution that brings together the policy, regulatory and technology that works in operationally and financially sustainable manner. This requires the project to completely finalize the two demos in Rokera and Hunanawa not only in terms of installation and operation, but also in terms of testing the institutional and financial settings.	PMU
B.2	**Reactivate the UNDP's flagship De-risking Renewable Energy Investment (DREI) activity again**. or, at minimum, expand the ongoing 'technical and economic feasibility assessment' to include risk and barrier assessment and suggest measures to mitigate or transfer whatever risks that need to be addressed to facilitate investments, particularly private sector investment, in the rural electrification program of the government. While the MTR supports the techno-economic feasibility study, it also reinstates the significance of the DREI in identifying the barriers and associated risks which can hold back investment in renewable energy. It then assists policymakers to put in place packages of targeted public interventions to address these risks. The DREI will make direct contribution to achieve the additionality of the SPIRES project by addressing the RE development from barriers removal and risk mitigation point of view and guide appropriate policies, actions, investments on RE-based electricity generation options for rural electrification projects. Therefore, the MTR recommends reviving the DREI activity and seeking UNDP regional hub' assistance to source the right expertise for implementing the DREI.	PMU with support of the regional hub
B.3	**Develop and implement a new partnership strategy where stakeholders** and their potential role in removing barriers should be mapped and engagement strategy identified. The MTR identified number of partnerships that could be established to support the project facilitation role such as with development partners (Word Bank, IFC, ADB, etc.), that potentially could adopt the SPIRES model for replication and upscaling, and national agencies such as Solomon Power for mainstreaming SPIRES considerations in the review process of the energy act, and RESCOs or new RE business entrepreneurs to develop the RE service market. This can be done by conducting a mapping exercise to identify potential partners who align with the SPIRES project goals and have the resources, expertise, and influence to contribute effectively. Consider organizations, businesses, community groups, government agencies, or academic institutions that have a vested interest in the SPIRES project's success. And then clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the project and foster communication and trust by establishing regular channels of	PMU

	communication and mechanisms for sharing information, updates, and feedback. Also, consider the establishment of the working groups specifically dedicated to address policy dialogue around rural electrification in Solomon Islands.	
C.	Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	
C.1	**Reactivate the role of the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)** to serve the strategic orientation of the SPIRES project and provide overall project advisory services and technical backstopping to the PMU. The CTA ToRs should be bound by specific deliverables in specific times, and the CTA role holder should have good experience with barrier removal projects to support achieving the GEF additionality in the SPIRES project.	PMU with UNDP support
C.2	**Seek Solomon Power's formal approval on the demonstration projects' design prior to construction and installation** to ensure full compliance with their standards and accordingly manage the expectations of the beneficiaries.	PMU
C.3	**Revamp and expand the existing communication strategy to a include a gender-sensitive and targeted communication actions** considering the specific needs, challenges, and priorities of different stakeholders and particularly participating communities. The strategy should include tailored messages to the targeted communities to keep them informed, Solomon public community and public institutions aiming at raising awareness and creating an engaging environment for increasing access to electricity in rural communities in the Solomon Islands.	PMU
C.4	**Establish data collection systems to keep track of project indicators and co-financing**. It is important that project indicators are kept up to date (disaggregated by gender where relevant), and co-financing sources and activities are well-documented. This will help to enforce a culture of PLF-based planning.	PMU
C.5	**Consider requesting 6 to 12 months extension of the project implementation period** to allow project activities to be satisfactorily completed. The exact duration of the extension period is to be determined during the 2024 PIR reporting cycle.	PMU and UNDP
C.6	**Increase the frequency of the board meeting to every 6 months** to strengthen the oversight and strategic guidance role of the project and avoid additional delays.	PMU and UNDP

6. Annexes

Annex 1 - MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION

Location: Honiara

Application Deadline: Friday 24th February 2023

Type of Contract: Individual Contract

Post Level: International Consultant

Languages Required: English

Starting Date: 13th March 2023

Duration of Initial Contract: 13st March 2023 to19th May 2023

Expected Duration of Assignment: 35 days

BACKGROUND

A. Project Title: Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in Solomons Project (SPIRES)

- **B. Project Description**

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in Solomons Project (PIMS#6089) implemented through the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, which is to be undertaken in 2023. The project started on the 12 November 2020 and is in its third year of implementation. 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* (MTR Guidance).

The SPIRES Project's goal is reduced annual growth rate of GHG emissions in the energy and energy end use sector of the Solomon Islands. Its objective is the facilitation of the achievement of increased access to electricity in rural communities in the country. The project follows these four approaches a) Review, improvement, approval and enforcement of appropriate policy, planning and regulatory frameworks that will support enhanced and accelerated electrification of the off-grid areas in the country; (b) Development and enforcement of suitable institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification in the country; (c) Development and implementation of cost-effective demonstrations of various schemes for rural electrification in the off-grid areas involving the private sector, CSOs, NGOs and local communities; and, (d) Design and conduct of information communication and education activities to improve levels of awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and citizenry on climate resilient and low carbon development of off-grid areas. It is expected that the project's outputs are collectively contributing to the realization of the following outcomes: a) Enforcement of approved policies, and rules and regulations to support enhanced application of cost-effective RE technologies for electricity generation in the off-grid areas in Solomon Islands; b) Enforced improved institutional and financial mechanisms in the integrated planning and implementation of rural electrification and RE-based energy production in the off-grid areas; c) Adoption and implementation of climate

resilient and low carbon electricity applications in increasing access to electricity in off-grid areas; d) Increased confidence in, and application of, RE technologies and RE-based power generation to support socio-economic development in off-grid areas; and e) Enhanced awareness and knowledge of the government, private sector and communities on the cost-effective application of RE and EE technologies/ practices.

The Solomon Islands had experienced the global pandemic in 2020 and has its first community transmissions in early 2022. One of the impacts of this pandemic was travel restrictions were imposed at both international and domestic airports and seaports. This has led to delays in project implementation in 2022. Prior to that it is noteworthy to mention the recruitment challenges faced by the Implementing partner who only managed to get the full project team was only recruited in Quarter 3 of 2021. This has slowed down project implementation. Furthermore, travel restrictions have also impeded the procurement and installation of solar PV systems as majority of the solar panels and systems were procured outside the country. These challenges have led to the further delay of installation of the renewable energy infrastructures in the 8 designated demonstration sites. Another challenge was that some key activities such as techno economical assessments, and policy reforms were impacted due to travel restrictions as limited technical people from outside the country were permitted to enter the country and there is limited pool of energy experts in 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 in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

MTR is primarily a monitoring tool to identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. MTRs are a mandatory requirement for all GEF-financed full-sized projects (FSP). MTRs are not mandatory for GEF-financed medium-sized projects (MSP) but should be undertaken, at the discretion of the Project Board, when the project is not performing well and could therefore benefit from an independent review. The project document outlines that an independent MTR will be conducted and submitted to GEF. The MTR findings and responses outlined in the management response will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's duration. The terms of reference, the review process and the MTR report will follow the standard templates and guidance prepared by the UNDP IEO for GEF-financed projects available on the UNDP Evaluation Resource Center (ERC). As noted in this guidance, the evaluation will be 'independent, impartial, and rigorous. The consultants that will be hired to undertake the assignment will be independent from organizations that were involved in designing, executing, or advising on the project to be evaluated.

The aims of the MTR are the following:

- Assess the progress towards the achievements of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document
- Assess the extent of barrier removal that has been achieved as of the mid-term, and the prospects of full barrier removal by end-of-project.

- Assess early signs of project success or failure, and recommend corrective and adaptive measures
- Assess the progress towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.
- On the basis of the MTR findings, identify and propose the necessary changes to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results[20].
- Review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **D. MTR Approach & Methodology**

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

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e., PIF, UNDP 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 approach[21] 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.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.[22] Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to *Solar PV system demonstration sites,* including the following project sites: *Hunanawa Community and Rokera Provincial Secondary School, Malaita Provinces.*

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, however, 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.

[20] The MTR is expected to provide guidance on how to expedite the implementation the delayed project activities and those that are planned for implementation during the PIR 2023 reporting period, as well as guidance to the PMU on how to put back the project implementation on track, and how to carry out the planned project activities to be able to generate the necessary data/information that will be used in gauging the level of achievement of each Outcome indicator in each project component.

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

[22] 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.

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.

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, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
    - Were relevant gender issues (e.g., the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for

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 logframe 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

<u>Management Arrangements</u>

- 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? Please make sure that evidentiary documents of the actual co-financing that was realized are available, including report on the results of co-financed activities that were carried out by the co-financers or project partners.

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? Make sure that evidentiary documents about the reported results of the co-financed and subsumed baseline activities as well as of the incremental activities are available for the review.
- 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 risks[23] (in the SESP).

[23] 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.

- The individual risk ratings (in the SESP) .

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

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

Reporting

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

Communications & Knowledge Management

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

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 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. The MTR Team must make sure that evidentiary documents are checked and verified to support the conclusions and the ratings that it will make regarding the mid-term accomplishments of the SPIRES Project.

Based on the MTR findings and data/information gathered, the MTR Team shall update the GEF Core Indicator values by including the estimated mid-term value of Indicators 6.0, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 11.

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. The MTR Team must include the relevant steps to be taken (as well requirements) to implement each recommendation. 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 an *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 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and project management. Completion date: (14 March 2023)
- Presentation: MTR team presents initial findings to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission. Completion date: (4 April 2023)
- Draft MTR Report: MTR team submits the draft full report with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR mission. Completion date: (14 April 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: (5 May 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 Country Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country 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.

H. Duration of the Work

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately *35 of days* over a period of *8 of weeks* starting *6 March 2023,* and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- *24th February 2023:* Application closes
- *27th to 3rd March 2023:* Selection of MTR Team
- *6th to 8th March 2023:* Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
- *9th to 14th March 2023:Up 4 days:* Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report
- *15th to 16th March 2023:Up 2 days:* Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report- latest start of MTR mission
- *20th to 31st March 2023: Up 10 days:* MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits
- *3rd to 4th April 2023:* Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings- earliest end of MTR mission
- *10th to 14th April 2023: Up 5 days:* Preparing draft report.
- *17h to 18th April 2023: Up 2 days:* Incorporating audit trail on draft report/Finalization of MTR report (note: accommodate time delay in dates for circulation and review of the draft report)

- *19th to 21st April 2023):* Preparation & Issue of Management Response
- *(5th May 2022):* Expected date of full MTR completion.

The start date of the contract is 13th March 2023.

I. Duty Station

Identify the consultant's duty station/location for the contract duration, mentioning ALL possible locations of field works/duty travel in pursuit of other relevant activities, specially where traveling to locations at security Phase I or above will be required.

Travel:

- International travel will be required to Solomon Islands, and project demonstration sites of the SPIRES project during the MTR mission;
- The BSAFE training course must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel; Herewith is the link to access this training: https://training.dss.un.org/courses/login/index.php . These training modules at this secure internet site is accessible to Consultants, which allows for registration with private email.
- Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director.
- Consultants are required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under https://dss.un.org/dssweb/
- All related travel expenses will be covered and will be reimbursed as per UNDP rules and regulations upon submission of an F-10 claim form and supporting documents.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

J. Qualifications of the Successful Applicants

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one team expert, usually from the country of the project. The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas: *(give a weight to all these qualifications so applicants know what the maximum amount of points is they can earn for the technical evaluation)*

Education (20%)

- A Master's degree with academic and professional background in electrical engineering, energy, climate change mitigation, or other closely related field.

Experience (50%)

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to GEF and GEF related focal areas *climate change mitigation*;
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience working in Small Islands States context or least Development Country context and Pacific Islands region;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and *Climate Change*; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

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.

L. Schedule of Payments

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

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%

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

In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the Commissioning Unit and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the MTR, that deliverable or service will not be paid.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

APPLICATION PROCESS

M. Recommended Presentation of Offer

a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the template[24] provided by UNDP;

b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** (P11 form[25]);

c) **Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)

d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc.), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the Letter of Confirmation of Interest template. If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

All application materials should be submitted to by email at the following address ONLY: lucas.toro@undp.org by ***4:00 pm, 24th February 2023.*** Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

N. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the

[24] https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx

[25] http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

Annex 2: MTR evaluative matrix

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

Table 5: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators/evidence	Sources	Methodology
1. Project strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
· 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)?	· Level of alignment of project's activities with relevant stakeholders' plans · Stakeholders' perceptions on the relevance of project's activities to their needs · Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project design and implementation	· project documentations · national policies or strategies, websites · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
· 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 decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes? · Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for further guidelines. · Were relevant gender issues (e.g., the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?	· Degree of coherence of the project design in terms of theory of change, components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources, etc. · Level of coherence between programme design and project implementation approach · Identification of the problem and its causes in the project being addressed? · Assessment of gender integration into the project design	· project documentations · national policies or strategies, websites · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
· 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.	· SMARTness testing of indicators (Suitability assessment of the defined indicators/measures to demonstrate impacts) · Indicators inclusion of gender aspects	· project documentations · national policies or strategies, websites · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews

· 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.			
1. Progress Towards Results To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
· Review the logframe 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.	· Analysis of progress towards logframe indicators · Analysis the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators	· project documentations (PIRs) · Progress reports · Project deliverables · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
· 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?	· Stakeholders' perspective on project management effectiveness · Suitability of project management structure including gender balance · Adequacy and timeliness of UNDP support services · Inclusion of gender into project operations	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews

· 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?			
<u>Work Planning</u> · 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.	· Timeliness of activities delivery · Alignment of defined plans with the logframe · Coherence of project planning process	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<u>Finance and co-finance</u> · 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? Please make sure that evidentiary documents of the actual co-financing that was realized are available, including report on the results of co-financed activities that were carried out by the co-financers or project partners.	· Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations · Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures · Planned vs. actual funds leveraged · Co-financing data and evidence	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<u>Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems</u> · 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? Make sure that evidentiary documents about the reported results of the co-financed and subsumed baseline activities as well as of the incremental activities are available for the review. · 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.	· Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback, and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation · Review of progress reports and financial reports · Data disaggregation by gender · Alignment of M&E to the GEF, UNDP and national needs	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews

· 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?)			
<u>Stakeholder Engagement</u> · 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?	· Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained · Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized · Coherence of the established partnerships	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<u>Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)</u> · 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.	· Assessment of SESP · Compliance with SESP requirements · SESP update and monitoring	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
· Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board. · Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners, and internalized by partners.	· Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach when needed to improve project efficiency · Lesson learned documentation	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<u>Communications & Knowledge Management</u> · 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	· Assessment of the communication plan · Communication coverage · Communication material produced so far · Number and nature of knowledge products produced so far		

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).			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<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	· Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant activities globally and at the country level · Evidence of commitments from government or other stakeholder to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end · Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<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? <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.	· Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy · Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability · Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts · Elements in place in those different management functions, at appropriate levels (globally and at country level) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives, and interrelationships with other key actors · Exit strategy in place and actively operationalisation · level of capacities at the country level to continue climate financing management · Efforts to support the development of relevant policies at the country level · Evidences of commitment by the targeted countries to pursue the supported activities	· project documentations · risk/issue register · Project stakeholders feedback	· Desk review · Stakeholders' interviews
<u>Environmental risks to sustainability:</u>	· Outcome of the EIAs for project on the ground	· project documentations	· Desk review

· Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?		· Project stakeholders feedback ·	· Stakeholders' interviews · Surveys

Annex 3: Interview Guide used for data collection

Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to speak with us today. The UNDP is conducting a Midterm Review of 'Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES)' project.

The evaluation aims to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

As part of the evaluation, we are talking to stakeholders to hear a range of perspectives on the work done so far and future priorities. We've booked in one hour for this interview, but it may not take the full hour.

Participation in this consultation is voluntary and confidential. You can decline to participate or end the interview at any time. No comments will be attributed to any individual in discussions or reports, unless we request your express permission.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview questions

It should be noted that below interview questions are presented as a guide to be used in the interviews, however, each individual interview is unique, and questions will be tailored to the interviewees' roles and perspectives. In addition, follow up questions will be asked based on the responses to obtain full story from each response.

Questions

Introductory question

Could you please introduce yourself and explain your involvement and the role of your organization/agency in the SPIRES project?

Effectiveness

1) In your opinion, what has been the greatest achievement in the project to date? And why?
2) What were the challenges in delivering project? How could we overcome these challenges?
3) What factors have contributed to achieving intended outputs and outcomes?
4) What worked so well and what didn't work so well? and why?

Outcomes

5) What sort of impacts did the project deliver to its stakeholders?
6) What trends do you foresee in the access to the electricity in rural areas? Consider:

    a. off-grid rural electrification projects
    b. Policy and regulatory framework for rural electrification
    c. Level of capacities

Relevance

7) In your opinion, to what degree the project activities are aligned to the needs of the participating stakeholders?
8) In your opinion, to what degree the project activities are aligned with the strategic plans and strategies of the participating stakeholders?

Efficiency

9) In your opinion, has the project been delivered on time and on budget? Has there been anything underachieved or overachieved within the agreed framework of the project, and what are the reasons/explanation for it?
10) In what ways has the project been adapted to emerging issues and opportunities? Examples?

Sustainability

11) Do you foresee any social, financial, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the project outputs and outcomes?
12) What would happen to the project output and benefits when the GEF funding finishes?
13) What lessons have been learnt for the project in achieving outcomes?

Closing

- Anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?

Thank you for your kind participation!

Annex 4: Rating scales

Rating scales

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (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 (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
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 5: List of persons interviewed

No	Name	Title
1.	Dr. Christopher Vehe	Permanent Secretary MMERE
2.	Dr. Melchior Mataki	Permanent Secretary MECDM
3.	Mr. Chanel Iroi	Deputy Secretary Technical MECDM & GEF Operational Focal Point
4.	Mr. Barnabas Bago	National Programme Coordinator MECDM
5.	Mr. Gabriel Aimaea	Deputy Director Energy Division MMERE
6.	Mr. Roy Atu	Project Officer MEHRD
7.	Mr. Hugo Hebala	Deputy Secretary Technical MRD
8.	Mr. Michael Ho'ota	Deputy Secretary Technical MAL
9.	Mr. Solomon Pita	Dean Faculty of Science and Technology SINU
10.	Mr. Patrick Suti	DBSI Development Bank of Solomon Islands
11.	Mr. Lemuel Liolea	Private Entrepreneur
12.	Mr. Elmar Elbling	Unit Head ADB
13.	Mr. Simley Giobauta	Country Officer IFC
14.	Mr. David Maai	SPIRES Project Manager
15.	Mr. Andrew Daka	CTA
17.	Ms. Joanne Aihunu	RSD Team Leader
18.	Lemuel Liolea	Archives Solution
19.	Smith Jones	C-Me Electrical & Engineering
20.	Davis Kwahea	G-Rock Electrical and Engineering
21	Grace Wate Kikiribatu	FESCS (Future Electrical & Solar Consultancy Services)
22	Manuel Soriano	UNDP Regional Technical Advisor

23	Phatthamon Jantalae	Programme Associate – UNDP Regional Office

Annex 6: MTR Itinerary

Date	Destination	Meeting Time	Community consultation	Stakeholders engagement
23/04/23	Arrived in Honiara			
24/04/23	Honiara	9.00 am-4.00pm	NA	Meeting with UNDP and PMU
25/04/23	Travel Hir - Auki	2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Traveling day	Meetings with stakeholders in Honiara
26/04/23	Travel Auki – Afio Travel Afio – Hunanawa - Afio	8:00 am – 12:00 nn 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Met with Solar committee members of Hunanawa	
27/04/23	Travel Afio – Rokera School – Afio	12:00 nn – 4:00 pm	Met with the school/communities committee & contractors	
28/04/23	Travel Parasi – Auki - Hir	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Mission ends	
29/04/23	Departure from Hir			

Annex7: List of documents reviewed

List of documents reviewed

- Project Identification Form (PIF)
- Final UNDP-GEF Project Document with all annexes
- CEO Endorsement Request
- UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and associated management plans (if any)
- Inception Workshop Report
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- CDRS – Financial reports
- Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports)
- Minutes of Project Board Meetings)
- GEF Core Indicators (from PIF, CEO Endorsement)
- Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions
- Co-financing data with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures
- National strategic frameworks
    - National Energy Policy 2019
    - Corporate Plan 2016 - 2018 that sets out the vision, mission, and strategic directions the Ministry of Mines
    - National Development Plan 2016-2035
    - Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Solomon Islands
    - National Development Strategy 2011 – 2020
- Audit reports
- Project website
- Project Facebook page
- UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)
- Project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes
- Project MoUs
- Mission reports
- Financial mechanisms report
- SIG financial and procurement policies

Annex 8: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

International consultant

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's Mid-Term Review.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Evaluators: ___Mohammad Alatoom & Jennifer Tugunau_____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

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

Signed at _____Honiara____ (Place) on _____25 April 2023_____ (Date)

Signature: _____e-signed: Mohammad Alatoom_____

National consultant

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).

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11. 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.
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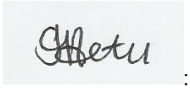
Signed at _____Honiara___ (Place) on _____25 April 2023____ (Date

Signatutre:  : Jennifer Tugunau

Annex 9: Signed MTR final report clearance form

Terminal Evaluation Report for Midterm Review of 'Stimulating Progress towards Improved Rural Electrification in the Solomons (SPIRES)' project Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 10: In a separate file - Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report

Annex 11: In a separate file – CCM Core Indicators

Annex 12: In a separate file - GEF Co-financing template (categorizing co-financing amounts by source as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditure')