

# Mid-Term Review of the Project

## “Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan”

### Deliverable 3: Final MTR Report

UNDP PIMS#	6319
# GEF ID	10234
MTR execution period	February – April, 2024
Report date	
Region and countries covered by the report	Bhutan
GEF Strategic Program / Action Area	Biodiversity
Executing Agency/Executing Partner and other Project Partners	Department of Tourism, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
MTR Team Members	José Galindo - International Evaluator Sangay Dorji - National Evaluator
Acknowledgements:	The evaluators would like to acknowledge the information and feedback provided by the interviewed project stakeholders including but not limited to officials from, MoAL, MoENR, MoF, MoHA, MoH, MoEA, BTFEC, BFL, RSPN, Tarayana Foundation, HAB, GAB and PMU staff. Special thanks to the UNDP Country Office staff. Without the on-ground efforts of stakeholders, the Mid-Term Review report would not have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	2
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	4
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
2 INTRODUCTION .....	10
2.1 MTR purpose and objectives .....	10
2.2 Scope & Methodology.....	10
2.2.1 Data collection and analysis .....	11
2.2.2 Information analysis.....	11
2.2.3 Draft Final Report .....	12
2.3 Ethics.....	13
2.4 Limitations of the evaluation .....	13
2.5 MTR Report Structure.....	14
3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT.....	14
3.1 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional and political factors relevant to the objective and scope of the project .....	14
3.2 Problems that the project sought to address.....	15
Project description and strategy: objective, products and desired outcomes, description of places where it is developed. ....	16
3.3 Project execution mechanisms: project's Board of Directors brief description, agreements with main execution partners, etc.....	16
3.4 Project timing and milestones .....	17
3.5 Main stakeholders: summary list.....	17
4 FINDINGS .....	18
4.1 Project Strategy .....	18
4.1.1 Project Design .....	18
4.1.2 Results framework.....	19
4.2 Progress Towards Results.....	20
4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis.....	20
4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective. ....	38
Project implementation and adaptive management .....	40
4.2.3 Management arrangements.....	40
4.2.4 Work planning.....	40
4.2.5 Finance and co-finance .....	41
4.2.6 Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems .....	42

Management arrangements .....	43
4.2.7 Social and environmental standards .....	44
4.2.8 Reporting .....	46
4.2.9 Communication .....	46
4.3 Long-term sustainability .....	47
4.3.1 Financial risks to sustainability .....	47
4.3.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability .....	48
4.3.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability .....	48
4.3.4 Environmental risks to sustainability .....	49
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	50
Recommendations .....	52
6 ANNEX .....	54
6.1 Annex 1: Terms of Reference .....	54
6.2 Annex 2: Logical Framework .....	78
6.3 Annex 3: Base Documents for Review .....	86
6.4 Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix .....	87
6.5 Annex 5: Evaluation Scales .....	96
6.6 Annex 6: Interview questions .....	98
6.7 Annex 7: Evaluation consultant code of conduct agreement form .....	102

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ABTO	Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators
BFL	Bhutan for Life
BT FEC	Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation
BWS	Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary
CR	Critical
CSI	Cottage and Small Industries
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Committee of Tourism Associations
DCSI	Department of Cottage and Small Industries
DoFPS	Department of Forests and Park Services
DPO	Dzongkhag Planning Officers
ECoB	Economic Census of Bhutan
EN	Endangered
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Full-Sized Project
FYP	Five Year Plan
GAB	Guide Association of Bhutan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
GEFSEC	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
GWP	Global Wildlife Program
HAB	Handicrafts Association of Bhutan
HACT	Harmonized Assessment to Cash Transfer
HRAB	Hotel Association of Bhutan
HWC	Human-Wildlife Conflict
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practice
LECT	Landscape Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce
MOAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MoENR	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources

MoF	Ministry of Finance
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTAC	Multi sector Technical Advisory Committee
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PAs	Protected Areas
PHCB	Population and Housing Census of Bhutan
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR GEF	Project Implementation Report
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RSPN	Royal Society for the Protection of Nature
SAWEN	South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SRCWP	Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection in Asia
STAP GEF	Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
SWS	Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary
TCBDOT	
UNDP-GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Facility
VU	Vulnerable
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Table 1 Project Information**

Project Title	<b>Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan</b>		
GEF Project ID:	10234	PIF approval date:	Jun 13, 2019
GEF Agency Project ID:	6319	CEO Endorsement Date:	Jun 7, 2021
Agency(ies) GEF:	UNDP	Project Document Signature Date:	Aug 11, 2021
UNDP Business Unit Award ID:	00094492	Date Project Coordinator hired:	TBA
Country (ies):	Bhutan	Date of Inception Workshop:	Nov 18, 2021
Region:	Asia & Pacific	Date of Mid-Term Evaluation:	February 1, 2024
Focal Areas:	Biodiversity	Date of final evaluation report:	May 11, 2026
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	Biodiversity 1) Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as within production landscapes and marine habitat		
Trust Fund:	GEF	Planned date for operational closure:	Aug 11, 2026
Implementing Partner:	Department of Tourism		
<b>Financing</b>			
		at CEO approval date (USD)	at Mid-Term Review (USD)*.
<b>[1] Total GEF funding:</b>		<b>4,854,128</b>	<b>2,326,538.55</b>
[2] Tourism Council of Bhutan		2,938,000	704,000
[3] Ministry of Agriculture and Forests		524,000	266,761.70
[4] Bhutan for Life		3,756,500	1,373,749
[5] Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation		500,000	0
[6] WWF		1,195,884	346,600
[7] UNDP contribution		158,178	103,346.87
<b>[8] Total Co-financing [2+3+4+5+6+7]</b>		<b>9,072,562</b>	<b>2,794,457.57</b>
<b>[9] PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1+8]</b>		<b>13,926,690</b>	<b>5,120,996.12</b>

## Project description

1. This project seeks to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development in Bhutan as a long-term strategy for mitigation of threats to biodiversity and to generate sustainable conservation financing and livelihoods. This will be achieved through establishing Bhutan as a model ecotourism destination, to generate livelihood opportunities, sustainable financing for landscapes within and outside protected areas, facilitate human-wildlife coexistence, and mitigate the negative impacts of increasing tourism on Bhutan's socio-cultural heritage and globally significant biodiversity.
2. The project strategies are: 1) Effective policy and institutional framework for ecotourism that incentivizes and integrates biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector; 2) Introduce biodiversity-friendly ecotourism strengthens biodiversity conservation, livelihoods, and enhances human-wildlife co-existence; 3) Institute effective capacity, marketing, and knowledge exchange to establish Bhutan as an ecotourism model.

**Table 2 Midterm (MTR) Ratings and Achievement Summary Table**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	Outcome 1: Moderately Unsatisfactory MU	35% estimated progress with regards to mid-term targets. Indicator 5 report partial progress (65%); Indicator 6 reports no progress while Indicator 7 reports different trainings but no concrete progress (40%) in terms of the expected number of certified entities.
	Outcome 2: Moderately Satisfactory MS	Estimated progress rate rounds 69% with regards to mid-term targets. Indicators 8 (100%) and 11 (75%) may be close to fully achieve mid-term targets; indicator 9 , 10, do not provide relevant data and lack a baseline to measure progress.
	Outcome 3: Unsatisfactory U	Estimated progress rate rounds 17% of midterm targets. indicator 13 reports negative progress while indicator 15 is on track, Indicator 14 reports partial and initial progress, however, concern is raised about the quality of capacity building activities reported, considering the state of the project and infrastructure.
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	Moderately Unsatisfactory MU	PMU was flexible and patient to adapt to challenging context. Overall performance is delayed, progress in outcomes rounds 36% of mid-term targets and only one indicator has achieved its mid-term targets. There is a clear gap in specialized and full-time dedicated PMU, specialized expertise in ecotourism and M&E.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Moderately Unlikely MU	Gap in institutional legal and human frameworks to empower ecotourism. Gap in creating stakeholder ownership and institutional commitment for sustainability.

### Concise summary of conclusions

3. The project is highly relevant and strategically positioned considering tourism represents 9% of Bhutan's GDP, holding special attention for a country that has not yet recovered pre-covid tourism flows. The project is recognized by local authorities as a catalyzer for economic development and a great opportunity to benefit communities.
4. Project implementation faced a complex post- covid context leading into a slow start up process. Despite the difficult operating context, it must be noted that the project has made significant progress and has demonstrated adaptive management since the second semester of 2023. Important concern has been raised with regards to the quality of outputs and implementation, leading into sustainability risks. Interventions and investments mostly reflect business as usual tourism where very limited added value was found in terms of mainstreaming biodiversity while the outputs related to human wildlife conflict are implemented in relative isolation.
5. While the project design phase was successful in engaging a wide range of both national and subnational stakeholders, stakeholder engagement, particularly local stakeholders and private sector entities during planning, designing and implementation of infrastructure projects was limited.
6. The MTR concludes that there is a reasonable risk that the project is not likely to achieve the expected targets and goals during the remaining implementation period without a profound change in terms of adaptive management capacity and strategic direction to take the best advantage of the remaining time and resources available. The project has 27 months, adequate resources, and political commitment to implement the recommendations of this MTR to achieve the expected results.
7. The expected transformational added value of GEF investments in terms of ecotourism and mainstreaming biodiversity are not yet visible. Moreover, there is a potential reputational risk, considering infrastructure provided by the project is labeled and promoted as ecotourism, when in practice it does not meet ecotourism standards or best practices during planning, construction and operation.

**Table 3 Recommendations**

#	Recommendation	Responsible Entity
---	----------------	--------------------



1	Strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for ecotourism is one of the expected transformational impacts from the project. The MTR recommends to compensate for the existing gap in terms of strategic direction attributed to not implementing the Ecotourism Master Plan. The PMU is requested to present the PSC an alternative proposal on how resources from the project will be used strategically to ensure the achievement of the same expected result and purpose envisaged in the ProDoc.	Department of Tourism UNDP
2	Considering the limited time until the end of the project, the MTR strongly recommends strengthening management and technical capacity of the PMU. A full-time dedicated project coordinator must be ensured, as provided by the Prodoc. The MTR also recommends to hire a full-time ecotourism specialist, this key person must have the capacity and authority to ensure quality delivery and strategic direction to achieve project targets in the remaining time.	Department of Tourism UNDP
3	Contract a short-term assignment to set up the M&E system. Special emphasis shall be placed in re-defining project indicators, assessing baseline gaps, and updating all monitoring tools, including those mandatory by the GEF such as the METT scorecards, UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard, core indicators, GHG mitigation, KAP and co-financing core indicators and co-financing.	Department of Tourism UNDP
4	The MTR strongly recommends that UNDP review all current construction and related tendering processes to ensure that ecotourism guidelines as well as environmental and social safeguards are met as a precondition to continue construction. For the rest of infrastructure either close to or in operation, corrective measures shall be convened to ensure they can be fully considered ecotourism products.	UNDP
5	Ecotourism is not only about constructions, but also about a mind shift in people's culture and practices, which is expected to complement all project interventions. It is recommended to refocus and enhance knowledge, management and strategic communications from current institutional profile to prioritize project beneficiaries and local communities to promote long term shift in mindset of local communities, project beneficiaries and local communities.	Department of Tourism
6	The MTR recommends to strengthen the project steering committee, by expanding its representation from private sector and local communities. It is recommended that the PSC achieves a common understanding of the project as it was originally formulated, as well as to engage them with the risks flagged and recommendations described in this MTR report. Existing expectations about investing in areas outside of the project landscape, or further redistributing technical assistance resources to increase physical investments should not be pursued or encouraged.	UNDP Department of Tourism
7	The private sector could play a greater role in project implementation. It is recommended to explore opportunities to engage them in the management and sustainability of GEF investments. In some cases, it could partner with the communities with a commitment to transfer capacities, in other cases they may bring co-finance to scale up, complement or improve existing investments.	Department of Tourism UNDP
8	Recognizing the project landscape areas are in dzongkhags with least tourist visitation, the MTR notes that there are limited marketing activities on ecotourism which may result in limited awareness on the ecotourism products. The MTR recommends that the project refocus on marketing ecotourism at international, national and project landscapes level to ensure that the GEF investments have a catalytic and value-added effect on Bhutan's tourism development.	Department of Tourism
9	The project outcomes partially hinge upon the government's tourism-related policy environment. It is recommended to conduct policy framework analysis, including incentives to promote tourism in the eastern region of Bhutan and Zhemgang to ensure adequate tourist traffic to project sites and facilitate communities' enhanced livelihoods through ecotourism.	Department of Tourism
10	The MTR strongly recommends updating and strictly following the stakeholder engagement plan, especially for investments where local stakeholders are expected to take ownership and become direct beneficiaries.	Department of Tourism

11	The MTR commends the project on the implementation of the gender safeguards including the consideration on gender segregated restrooms, adequate participation of women in project activities and notes that more than 50% of the project beneficiaries are women. The MTR recommends the project to enhance and strengthen the implementation of the gender safeguards as originally envisaged.	Department of Tourism
----	--	-----------------------

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 MTR purpose and objectives

8. The purpose of the mid-term review is to assess the progress made in achieving the project objectives and results outlined in the Project Document (ProDoc), analyzing early signs of success or failure to identify any changes needed to achieve the desired results. The MTR reviews the project strategy and its risks to sustainability.
9. The MTR has evaluated the results according to the criteria described in the Guidance for conducting Midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects (2014). The specific objectives are:
  - a) Ensure the success of the project by identifying any changes that need to be incorporated into adaptive management to achieve the expected results:
  - b) Ensure accountability for the achievement of project objectives, as well as those of UNDP-GEF, and encourage accountability in the use of resources.
  - c) Enhance organizational learning through documentation, feedback and dissemination of lessons learned.
  - d) Strengthen project oversight and management functions.

### 2.2 Scope & Methodology

10. The MTR was conducted based on the Guidance for conducting Midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects (2014). In accordance with the guide and the project context, the following tools were applied: a) documentation review; b) stakeholder interviews; c) questionnaires; d) field visits. During the process, there was active interaction between the evaluation team, Department of Tourism, MOICE, Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS), MoENR and District administrations UNDP Bhutan, the PMU and other stakeholders.

### **2.2.1 Data collection and analysis**

11. Two data collection techniques were used: document review and individual interviews, which are described below.

#### ***2.2.1.1 Secondary Information - Documentary Review***

12. The evaluators reviewed the documentation provided by the PMU and the implementing partners. In accordance with the TOR, 16 documents were considered essential for this review. A detailed list of documents and their status of implementation is presented in Annex 3.
13. Based on this analysis, the evaluation team prepared a detailed description of the project covering the identified problem, the established objectives and their respective activities. This provided a baseline situation prior to project implementation, as well as its perceived contribution or impact.

#### ***2.2.1.2 Stakeholder interviews and implementation site visits***

14. Following the suggestions of the Guidelines, the evaluation applied a consultative approach that included interviews with diverse stakeholders. This activity sought to enrich the vision of the context through first-hand contact with the most representative actors in the implementation of the project, thus receiving testimonies on the progress and barriers encountered so far.
15. To conduct the interviews, an identification of stakeholders was carried out together with the PMU to interview them virtually and during the field mission.
16. A questionnaire was used for the different interviews, focusing on the participation of the different actors according to their role in project implementation (Annex 6). The questionnaire included several questions related to gender equality and women's empowerment for the different project stakeholders, and various specific questions for the project beneficiaries.
17. The mission or visit to implementation sites was planned with the PMU to coordinate the sites to be visited, as well as the stakeholders in the territory to be interviewed, including representatives of state institutions, local institutions and beneficiaries.

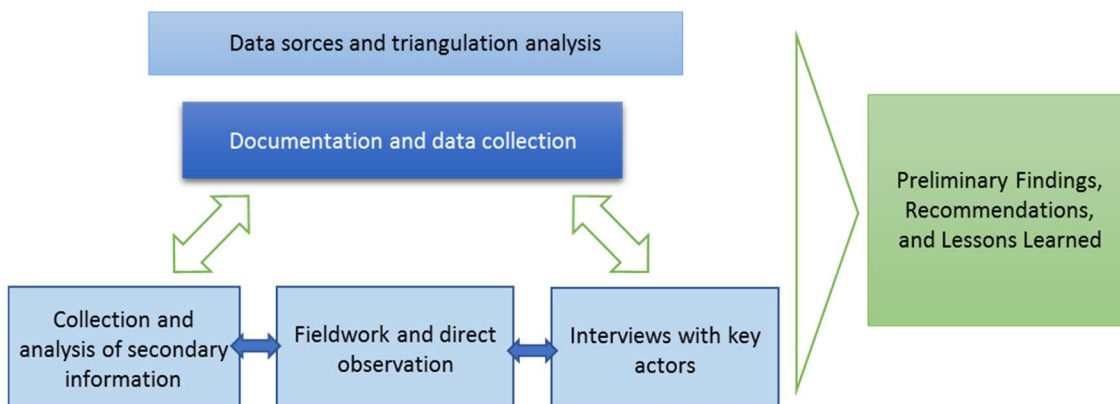
### **2.2.2 Information analysis**

18. Within the framework of the Guide, the results and impacts of the project were assessed using the evaluation matrix (Annex 4), which identified the key questions related to the

evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues, and the methods selected (desk review and interviews).

19. Initially, at the completion of the interview phase, the evaluation team systematized and analyzed the information gathered from primary and secondary information sources to generate the most relevant and representative findings of all the data collected so far. With this first analysis, the findings were presented to the UNDP country office and the project team. At the end of the presentation, important feedback and clarifications were gathered for the preparation of the review report.
20. Subsequently, the evaluators conducted an in-depth analysis to reinforce the credibility and validity of the findings, judgments and conclusions obtained. The evaluation team used triangulation techniques to ensure technical quality. Triangulation consisted of double or triple checking the results of the data analysis by comparing the information obtained through each data collection method (desk study and individual interviews) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 Information Analysis Diagram**



Source: José Galindo, 2021

### 2.2.3 Draft Final Report

21. After information was gathered and analyzed, this report presents the main findings and recommendations of a technical and practical nature, which reflect a realistic understanding of the project's achievements, and seek to facilitate the identification of influencing factors and possibilities for advancing project performance including corrective measures and compliance with the objectives and results established in the logical framework.

22. The review was strictly governed by the standards of good evaluations of utility, feasibility, accuracy and neutrality. The project review will apply to the design, implementation and results of the project for each of its Outcomes.
23. Project design: the project formulation and design were assessed by analyzing the ProDoc to determine whether the strategy is proving effective in achieving the desired results; the proposed indicators and targets were critically analyzed to assess whether they meet "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) criteria; and finally, how other broader aspects of the development concept have been integrated into the project design.
24. Progress in the achievement of results: the progress made by the project was analyzed for each of its results. The GEF monitoring tools that were provided to the evaluators were reviewed. The mid-term progress towards the achievement of the objectives and each outcome of the project was evaluated.
25. Project implementation and adaptive management: aspects related to management mechanisms, work planning, financing and co-financing, monitoring and evaluation systems at project level, stakeholder involvement, information and communication were assessed.
26. Sustainability: the likelihood that project benefits will last over time after project completion was assessed. Risks likely to be faced by the project were examined to ensure that the results will continue when the project is completed.

### **2.3 Ethics**

27. The evaluation was conducted in adherence to the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations' and GEF and UNDP policies on monitoring and evaluation. The evaluators safeguarded the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing data collection and reporting. The evaluators also ensured the security of information collected before and after the evaluation, protocols followed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of information sources.

### **2.4 Limitations of the evaluation**

28. The evaluation process faced two limitations. The first limitation was the timely access to quality and organized information on the project. Information required for the review

was requested before the start of the mission and even as the mission ended, there were still some information not provided which were later updated for consideration by the MTR team. The gaps were partially filled through structured interviews with the stakeholders and reflected in the review report. The second limitation relates to the number of days assigned to the international consultant's mission, considering the extent of the project and the time needed to mobilize within the intervention landscapes. This second limitation was somehow mitigated by the extensive field mission that was carried out by the national consultant, covering all Dzongkhags of the project landscapes.

## **2.5 MTR Report Structure**

29. The MTR report is structured in three levels, beginning with this introductory chapter to the evaluation and its methodological process. A second level, covering chapters 2, 3 and 4, presents the evaluation results for each stage of the project life cycle. The main findings and analysis of the evaluation are summarized in the final chapter, presenting conclusions and recommendations.

## **3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

### **3.1 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional and political factors relevant to the objective and scope of the project**

1. Bhutan's mountainous terrain spread across alpine, temperate, and subtropical agro-ecological zones makes it one of the biodiversity hotspots and an ideal ecotourism destination. Despite its small size (38,394 km<sup>2</sup>), the country harbors almost 6,000 species of vascular and non-vascular plants of which 144 are endemic, 739 species of birds, and 200 species of mammals, 27 of which are globally threatened. These include Bengal tiger (IUCN Red-List: EN), snow leopard (VU), clouded leopard (VU), Red panda (EN), Asian elephant (EN), Himalayan black bear (VU), takin (VU), golden langur (EN), capped langur (VU), Himalayan musk deer (EN) and the critically endangered pygmy hog (CR). The entire country is encompassed within one of WWF's 35 global priority ecoregions (the Eastern Himalayas) and hosts 23 Important Bird Areas covering 26% of the country and three Ramsar sites have been identified or declared. The formal

review of Key Biodiversity Areas for Bhutan has just begun, but over half of Bhutan is already set aside as protected areas (PAs) connected by biological corridors.

30. Despite myriad challenges, Bhutan has achieved sustained socio-economic growth since its first plan in 1961. However, economic growth has been challenged by COVID pandemic and recovery from the pandemic for all sectors has been slow. Complex challenges of ecosystem degradation, biodiversity losses, and climate change needed to be addressed to avoid higher economic and human costs, and ecotourism is seen as a potential green solution to these problems. Due to rich cultural and natural heritage, Bhutan is considered as one of the top travel destinations in the world. However, despite nature being one of two main attractions for tourists coming to Bhutan (the other being culture), nature-based tourism is under-developed and has accounted for only 12% of tourism activities.

### **3.2 Problems that the project sought to address.**

31. The many direct pressures on biodiversity identified in the NBSAP include land-use conversion, forest fires, over-extraction of timber and fuelwood, overgrazing, forest offenses and wildlife poaching, unsustainable agricultural practices, pollution, invasive species, and human-wildlife conflict. Indirect pressures include climate change, population, and poverty. Also, the project identified the following key barriers affecting the biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and forest management:
  - Barrier 1: Inadequate policies, legislative framework, tools and capacity to enable green development at the local level.
  - Barrier 2: Insufficient capacity and knowledge to apply best practices in sustainable rangeland and forest management and biodiversity conservation by local stakeholders at the landscape scale.
  - Barrier 3: Insufficient linkage between livelihoods and sustainable rangeland and forest management and biodiversity conservation.
  - Barrier 4. Inadequate knowledge management and M&E systems for green development.

### **3.3 Project description and strategy: objective, products and desired outcomes, description of places where it is developed.**

32. The project objective is 'Ecotourism development mainstreams biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan.' To achieve this objective, the project implements three project Components: 1) Enabling and coordinated policy and institutional framework for ecotourism; 2) Demonstration of innovative and diversified ecotourism landscapes that support human-wildlife coexistence 3) Ecotourism capacity, promotion, knowledge management, and M&E.

### **3.4 Project execution mechanisms: project's Board of Directors brief description, agreements with main execution partners, etc.**

33. The project is implemented under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Royal Government of Bhutan. The Implementing Partner (IP) for this project is the Department of Tourism, erstwhile Tourism Council of Bhutan. The IP is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources.

34. The Project is governed by a Project Steering Committee 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 grievance. The Project Steering Committee has the following composition:

- Ms. Tashi Wangmo, Secretary, MoICE, Chairperson
- Mr. Dorji Dhradhul, Director General, DOT – Member and Project Director
- Mr. Mohamad Younus, Resident Representative, UNDP Bhutan – Member
- Mr. T.N Sharma, Specialist, Ministry of Finance, Member
- Mr. Lobzang Dorji, Director, DoFPS – Member
- Dasho Babu Ram Sherpa, Dzongdag, Trashiyangtse – Member
- Dasho Kezang Jigme, Dzongdag, Zhemgang – Member
- Mr. Tshewang Dorji, Representative Committee of Tourism Associations – Member
- Mr. Tashi Tenzin, Project Manager, PMU, TCB – Member Secretary

35. The project is executed by the Project Management Unit (PMU), led by the project director, project manager, project technical specialist, M&E officer, project coordinator,



a project accountant, and a Dzongkhag/circuit focal. Additionally, the project is supported by UNDP through staff in Country Office and at regional and headquarter levels as and when requested by the PMU and with approval from GEF.

### **3.5 Project timing and milestones**

- Project start: August 11, 2021
- First Disbursement Date: Oct 18, 2021
- Inception Workshop: Nov 18, 2021
- Mid-Term Review: February 1, 2024
- Final Evaluation: May 11, 2026
- Project Closure: Aug 11, 2026

### **3.6 Main stakeholders: summary list**

- Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE)
- Department of Tourism, (MoICE)
- Department of Forest and Park Services, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
- Bhutan for Life
- Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Nature
- World Wildlife Fund Bhutan
- UNDP Bhutan
- Guide Association of Bhutan
- Handicrafts Association of Bhutan
- Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan
- Tarayana Foundation
- Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators

## **4 FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Project Strategy**

#### **4.1.1 Project Design**

36. The project formulation and design were developed in a participatory manner, targeting institutional stakeholder participation with relatively adequate levels of appropriation from national and local institutions, private sector representatives and institutional CSO representing the tourism sector. While some of the communities were not directly consulted, it was assumed that the local governments (gewog and thromde) represented the interest of the communities.
37. Project design started back in 2017 and was later reviewed and updated due to the COVID pandemic prior to submission to the GEF. All interviewees confirm the project is even more relevant now than when it was formulated, as it is considered as part of the Post Covid green recovery efforts of the government. The project is aligned with high level national priorities and responds to national policies and plans related to tourism, environment, and economic development. Interviewees acknowledged this finding.
38. The project is aligned with high level national priorities and responds in general terms to national policies related to tourism, environment, and economic development. The project complements the government's capacities and needs in further strengthening the tourism sector through diversification of products and services as well as new ecotourism destinations with the goal of increasing tourist arrivals in the country.
39. However, project design failed to assume that there was a common understanding and sufficient capacity in the ecotourism concept and practice within the implementing partner and other key stakeholders in general.
40. The project design also overestimated existing national capacities to define, design and apply ecotourism in Bhutan. The implementation arrangements assumed the implementing partner would have the capacity to ensure full time dedication of specialized staff, in a context where continuous rotation and reduction of manpower within the Department of Tourism would not occur.
41. The selection of landscapes and intervention sites is one of the strengths identified in project design. Interviewees at the landscape level acknowledge the project as an opportunity to diversify and decentralize the flows of visitation to the country which are

concentrated in the north, opening new circuits, and unlocking the untapped tourism potential of eastern Bhutan.

42. However, this decision posed an important challenge in terms of achieving the expected goals, as these landscapes are still in an early stage of tourism development, facing relative isolation from the tourist circuits, limited infrastructure, accessibility, and market constraints. Therefore, project design underestimated the complexity related to achieving the expected targets in landscapes where tourism value chains are not mature.
43. Developing new tourist destinations require a longer-term approach that demands intensive focus into building the ecosystem which will connect the value chain, including tour operators, tourist guides, hotels, transportation, promotion, food, and entertainment, etc. It takes a longstanding effort to build a service culture within communities with either subsistence or agricultural backgrounds. With this regard, the project failed to incorporate capacity building, communication, and knowledge management outputs.
44. Most of the stakeholders interviewed confirmed that the selection of the implementing partner was adequate, as it ensures appropriation and higher leverage to ensure participation from the tourism industry. However, the Department of Tourism holds relatively limited experience implementing projects financed through international cooperation. Moreover, during these past years, the sector has been affected by institutional reforms as part of the national transformation initiative including reduction in manpower as well as transferring the former Tourism Council of Bhutan under the MoICE as the Department of Tourism, leading into difficulties to ensure exclusive and full dedication of PMU staff.

#### **4.1.2 Results framework**

45. The formulation of indicators proved to be ambitious considering the baseline situation of the prioritized landscapes considering the tourism baseline of these landscapes, with modest flows of visitors, relative isolation from the tourist routes and limited capacities of communities and private sector. Moreover, improving livelihoods and creating new economies in communities that are not familiar with the service sector demand a more patient and careful approach. Under these circumstances, project expectations underestimated the time and investments needed to develop new products and tourism destinations (Table 4).

46. In general terms, indicators are not described and measured regularly to inform project decision making, the monitoring and evaluation plan does not add value as its just recreates the contents of the results framework. Out of the 15 indicators, eight present weaknesses in terms of the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

**Table 4 Indicators that do not meet the SMART criteria**

Indicator	S	M	A	R	T	Commentary
1: Number of direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Lacks specificity, does not provide definition and methodology to measure.
2: Area of landscapes under improved management for ecotourism and biodiversity conservation	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Ambiguous formulation of areas outside of PAs under improved management. Target unrealistic.
4: Number of indirect project beneficiaries indirectly benefitting from improved ecotourism or biodiversity conservation.	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Needs to be specific; does not explain how targets were estimated nor how to measure.
9: Extent of livelihoods improvement from ecotourism	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Does not present baseline, ambiguous formulation. Target estimates lack technical analysis and ambition.
10: Targeted reduction of threats to biodiversity and human- wildlife coexistence	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Does not present baseline, not specific definition of "habitat improved". Unrealistic targets.
11: Extent of revenues / financial flows generated for biodiversity conservation from ecotourism.	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Does not provide complete quantitative financial baseline. Unrealistic targets.
12: Level of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of target stakeholders.	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	No baseline; lack of ambition in targets.
15: Number of best practices and key project lessons documented.	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Not relevant as no real impact or transformation in knowledge and communication is measured.

## 4.2 Progress Towards Results

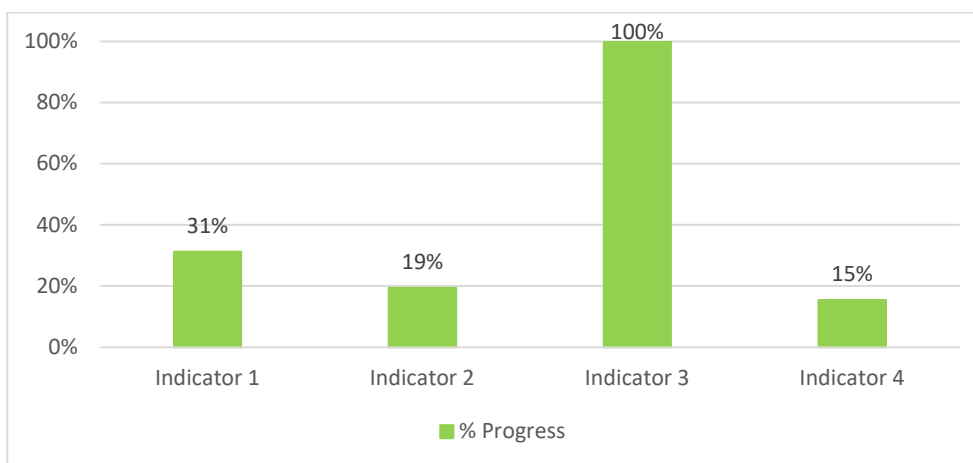
### 4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

Progress towards achieving the project objective	Moderately Unsatisfactory MU
--	------------------------------

47. In broad terms, the objective indicators reveal that the project is relatively distant from achieving its proposed goals and overarching objectives. External factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic have significantly impeded field activities, contributing to this disparity. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the project has commenced yielding some outcomes after a three-year period (Figure 2).

48. The objective indicators currently stand at 41.5% completion (Figure 2). Notably, one of the four indicators, linked to the METT scorecard, is reported with 100% compliance.
49. The project reports a Bhutan METT+ Scorecard; additionally, the project also reports METT scores pertaining to the specific improvements related to better ecotourism management (revenue generation, visitor management, community engagement and threat reduction) by selecting relevant guidance from the METT assessment sheets.
50. Furthermore, two additional indicators at the objective level are progressing at a notably sluggish pace toward their targets. Indicator 1 indicates minimal advancement on average, currently standing at 31.2%, particularly concerning the number of direct project beneficiaries. Progress falls below the average, particularly concerning the national private sector and local private sector personnel. Conversely, progress is approaching the target for Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) Officials.
51. Conversely, indicator 2, focusing on the area of landscapes under improved management for ecotourism and biodiversity conservation, lags in reaching its target, with only 19.4% progress. This shortfall is attributed to the delayed identification of ecotourism products.
52. Due to the lack of a formal M&E system, the evaluators used the PIR 2023 for this evaluation and supplemented by additional information provided during the MTR. While quarterly reports are published, they are updates on activities and provide no information on the progress on indicators.

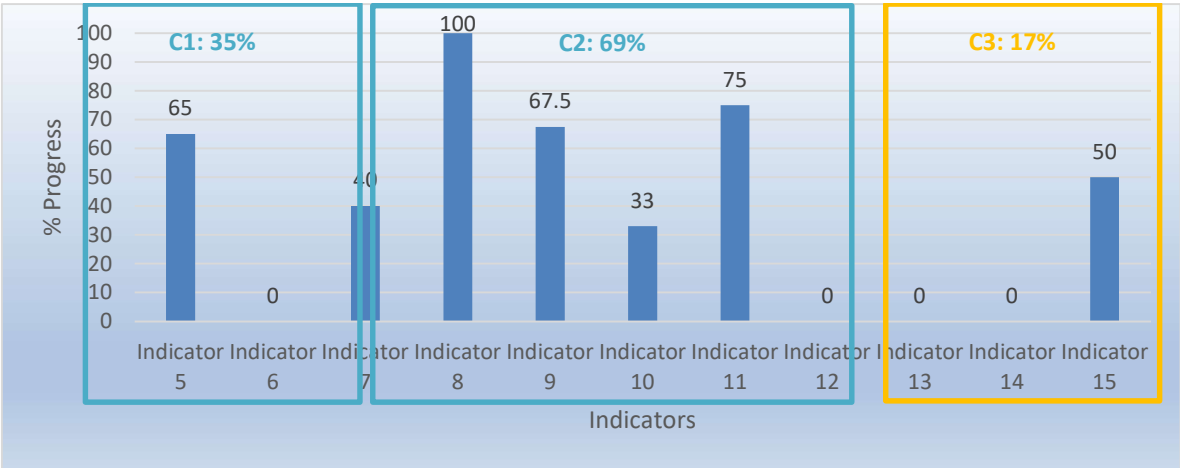
**Figure 2 Project progress based on its objective indicators**



**Source: PIR, 2023; SPR Q4, 2023 and updates provided during MTR**

Regarding progress by component, it is observed that Component 2 exhibits a relatively higher performance rate of 69%. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that this assessment is nuanced by the fact that required data on annual household income for indicator 9 hasn't been collected and that data for reduction in loss of wildlife through snares is not available. (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 Project progress based on its component indicators**



Source: PIR, 2023; Standard Progress Report Q4, 2023 and additional information provided by PMU.

**Table 5 Progress on Objective Indicators**

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End- of- project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 1: a) Number of direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender Total b) People living in demonstration landscape Gewogs c) Local private sector personnel d) National private sector personnel e) Local RGoB Officials f) National RGoB Officials</p>	<p>a) 0 b) 0 c) 0 d) 0 e) 0 f) 0</p>	<p>a) 851 people (398 female) b) 713 people (344 female) c) 3 people (0 female) d) 18 people (2 female) e) 70 people (9 female) f) 56 people (14 female)</p>	<p>a) 8.233 (4,266 female) b) 5.181 (2,592 female) c) 114 (76 female) d) 2.775 (1,564 female) e) 105 (12 female) f) 60 (22 female)</p>	<p>a) 16,467 people (8,534 female) b) 10,361 (5,185 female) c) 227 (152 female) d) 5,550 (3128 female) e) 210 (25 female) f) 119 (44 female)</p>	<p>a) 10292 people (5178 female) b) 8690 people (4493 female) c) 1204 people (661 female) d) 35 people (8 female) e) 311 people (72 female) f) 52 people (16 female)</p>	<p>31,2%</p>
<p>Indicator 2: Area of landscapes under improved management for ecotourism and biodiversity conservation a) Total b) Terrestrial protected areas: Area under improved management effectiveness (Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary) (see Indicator 3 for METT targets) c) Areas outside of PAs under improved management for biodiversity (as measured by adoption and implementation of integrated landscape-level tourism plan and site-specific tourism management plans with standard environmental and</p>	<p>a) 0 ha b) 0 ha c) 0 ha</p>	<p>a) 1,500 ha b) 744 ha c) 756 ha</p>	<p>a) 297,101 ha b) 226,200 ha c) 70,901 ha</p>	<p>a) 368,002 ha b) 226,200 ha c) 141,802 ha</p>	<p>a) 44534.13 ha (15%) b) 21958.9 ha (10%) c) 23575.23 ha (33.2%)</p>	<p>19.4%</p>



Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End- of- project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
social safeguards in place to benefit biodiversity						
Indicator 3: Management (METT) at Bumdeling and Sakteng WS a) Overall METT score (GEF Core Indicator 1.2) b) Tourism specific score (Maximum = 39). Specific improvements related to better ecotourism management (particularly on revenue generation, visitor management, community engagement and threat reduction).	a) BWS = 67. SWS = 72 b) BWS = 22; SWS = 24	The GEF-& METT will be conducted during the MTR which will be in Jan-Feb 2024.	a) BWS = 78; SWS = 80 b) BWS = 28; SWS = 28	a) BWS = 86; SWS = 86 b) BWS = 31; SWS = 31	a) BWS=80, SWS=81.3 b) BWS=31, SWS=25.	100%
Indicator 4: Number of indirect project beneficiaries indirectly benefitting from improved ecotourism or biodiversity conservation a) Total b) People in local communities c) Private sector personnel d) RGoB Officials	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0 d) 0	a)1,396 people (774 female) b)950 people (560 female) c)390 people (195 female) d)56 people (19 female)	a) 50,129 (24,445 female) b) 48,816 (23,952 female) c) 889 (416 female) d) 425 (77 female)	a) 101,444 (49,444 female) b) 97,631 (47,903 female) c) 2,963 (1,387 female) d) 850 (154 female)	a)1,396 people (774 female) b)950 people (560 female) c)390 people (195 female) d)56 people (19 female)	15,4%
Green = Achieved	Yellow: On track for achievement		Red= Risk of non-compliance at project closure			

***Component 1: Enabling and coordinated policy and institutional framework for ecotourism and wildlife conservation***

**Outcome 1: Effective policy and institutional framework for ecotourism that incentivizes and integrates biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector.**

53. Progress towards Component 1 stands at 35% (Table 6). The project's outcomes were impacted by a government's decision to develop a long-term tourism development plan instead of the Ecotourism Master Plan, initially endorsed by this project where ecotourism is expected to be covered as one of the offerings. The MTR team was informed that the draft Long-Term Tourism Development plan has been presented to the PSC and submitted to the Ministry.
54. The multi-sectoral Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) has been established with the intention that this body will provide technical advisory services to the PSC. The evaluators have not been provided with details on how this has been achieved. Some of the MTAC members were of the view that the MTAC meetings have not been regular and there has been no value addition of this body as originally envisioned.
55. Regarding indicator 5, the project pivoted from developing an Ecotourism Master Plan to contributing to the formulation of Bhutan's Long-Term Tourism Plan. The alteration received endorsement from both the Project Steering Committee and the RTA.
56. In the absence of the Ecotourism Masterplan, the evaluators noted the lack of guidance on the products and services to be developed resulting in the project investments deviating from the main objective of mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism development activities.
57. Delays were encountered with Indicator 6, primarily attributed to the protracted process of drafting the long-term tourism plan. While it was anticipated that plan approval would catalyze a review of the operationalized mechanism by late 2023 for subsequent adoption, no progress towards adoption has been officially reported to date. Simultaneously, efforts are underway to devise the modality and management plan for park fee retention through BIOFIN co-financing, particularly within Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and Jigme Dorji National Park. Indicator 7 confronts delays owing to the absence of a green certification standard. In the absence of national standards, 16 tour operators received Travelife Partner Certification, while no homestay or hotel was certified. A Green Hotels standard was recently adopted, Consequently, tour operators and hotels will undergo certification in alignment with this standard.

**Table 6 Progress on Component 1 Indicators**

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 5: Extent to which biodiversity conservation is integrated into tourism policy:</p> <p>a) Status of establishment of National Ecotourism Master Plan with national level Multi-sector Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector</p> <p>b) Number of guidelines for ecotourism incorporating biodiversity conservation</p>	<p>a) No strategic direction on ecotourism development. Tourism policy under development. TCB does not include representation from the environment sector and protected areas.</p> <p>b) 12 guidelines are under the implementation of which 6 need revision to include ecotourism principles and safeguards</p>	<p>a) Long-term tourism plan for Bhutan is at the final draft stage, and MTAC established</p> <p>b) 3 existing guidelines revised and adopted by TCB; 2 new guidelines developed and adopted (66.6%)</p>	<p>a) Long-term tourism plan adopted by the TCB and being piloted in the demonstration landscape, with MTAC established.</p> <p>b) 6 existing guidelines revised and adopted by TCB; 6 new guidelines developed and adopted</p>	<p>a) Long-term tourism plan under implementation across Bhutan, with MTAC fully functional with clear governance and operational mechanisms</p> <p>b) 18 Guidelines under implementation (6 existing without revision; 6 existing with revision and 6 new guidelines)</p>	<p>5.a. Long Term Tourism Plan in draft stage, no specifics on eco-tourism, concessionary frameworks, mainstreaming biodiversity, and plough-back funds to biodiversity conservation. MTAC established meetings conducted (30%).</p> <p>5.b. A total of 8 guidelines and checklists developed and revised (100%).</p> <p>Combined unweighted Score 65%</p>	65%

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 6: Extent of operationalized mechanisms and guidelines for enhancing revenue generation for biodiversity through ecotourism</p> <p>a) Status of establishment and implementation of ecotourism concessions framework</p> <p>b) Status of adoption and implementation of operational guidelines for Park Fees, Activity Fees and User Fees</p>	<p>a) A conceptual framework for concessions mechanism developed and under discussion</p> <p>b) Operational mechanisms for sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation at local levels do not exist except for visitor fees collected at the Royal Takin Preserve in Thimphu and a certain percent of cordyceps collection permit fees are deposited in the HWC endowment fund. No formal mechanism in place for retaining such revenues for local biodiversity conservation</p>	<p>a) 0 concessions mechanism finalized and adopted by Cabinet and operational guidelines for concessionary licensing arrangements within and outside Pas developed.</p> <p>b) 0 operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at local level developed and approved.</p>	<p>a) Concessions mechanism finalized and adopted by Cabinet and operational guidelines for concessionary licensing arrangements within and outside Pas developed.</p> <p>b) Operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at local level developed and approved</p>	<p>a) At least two concession-based initiatives operational in the demonstration landscape with lessons shared for national replication and upscaling</p> <p>b) Operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at</p>	<p>a) 0 concessions mechanism finalized and adopted by Cabinet and operational guidelines for concessionary licensing arrangements within and outside Pas developed.</p> <p>b) 0 operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at local level developed and approved.</p>	0%

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
				local level implemented		
Indicator 7: Number of entities certified under ecotourism certification schemes delivering environmental and social safeguards	a) 0 tour operators certified b) 0 hotels certified as green hotels; 0 homestays certified as green homestays	a) 0 tour operators certified in demonstration landscape b) 0 hotels and lodges certified as green; 0 homestays certified as green in demonstration landscape	a) 20 tour operators certified in demonstration landscape b) 20 hotels and lodges certified as green; 5 homestays certified as green in demonstration landscape	a) 50 tour operators certified across Bhutan b) 70 hotels and lodges and 30 homestays certified as green across Bhutan	a) 16 tour operators certified as Travelife Partner (80%) b) 0 hotels and lodges certified as green; 0 homestays certified as green in demonstration landscape	40%

***Component 2: Demonstration of innovative and diversified ecotourism landscapes that support human-wildlife coexistence.***

**Outcome 2: Wildlife-based ecotourism strengthens biodiversity conservation, enhances livelihoods and human wildlife co-existence, reduces HWC and deters poaching and illegal trade and other biodiversity threats.**

58. Component 2 demonstrates a progress rate of 69% across its five indicators, on average. While one indicator is poised to achieve its mid-term target, two others have fallen short of expected outcomes and are behind schedule. Moreover, one objective was not slated for mid-term evaluation and reporting (Table 7).
59. Indicator 8 highlights the establishment of the Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce (LECT). Additionally, landscape-level wildlife conservation committees have been established in BWS and SWS, with finalized terms of reference set for implementation commencing in Year 2.
60. Indicator 9 is progressing satisfactorily towards meeting its targets. The midterm target of increasing household income by 10% is close to being achieved. Furthermore, five nature-based enterprises have been established across various regions. The MTR notes the absence of regular monitoring of increase in livelihood as a concern that needs to be addressed through an improved M&E system.
61. Indicator 10 exhibits progress, albeit lacking clear percentage figures for targets a. and c. The data provided to the MTR team on reduced HWC incidences lacked clear baselines. Implemented activities include the installation of a 5.5 km wire fence at Yangbari in Mongar Dzongkhag to mitigate crop depredation and the testing of a solar corral fence in Zhemgang to prevent livestock loss to wildlife, particularly from tiger depredation. During the MTR, it was pointed out that % figures for indicator 10.a & c are not dependable as M&E indicators and recommended changing to “person-hours dedicated to SMART patrolling” as a better indicator.
62. Indicator 11 is on track. It is anticipated that new mechanisms developed under Component 1 will be integrated into the business plan and subsequently piloted in BWS and SWS.

**Table 7 Progress on Component 2 Indicators**

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 8: The status of establishment of multi-sector coordination mechanisms</p> <p>a) The integration of biodiversity conservation (including safeguarding guidelines and standards) into ecotourism development and operation</p> <p>b) Cross-agency cooperation across nature conservation and law enforcement sectors to combat poaching and human-wildlife conflict</p> <p>Baseline: No such multi-sector mechanism exists</p>	No such multi-sector mechanism exists	<p>a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce established and not trained in the application of safeguarding guidelines and standards yet.</p> <p>b) The Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees established in BWS and SWS</p>	<p>a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce established and trained in the application of safeguarding guidelines and standards</p> <p>b) Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees established and landscape level baseline on HWC and poaching provides information for SMART patrolling</p>	<p>a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce applying safeguarding guidelines and standards to ecotourism businesses, and lessons learned shared with national level MTAC for upscaling</p> <p>b) Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees fully operational and providing a model for national replication</p>	<p>a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce established and trained in the application of safeguarding guidelines and standards yet.</p> <p>b) The Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees established in BWS and SWS</p>	100%
<p>Indicator 9: Extent of livelihoods improvement from ecotourism:</p> <p>a) % of local households within the demonstration landscape communities benefitting from ecotourism</p> <p>b) Number of jobs through ecotourism in landscape</p>	<p>a) TBC in Year 1</p> <p>b) 1,559 (estimated as 30% of employment baseline)</p> <p>c) 119 (estimated as 50% of tourism related enterprises baseline)</p> <p>d) TBC in Year 1, with indicative baseline of</p>	<p>a) working on the baseline</p> <p>b) 1,653 (It is not reported how many women) (includes 29 new jobs created; 17 = women)</p> <p>c) 124 (5 new)</p>	<p>a) 30% (369 households)</p> <p>b) 1,715 (857 = women) (includes 156 new jobs created; 78 = women)</p> <p>c) 137 (18 new)</p> <p>d) At least 10%</p>	<p>a) 50% (1,230 households)</p> <p>b) 2,027 (1,013 = women) (includes 468 new jobs created; 234 = women)</p> <p>c) 179 (60 new)</p>	<p>a) The project reported 444 households.</p> <p>b) 74 jobs created 52 females</p> <p>c) 5 new enterprises</p> <p>d) Project reported additional revenue</p>	43.75%

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
Gewogs, segregated by gender (total including baseline employment; number of new jobs created) c) Number of local nature/wildlife-based economic enterprises related to ecotourism d) Average annual household income (\$US)	\$2,000 (as defined by the Bhutan Living Standards Survey)	d) USD 5,143	increase in household income (\$2200)	d) At least 20% increase in household income	of USD 189 per household per annum in the GEF investment areas corresponding to 9.48% increase from the baseline of USD 2000.	
Indicator 10: Targeted reduction of threats to biodiversity and human-wildlife coexistence a) % reduction in annual incidences of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) impacting crops, livestock and people in targeted communities within the demonstration landscape b) Habitats improved for flagship species in the demonstration landscape c) Reduction in the incidence of wildlife loss through snares	a) Local communities in the demonstration landscape are currently not implementing measures according to the national HWC Management Strategy. (HWC incidences in target communities to be established in Year 1) b) Habitats are under threat with no conservation measures c) Snares are difficult to locate and wildlife is often caught by poachers through snare devices (Baseline for loss of wildlife through snares will be determined in Year 1 through HWC baseline)	a) % is not reported b) 4 Habitat enrichment plans prepared for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, black-necked crane and golden langur c) % is not reported	a) At least 15% reduction in annual HWC incidences in the target communities b) Habitat enrichment plans prepared for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, black-necked crane, golden langur and golden mahseer c) Reduction in the loss of wildlife through snares by 50%	a) At least 50% reduction in annual HWC incidences in the target communities b) Habitats improved for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, blacknecked crane, golden langur and golden mahseer c) Reduction in the loss of wildlife through snares by >90%	a) 10% reduction in HWC estimated by RPs, no accurate information provided. b) 4 Habitat enrichment plans prepared for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, black-necked crane and golden langur c) % is not reported.	33%



Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 11: Extent of revenues / financial flows generated for biodiversity conservation from ecotourism:</p> <p>a) Status of established financial mechanisms and financial flows (\$US) for biodiversity conservation inside PAs</p> <p>b) Status of established financial mechanisms and financial flows (\$US) for biodiversity conservation outside PAs</p>	<p>a) Entry fees implemented in Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary only which is deposited in general government revenue and not retained for local biodiversity conservation (local collection in 2019 estimated at US \$ 700)</p> <p>b) Khoma Gewog started collecting Nu. 50 from each visitor to Singye Dzong which is maintained within the Gewog Administration for waste management along the Singye Dzong trail (collection in the second half of 2019 estimated at US\$ 300)</p>	<p>a) 0 mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted in BWS and SWS</p> <p>b) 0 mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted outside PAs and at least 2 Youth/community enterprises established demonstrating sustainable nature-based business operational and contributing to the sustainable management of domestic tourism within the demonstration landscape</p>	<p>a) new mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted in BWS and SWS</p> <p>b) New mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted outside PAs and at least 2 Youth/community enterprises established demonstrating sustainable nature-based business operational and contributing to the sustainable management of domestic tourism within the demonstration landscape</p>	<p>a) At least \$45,000/year generated in BWS and SWS through new mechanisms on financial flows for biodiversity conservation inside PAs.</p> <p>b) At least \$155,000/year generated in demonstration landscape areas outside PAs through new mechanisms on financial flows for biodiversity conservation outside PAs including nature-based ecotourism</p>	<p>a) 2 mechanisms developed in Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and Jigme Dorji Wangchuk National Park by BIOFIN (UNDP) – cofinancing for this project, ready to be implemented in BWS and SWS. Implementation will start as soon as international arrivals start in these two Pas.</p> <p>b) 0 mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted outside PAs and at least 3 Youth/community enterprises established demonstrating sustainable nature-based business operational and contributing to the sustainable management of domestic tourism within the</p>	75%

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
					demonstration landscape	
Indicator 12: Level of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of target stakeholders towards wildlife conservation and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism, as measured by KAP surveys: a) KAP score for communities in the demonstration landscape (gender-disaggregated) b) KAP score for private sector in the demonstration landscape (gender-disaggregated)	(KAP baseline to be completed in Year 1)	(No mid-term target. KAP survey will not be repeated at mid-term)	(No mid-term target. KAP survey will not be repeated at mid-term)	a) 20% improvement from baseline b) 20% improvement from baseline	(No mid-term target. KAP survey will not be repeated at mid-term)	N/A

***Component 3: Ecotourism capacity, promotion, knowledge management and M&E***

**Outcome 3: Effective capacity, marketing and knowledge exchange to establish Bhutan as a model ecotourism destination.**

63. Component 3 demonstrates a progress rate of 17%. While one of the three indicators has achieved its mid-term target, the remaining two indicators have not. These were anticipated to be completed by the conclusion of December 2023; however, as of the finalization of this document, no progress has been reported (Table 8).
64. Delays were encountered with Indicator 13 due to the stagnation of the tourism industry amid the pandemic, leading to the deferment of the tourism survey. Additionally, the national tourism monitor, initially slated for completion by the end of 2023, remains unpublished. Nevertheless, recent observations indicate a positive trend with an increase in visitors to the eastern regions.
65. Similarly, indicator 14 is overdue and was scheduled for implementation during the MTR; The MTR team was informed that the capacity development scorecard will be assessed after the MTR.
66. Indicator 15 has successfully achieved its target, surpassing expectations with the development of 14 good practices, far exceeding the initial target of 3 practices. However, specific figures regarding the number of downloads are not reported; views currently total approximately 51,382. Moreover, strategic partnerships were forged, including collaboration with Kuensel, the national newspaper, to produce articles and interviews on ecotourism and biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, collaborative efforts with local artists and the Bhutan Transport Authority culminated in a bus campaign aimed at promoting biodiversity awareness and ecotourism across six scenic districts. Additionally, Bhutan Broadcasting Services aired monthly talk shows addressing sustainable tourism and conservation issues. Furthermore, a partnership with the NGO READ Bhutan facilitated educational initiatives for children regarding black-necked crane conservation, resulting in the creation of a children's book authored and illustrated by children from Bumdeling, Trashigang.

**Table 8 Progress on Component 3 Indicators**

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End- of- project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
Indicator 13: % of international tourists who have opted for nature-based tourism products including trekking, homestays, birding, rafting, endurance/adventure sports – as measured by the National Tourism Monitor	12.86% international tourists (actual as per Tourism Monitor 2018)	has not been monitored	15% international tourists	20% international tourists	has not been monitored	NA
Indicator 14: Capacity of national and local stakeholders to mainstream biodiversity into ecotourism development and operation as measured by the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard a) National level (Relevant National laws and policies; Agencies include TCB, DoFPS, RSPN): b) Local level: (BWS, SWS, five landscape Dzongkhags)	a) 29% b) 27 %	a) 0 % b) 0%	a) 36 % b) 31 %	a) 72 % b) 63%	a) 0 % b) 0%	NA

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Targets	End- of- project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating
<p>Indicator 15: Number of best practices and key project lessons documented and shared through TCB and project website and social media for upscaling including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>14 best practices developed, and no downloads of project documents and initial results and lessons learned are reported</p>	<p>At least 3 best practices developed and at least 250 downloads of project documents and initial results and lessons learned (Ecotourism Master Plan, Ecotourism Concessional Framework, Ecotourism Guidelines, HWC policy Briefs)</p>	<p>At least 6 best practices developed and at least 800 downloads of project documents, results and lessons learned (MT target list, plus management plans for products and services in the demonstration landscapes, flagship species habitat enrichment plans, HWC reduction reports, documents on gender mainstreaming etc.</p>	<p>Considerable communication products have been developed and disseminated. Best practices on river rafting, homestay management, tour operator certification and flyfishing developed and used for training of tourism personnel. 313 trainees attended. No downloads reported.</p>	<p>50%</p>

#### **4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.**

67. The project evaluation team identifies four major barriers that the project must overcome to get back on track to accomplish the expected goals.
68. The first barrier is leadership to mobilize the necessary support to ensure a common understanding of the expected project transformational impact and GEF incremental added value. Implementation needs to be back on track as it was originally planned, ensuring the quality and transformational impact expected. The absence of the Ecotourism Masterplan is a barrier that has left the project without strategic direction.
69. The project outcomes partially hinge upon the government's tourism-related policy environment. A conducive policy framework, including incentives to promote tourism in the eastern region of Bhutan and Zhemgang, is essential for ensuring adequate tourist traffic to project sites and facilitating communities' enhanced livelihoods through ecotourism.
70. At the steering committee level effective leadership is needed to manage expectations related to further redirect resources oriented to strengthen frameworks, capacities, and technical assistance against increasing budget to build additional infrastructure inside or outside of the prioritized landscapes. High level commitment is needed to increase country appropriation, to improve stakeholder participation and ensure adequate integration of implementing partners at landscape level. For example, the human wildlife conflict outputs were implemented in relative insolation to the tourism stream and are not visible in terms of the criteria used for selecting project sites or beneficiaries, nor in terms of the current operation of the infrastructure financed by the GEF.
71. Private sector involvement in the project is primarily limited to contracting for infrastructure development. Reluctance to engage professional private sector entities in infrastructure operation and maintenance has resulted in semi-professional management and missed opportunities for private sector co-financing. Conversely, the private sector perceives project infrastructure as direct competitors due to their late involvement in project planning.
72. The second barrier relates to the gap found in terms of strategic direction to accomplish the major objective of the project which is mainstreaming biodiversity and strengthening the ecotourism concept in Bhutan. While the ultimate project outcome is to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the development of tourism products and services in Bhutan, a key challenge remains in terms of incorporating biodiversity mainstreaming values and principles in the project interventions.

73. Infrastructure financed by the GEF does not meet basic criteria or ecotourism standards, in all cases it could be defined as business-as-usual tourism. Social and environmental safeguards were not monitored appropriately, infrastructure inspected during the field mission did not meet environmental and social standards during design, construction and operation. On the other hand, tourist arrivals in project areas are heavily reliant on the establishment of additional entry and exit points to and from Bhutan. Current entry and exit points at Phuentsholing and Paro pose logistical challenges to destinations in the eastern and central regions due to extended travel times.
74. The third barrier is the capacity of the PMU. The implementation of the project is impeded by staff attrition and the transfer of key personnel, circumstances beyond the control of the project management, as it lacks authority over Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) staff transfers and staff resignations. Consequently, the implementation faced a gap in terms of specialized and full-time dedicated PMU, the most relevant gap is specialized expertise in ecotourism. The capacity of personnel within the project management unit in stakeholder engagement, mobilization, communication strategy development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and due diligence is identified as a significant barrier to the attainment of project objectives.
75. Current M&E does not add value to overall management and requires additional support to define the specific tools and means to ensure informed adaptive management, transparency and quality reports. Strategic communication shall be ensured not at a corporate or institutional levels, but one focused with the communities and beneficiaries, to ensure interventions are tuned with building capacities and changing existing mindsets to strengthen ecotourism culture.
76. The fourth barrier relates to the sustainability of the project. Early engagement and continual involvement of stakeholders at every phase of project implementation are crucial for achieving objectives. Field assessments during the Mid-Term Review (MTR) revealed that stakeholders, especially project beneficiaries, were not included during project planning and construction phases, resulting in reduced preparedness to operate facilities and diminished sense of ownership upon completion. Implementation strategy needs to revert current business-as-usual tourism infrastructure, to tap the potential of ecotourism as a means to further enhance sustained employment opportunities for youth and other vulnerable groups.

## Project implementation and adaptive management

Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Unsatisfactory MU
--	------------------------------

### 4.2.3 Management arrangements

77. Project initiation was affected by a national transformation process involving an in-depth restructuring of institutions, leading into a fusion that incorporated the previously autonomous TCB to its current directorate under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MOICE). The PMU faced challenges related to the uncertainty as well as human resources pooling that resulted from this institutional reform.
78. In terms of adaptive management, the first challenge faced by the project relates to the government decision not to proceed with the ecotourism master plan, instead a long-term tourism plan was to be developed, where ecotourism was a subset of the plan. This situation delayed overall implementation and affected the rest of components and outputs, particularly related to the development of ecotourism products and services.
79. Even though the project results framework does not explicitly commit to building accommodation facilities, the construction of the ecolodge in Berti was possible from the savings achieved during the first implementation period.

### 4.2.4 Work planning

80. The project encountered significant delays in its execution, largely attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 and the national lockdown measures. These disruptions resulted in delays in project activities during the first quarter of 2022. Furthermore, the pandemic prompted a reassessment of the project's objectives, particularly in the realm of tourism. Consequently, the PMU opted to transition from developing an ecotourism master plan to formulating a comprehensive long-term plan spanning a decade (2024-2034). Consequently, the delay in developing the master plan impeded progress in other critical activities, such as the investment framework and ecotourism guidelines and frameworks.
81. In terms of financial planning, while the existence of annual work plans for the first and second years is confirmed, there is a notable absence of updates to the annual budgets to account for project delays. In other words, no revisions to the budget are reported, despite such action being recommended in the 2023 PIR. Additionally, a contributing factor to the low execution rate is the misalignment of financial calendars between the Government of Bhutan (July to June) and the United Nations Development Programme



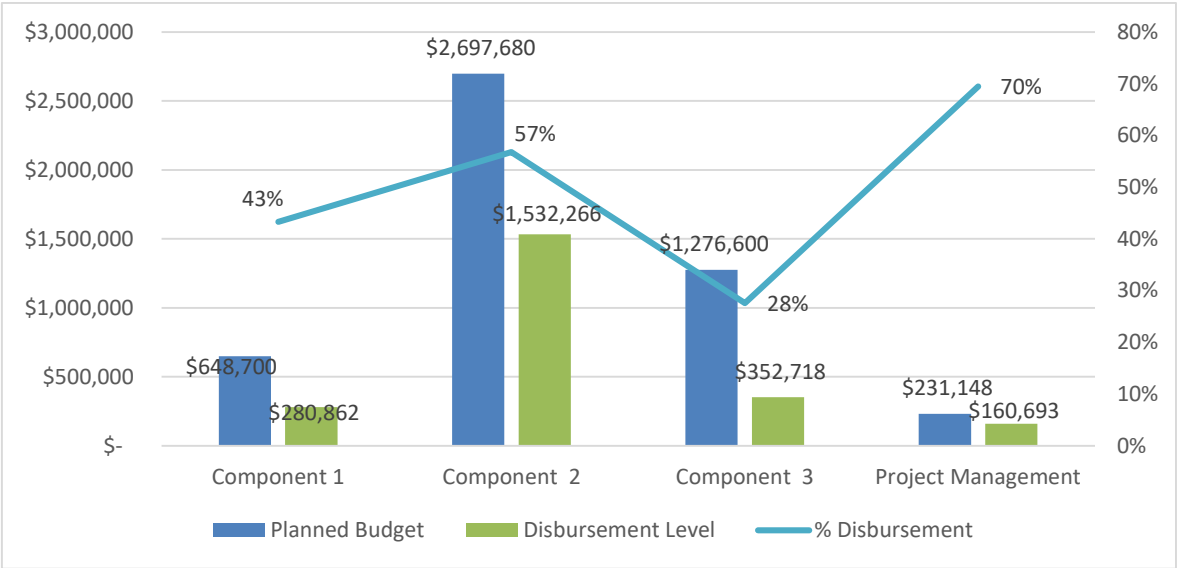
(January to December). This misalignment has created logistical challenges in financial planning and execution, and in expenditure reporting.

**4.2.5 Finance and co-finance**

82. The original project budget equals USD 4.854 million from the GEF for the implementation period. By December 31, 2023, the project disbursed USD 2.326 million which is 48% of the total available budget (**Figure 4**). However, concern was raised about the fact that by the end of 2024 almost 70% of the budget is expected to be executed, assuming full implementation as planned, leaving only USD 1,5 million approximately for the remaining 18 months.

83. In terms of expenditure at outcome level, the second Component reports the highest execution with 57%, followed by component 1, with 43% and Component 3 reports 28%.

**Figure 4 Outcome Budget vs Disbursement**



**Source: Budget monitoring table, 2023**

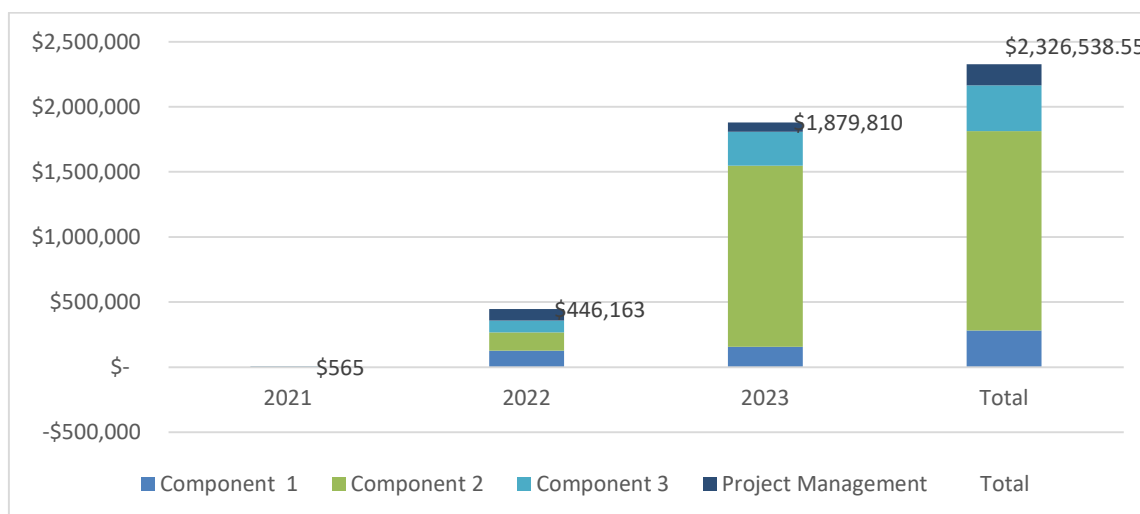
84. The lowest execution is reported in year 2021, in coherence with the startup process and considering implementation started in August. During the following years, execution surpassed USD 0,446 million dollars per year (Figure 5).

85. As part of the financial control, the project prepared progress reports, which included the planned budget and disbursement level for the different activities planned for each component. In the PIRs, the project presented the implementation progress report. The

information corresponded to the comparison of its cumulative progress with the budget approved in the ProDoc, in the UNDP ERP system, and the general ledger expenditure.

86. The above-mentioned tools, due to the quality and frequency of information, allowed the coordination of the project to be kept constantly informed of progress. The reports do not show any relevant problems related to financial management.

**Figure 5 Component wise Expenditure by Year**



**Source: Budget monitoring table, 2023**

87. Financial controls for the project fall under the government's financial and procurement system, which means that they are subjected to the formal protocols for reporting and auditing for all governmental institutions. There were spot checks (HACT assurance activity) for TCB in 2021 & 2023. Project budget is managed by the PMU and is controlled by UNDP according to their institutional guidelines.
88. In terms of co-financing, co-financing letters have been the means of reporting on the co-financing achieved by the project. ProDoc committed an amount of co-financing totaling US\$9.072 million from different donors. According to available information, USD 2.794 million has been mobilized (Table 9), representing 30.80%. On the other hand, there are new actors like the Zhemgang Dzongkhag and the Divisional Forest Offices that provided significant in-kind support to the project, which was not included in the Table 9-original co-financing table.

**Table 9 Cofinancing table**

Cofinancing Source	Name of co-financing institution	Type Cofinancing	Amount of Co-Financing Confirmed at Time of CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Amount of actual Cofinancing contributed at the time of the Mid-Term Review (US\$)	% of total expected amount of Cofinancing
Recipient Country Government	Tourism Council of Bhutan	In-kind	1,111,000	65,000	5.85%
		Public Investment	1,827,000	639,000	34.98%
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Department of Forests and Park Services	In-kind	524,000	266,761.70	50.91%
Recipient Country Government	Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental conservation	In-kind	500,000	0	0%
Recipient Country Government	Bhutan for Life	In-kind	1,792,500	1,373,749	36.57%
		Public Investment	1,964,000		
Non-governmental organization	World Wildlife Fund	Grant	1,195,884	346,600	28.98%
Donor agency	UNDP	Grant	158,178	103,346.87	65.34%
Total			<b>9,072,562</b>	<b>2,794,457.57</b>	30.80%

#### **4.2.6 Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**

89. The ProDoc presents, in general terms, a monitoring and evaluation plan, which includes the main milestones and procedures established for GEF-UNDP projects' implementation in each country. It establishes that the M&E will comply with the provisions of the UNDP POPP (Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures) and in accordance with the GEF M&E policy and other relevant GEF policies.
90. The ProDoc establishes that the project will comply with additional M&E requirements, such as inception workshop and report, PIRs, lessons learned and knowledge generation, GEF Focal Area Tracking Tools, MTR, terminal evaluation report and final report. The ProDoc presents a specific budget for its implementation, which is an adequate cost due to the complexity associated with the project indicators. A key aspect of the plan is that it allocates a budget for safeguards monitoring and takes special care to report beneficiaries in a gender-segregated manner.
91. Also, the ProDoc presents the Annex 5: Monitoring Plan that includes the information for each indicator mid-term and end-of-period targets, a brief description, data source, collected methods, frequency, responsible of data collection, means of verification and assumptions, and risks.
92. During the inception workshop the M&E system was reviewed, as well as the responsibilities. The outcome gave some observations to ensure compliance with GEF requirements. The suggestions were adequate for the project, e.g. disaggregating baselines by gender, regular reviews, and updating of M&E plan. Another valuable suggestion was to include lessons learned in the PIRs and planning meetings.
93. It has been verified that the main milestones proposed in the ProDoc have been met, the Mid-Term Review, annual reports and mission reports have been developed. In addition, the project has developed one PIR in 2023. Likewise, the project has completed the GEF monitoring tools such as Results Measurement Framework Worksheet. It is important to mention that only indicator 6 has not been completed.
94. The calculations and estimates used for reporting core indicators are not supported by the project. The project has also not provided other monitoring tools such as the UNDP's Capacity Development Scorecard, which were to be complemented by the PMU before the start of the MTR.
95. Throughout the project implementation phase, there has been a lack of confirmation regarding the presence of an M&E system to track progress adequately. Consequently,

- the PIR report serves as the de facto baseline. Notably, in the PIR 2023, the RTA underscores the necessity of establishing a formal M&E mechanism to ensure the timely completion of project activities. Consequently, the PIR highlights the existence of indicators yet to be assessed due to the non-application of tools such as the METT sheet.
96. Similarly, challenges persist in monitoring financial performance, particularly in reporting co-financing values, for which there is currently no designated tool. This concern was also raised by the RTA, who advocated for the development of a long-term plan to address this issue. However, it remains unclear whether any actions have been taken in response to this recommendation.
97. There is no evidence of tracking GEF Core Indicator 6 on GHG emissions mitigation. Output 2.3 activities on improving habitat will have improved sequestration in the AFOLU sector while ecotourism products may result in GHG mitigation as compared to the baseline of normal tourism.
98. As an integral component of the project, a Gender Analysis and Action Plan was formulated. This comprehensive plan delineated various actions along with their corresponding indicators, assigned responsibilities, timeframes, and budget allocations across the three project outcomes. It is important to acknowledge that the ProDoc received approval in 2021, predating the development of the gender tool in 2022. This temporal misalignment may have contributed to the ProDoc primarily focusing on gender as segregated beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to highlight that certain indicators outlined in the Gender Action Plan have yet to be integrated into the project's monitoring and evaluation framework.

#### **4.2.7 Management arrangements**

99. The project is implemented, with arrangements, under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Bhutan, and the Country Programme. The Implementing Agency (IA) for this project is the Department of Tourism (previously Tourism Council of Bhutan). The IA is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of GEF resources.
100. The project is led by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), made up of the Secretary of MoICE (Chair); Director General, Department of Tourism; Resident Representative, UNDP; Chief, Department of Macro Fiscal and Development Finance;

Director, Department of Forests and Park Services, Dzongdags of Trashiyangtse and Zhemgang, representative from the Committee of Tourism Associations and the Project Manager from the Department of Tourism as the Member Secretary. The PSC 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.

101. Two technical committees have been established to promote and enhance project coordination and collaboration; The Multi-sector Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) has 18 members from project stakeholders and co-financing agencies and this body is formed to provide timely technical advice to the PSC. The Landscape Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce (LECT) comprises members from landscape dzongkhags, protected areas and divisional forest offices and is established to promote cross learning while also improving collaboration among the landscape areas.
102. The project is executed by the Project Management Unit (PMU), led by the project director, project manager, project technical specialist, M&E officer, project advocacy & behavior change officer, a project accountant, and a Dzongkhag/circuit focal. Additionally, the project will be supported by a Guarantee that includes UNDP staff in Country Office and at regional and headquarters levels at the request of the PMU and with approval from GEF.

#### **4.2.8 Social and environmental standards**

103. The ProDoc recognizes that Biodiversity considerations are not adequately considered in the process of planning and development of tourism and tourism potential is not well considered in the planning and implementation of conservation activities. This poses a risk to the sustainability of ecosystems from mass tourism without adequate safeguards while at the same time species and ecosystem-oriented conservation without consideration of livelihoods could impede long-term sustainability. The project therefore aims to support mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in tourism development.
104. The ProDoc also requires that the Implementing Partner shall: (a) conduct project and program-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through

- the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.
105. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) asserts strong alignment with the guiding principles set forth by UNDP policies and in strict accordance with the laws and regulations established by the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB). It further notes that the project's every activity will be meticulously orchestrated with unwavering adherence to the tenets of sustainable development which entails a comprehensive integration of environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors into the decision-making process, ensuring a harmonious and balanced approach.
  106. The PMU and the RPs have obtained clearances for infrastructure development originally included in the ProDoc and covered by the Environmental and Social Safeguard Document. For activities added on during project implementation, environmental clearances were not updated.
  107. Environmental Clearance issued by the National Environment Commission Secretariat (now the Department of Environment and Climate Change) requires preparation of a Detailed Implementation Plan to ensure compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Environmental Clearances. There is no evidence of such plans having been prepared and implemented. This has resulted in inadequate practices and safeguards related to environmental management as well as for endangered and threatened species.
  108. While the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework acknowledges the requirement to use local and ecofriendly construction materials, some of the infrastructure developed in the landscape dzongkhags and protected areas relied heavily on concrete structures.
  109. The infrastructure developed by the project are handed over to community and youth groups for operation without clear business plans and operation modality. It was reported that consultants have been fielded to develop business plans. This has led to reduced community ownership on the facilities developed, sub-standard services and while the intention was to empower local communities with enhanced livelihood leading to greater community vitality, the reluctance of original group members to open the group membership to other community members is leading to community disharmony and divides.

#### **4.2.9 Reporting**

110. The principal tool used by the PMU to keep a systematic record of progress in performance and challenges to adaptive management is the PIR; the project has produced one to date 2023. In general, the PIRs collect sufficient detail to report on project progress and delays, however, it does not elaborate on the adaptive measures that the PMU will take. The PIR report was presented to and discussed with the PSC and UNDP CO.
111. Furthermore, the project has generated quarterly reports for select quarters; however, there is a lack of conclusive evidence regarding their completion. Additionally, an annual report was compiled for the year 2022, yet subsequent years lack such documentation. Notably, there is an absence of reports for the entirety of 2022. Furthermore, the project's records contain various consulting reports submitted by individual consultants or organizations.
112. The principal mechanism to keep the Project Steering Committee informed is the meetings. To date, the project has held 6 meetings, in which the team has communicated the annual planning, progress towards results, goals and activities, etc. Also, the PSC takes advantage of the meetings to follow up on the decision of the past PSC meeting.
113. In general terms, information management operates in a cloud-hosted centralized system. This makes it possible to keep updated information available for the PMU and other key actors at different intervention levels. This was evident during the MTR, since the organization and delivery of requested information was fast.

#### **4.2.10 Communication**

114. The project management unit had a dedicated communications officer till 2023 after which the post had been converted to personnel recruited as the M& E Officer. A communication plan developed in 2022 is in place without any evident update.
115. The communication activities involved issuing a press release on World Tourism Day in 2021, conducting a story telling workshop in Trashiyangtse in December 2021, releasing a book "Agay Phurba and the Dancing Cranes", publication of a knowledge magazine and project activity updates on UNDP Bhutan's and Department of Tourism's social media pages, advertisement on public transport buses and talk shows on the national television channel.



116. While efforts have been made to create awareness on mainstreaming biodiversity in tourism development through mainstream media, social media pages, talk shows and bus stickers, evidence of communication and awareness raising to local stakeholders and community members were not seen.
117. During the MTR, it was noted that communication and sharing of information with co-financing agencies as well as project stakeholders at the national level was lacking.
118. It was also noted that communication within the project management architecture has not happened as originally envisioned. For instance, there is no record of the meeting of the MTAC established to provide technical support and expert advice to the Project Steering Committee.

### 4.3 Long-term sustainability

#### 4.3.1 Financial risks to sustainability

Financial risks	Moderately Unlikely
-----------------	---------------------

119. The project faces two important financial risks. The first relates to the financial mechanisms and income generating tools that the project was supposed to support but was not able to deliver until mid-term. Therefore, no additional resources have been available to support both the sustainability and the upscaling of existing investments. Within a context of fiscal constraints and even important reduction in available funding for the tourism sector, interviewees acknowledge that there are no expectations for enhanced budgets or expected additional resources in the short and mid-term. Slow and somehow erratic post- covid recovery was often mentioned by interviewees, as Bhutan has not yet recovered pre-pandemic tourist flows.
120. Additionally, no current or future projects supported by international cooperation are expected to address ecotourism in the coming years. Trust funds such as the BFL and BTFEC offer competitive windows for opportunities, however its scale does not match the financial gaps.
121. The second risk relates with the financial sustainability of infrastructure and other related investments from the project. Considering infrastructure was constructed prior to market assessments, business plans and community participation, the major challenge lies in the capacity of beneficiaries to succeed. It is very early now to forecast the expected performance of the different investments deployed across the prioritized landscapes. The few operational ones seem to have a transformational impact in terms

of improving household income in the short term. However, it is also evident that the lack of business training and specialized tourism experience may pose an important challenge in the mid and long term.

#### 4.3.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

Socio-economic	Moderately Unlikely
----------------	---------------------

122. The project faces various risks that could impact its strategic direction and effectiveness. Firstly, the delay in approving the Ecotourism Master Plan and related regulations leading to a lack of clear guidance for the project's activities, especially with the shift to the Long-Term Tourism Plan. Additionally, inadequate cooperation and coordination among government agencies might hinder the integration of biodiversity into tourism, as different sectoral agendas dominate. This risk persists despite the existing interagency collaboration structures. Furthermore, the government's emphasis on broader tourism development over ecotourism could create conflicts with the project's objectives, as seen in the ambitious targets to increase tourist arrivals.
123. Secondly, there are concerns about the unrealistic expectations of generating sufficient economic benefits from ecotourism, especially with uncertainties in market demand and the impacts of COVID-19. While some signs of reduced risk are noted through visitor numbers, the lack of robust business planning and stakeholder engagement poses ongoing challenges. Moreover, the potential long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism demand and Bhutan's economy remain valid risks.
124. Lastly, issues of coordination in safeguards responsibilities between this project and co-financed activities, as well as the absence of private sector engagement, highlight the need for careful planning and ongoing monitoring to ensure successful project outcomes.

#### 4.3.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

Institutional and governance	Moderately Unlikely
------------------------------	---------------------

125. The project's most important transformational change in terms of institutional framework was the Ecotourism Masterplan. It was supposed to strengthen institutional capacities, mobilizing national attention and additional sources of funding, but mostly because it was meant to provide a clear sense of purpose and direction towards ecotourism development in Bhutan. In the absence of this tool, the perspectives of sustainability

are critical, as the tool that was chosen to replace the Ecotourism Masterplan is by no means sufficient to address the size of the challenge.

- 126. Critical gaps in terms of understanding and practicing ecotourism are evident across GEF investments in infrastructure, and the implementing partner does not seem to have the specialized skills and manpower to ensure appropriate implementation of project activities. The sustainability perspectives without project are even less positive, therefore particular attention shall be placed in the remaining implementation period to build a solid exit strategy.
- 127. The MTR finds an important reputational risk, as GEF investments are meant to have a demonstrative and catalytic effects. Investments analyzed so far cannot be labeled as ecotourism, on the contrary, findings highlight several issues and gaps that may mislead the real practice of ecotourism in the country. The potential for transformational impact is well recognized, especially because landscapes are in an early stage of tourism consolidation, however, project investments are not a good example of how to plan, construct and manage ecotourism products and facilities.

**4.3.4 Environmental risks to sustainability**

Environmental	Moderately Unlikely
---------------	---------------------

- 128. The initial risks outlined in the project document related to ecotourism development have seen updates by evaluators. Firstly, the risk of not obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for local ecotourism activities has been resolved, as all necessary FPIC has been obtained. However, concerns remain regarding potential conflicts within and between communities due to differing opinions on ecotourism governance and benefit-sharing mechanisms. The risk of inadequate incorporation of women and youth views has reduced, given the project's focus on equitable opportunities. On the contrary, risks related to environmental damage from infrastructure development have increased, along with concerns about operational risks without proper management plans. Capacities for sustainable ecotourism management among local stakeholders and potential safety risks remain key areas of concern, while climate change impacts and unintended consequences from policy changes are ongoing risks yet to be fully addressed.
- 129. The evaluators have identified new risks within the project. Firstly, there is a high risk associated with potential initiatives focusing solely on attracting tourists and livelihood generation without considering biodiversity mainstreaming values, which is evident from

some implemented activities. Secondly, a moderate risk exists regarding adherence to national regulatory requirements, as government institutions involved may overlook statutory environmental due diligence. Lastly, a high risk is highlighted due to insufficient consideration of climate change and natural disaster impacts, potentially leading to inadequate investment levels in essential safeguards against such events. These risks underscore the need for careful planning and adherence to regulatory frameworks to ensure sustainable and resilient project outcomes.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

130. The project is highly relevant to Bhutan, it addresses national policies and priorities supporting smart post-covid recovery. Considering the relative weight of tourism in Bhutan's GDP, diversifying tourism based on Bhutan's outstanding natural features and increasing the total number of visitors, holds special attention for a country that has not yet recovered pre-covid tourism flows. The project is recognized by local authorities as a catalyzer for economic development and a great opportunity to benefit communities from tourism.
131. The project complements the government's capacities and needs in further strengthening the tourism sector through diversification of products and services as well as new ecotourism destinations with the goal of increasing tourist arrivals in the country.
132. While the ultimate project outcome is to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the development of tourism products and services in Bhutan, a key challenge remains in incorporating biodiversity mainstreaming values and principles in the project interventions.
133. The project was able to demonstrate adaptive management capacity, considering the difficult initial context including COVID as a major challenge in terms of operations but especially because of its impact to the tourism sector. Project implementation faced high uncertainty after COVID due to government-wide national transformation exercise resulting in structural, governance and administrative changes.
134. After a slow start up process, the PMU achieved its learning curve and acquired implementation rhythm, which was reflected in higher budget execution during year 2023 resulting in almost four times more expenditure than in the year 2022. Construction of infrastructure accelerated after June 2023 with some investments are already inaugurated and under operation.

135. During the transition period, the PMU demonstrated adaptive management capacity, adjustments were made to the PMU to include a dedicated staff to manage the M&E while relying on the implementing partner's existing capacity to manage communication. Several changes were approved by the steering committee, reorienting resources to build infrastructure that was not originally identified in the ProDoc such as the eco-lodge and the Wangduegang Café in Zhemgang. However, as mentioned before, these changes had a profound effect in terms of the quality and overall strategic direction of the project.
136. Important concern was raised with regards to the quality of outputs and implementation, leading into risks towards sustainability. Interventions and investments mostly reflect business as usual tourism with limited added value in terms of ecotourism while the outputs related to human wildlife conflict are implemented in relative isolation to the ecotourism stream. There is little evidence demonstrating integration of different components and RP's.
137. Special concern was raised on the implementation of the environmental and social safeguards, particularly on the need of detailed implementation/ compliance plans mandated by law and due diligence in safeguarding threatened and endangered species.
138. Notable gaps were found pertaining to community consultation and participation during project implementation. Good practices require continued and sustained communication to and engagement of stakeholders throughout the project cycle and this was found lacking, particularly involving investments in activities camps, lodges, cafes and recreational areas. However, on a positive note, within the few months of operation of infrastructure handed over to communities, improvement of livelihoods was reported, benefiting specially youth and woman.
139. The MTR team considers there is a moderate risk that the project is not likely to achieve the expected targets and goals during the remaining implementation period. The expected transformational added value of GEF investments in terms of ecotourism and mainstreaming biodiversity are not yet visible. Moreover, as mentioned above, there is a potential reputational risk, considering investments deployed are labeled as ecotourism when they are not.
140. However, the project management informed the MTR team that pace of implementation has already picked up and they are confident of achieving the expected targets. A

profound change is needed in terms of adaptive management capacity and strategic direction to take the best advantage of the remaining time and resources available.

141. The MTR commends the project on the implementation of the gender safeguards including the consideration on gender segregated restrooms, adequate participation of women in project activities and notes that more than 50% of the project beneficiaries are women.
142. While the project design phase was successful in engaging a wide range of both national and subnational stakeholders, stakeholder engagement, particularly local stakeholders, and private sector entities during planning, designing and implementation of infrastructure projects was limited.
143. Recognizing the project landscape areas are in dzongkhags with least tourist visitation, the MTR notes that there are limited marketing activities on ecotourism which may result in limited awareness on the opportunities for ecotourism activities.

## Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Responsible Entity
1	Strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for ecotourism is one of the expected transformational impacts from the project. The MTR recommends compensating for the existing gap in terms of strategic direction attributed to not implementing the Ecotourism Master Plan. The PMU is requested to present the PSC an alternative proposal on how resources from the project will be used strategically to ensure the achievement of the same expected result and purpose envisaged in the ProDoc.	PMU Department of Tourism
2	Considering the limited time until the end of the project, the MTR strongly recommends strengthening management and technical capacity of the PMU. A full-time dedicated project coordinator must be ensured, as provided by the Prodoc. The MTR also recommends hiring a full-time ecotourism specialist, this key person must have the capacity and authority to ensure quality delivery and strategic direction to achieve project targets in the remaining time.	PMU UNDP
3	Contract a short-term assignment to set up the M&E system. Special emphasis shall be placed in re-defining project indicators, assessing baseline gaps, and updating all monitoring tools, including those mandatory by the GEF such as the METT scorecards, UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard, core indicators, GHG mitigation, KAP and co-financing core indicators and co-financing.	PMU UNDP
4	The MTR team strongly recommends that UNDP review all current construction and related tendering processes to ensure that ecotourism guidelines as well as environmental and social safeguards are met as a precondition to continue construction. For the rest of infrastructure either close to or in operation, corrective measures shall be convened to ensure they can be fully considered ecotourism products.	UNDP Department of Tourism
5	Ecotourism is not only about constructions, but also about a mind shift in people's culture and practices, which is expected to complement all project interventions. It is recommended to refocus and enhance knowledge, management, and strategic communications from current institutional profile to	Department of Tourism

	prioritize project beneficiaries and local communities to promote long term shift in mindset of local communities, project beneficiaries and local communities.	
6	The MTR recommends strengthening the project steering committee, by expanding its representation from private sector and local communities. It is recommended that the PSC achieves a common understanding of the project as it was originally formulated, as well as to engage them with the risks flagged and recommendations described in this MTR report. Existing expectations about investing in areas outside of the project landscape, or further redistributing technical assistance resources to increase physical investments should not be pursued or encouraged.	UNDP Department of Tourism
7	The private sector could play a greater role in project implementation. It is recommended to explore opportunities to engage them in the management and sustainability of GEF investments. In some cases, it could partner with the communities with a commitment to transfer capacities, in other cases they may bring co-finance to scale up, complement or improve existing investments.	Department of Tourism/ UNDP CO (Oversight)
8	Recognizing the project landscape areas are in dzongkhags with least tourist visitation, the MTR notes that there are limited marketing activities on ecotourism which may result in limited awareness on the ecotourism products. The MTR recommends that the project refocus on marketing ecotourism at international, national and project landscapes level to ensure that the GEF investments have a catalytic and value-added effect on Bhutan's tourism development.	Department of Tourism
9	The project outcomes partially hinge upon the government's tourism-related policy environment. It is recommended to conduct policy framework analysis, including incentives to promote tourism in the eastern region of Bhutan and Zhemgang to ensure adequate tourist traffic to project sites and facilitate communities' enhanced livelihoods through ecotourism.	Department of Tourism
10	The MTR strongly recommends updating and strictly following the stakeholder engagement plan, especially for investments where local stakeholders are expected to take ownership and become direct beneficiaries.	Department of Tourism
11	The MTR commends the project on the implementation of the gender safeguards including the consideration on gender segregated restrooms, adequate participation of women in project activities and notes that more than 50% of the project beneficiaries are women.	PMU

## 6 ANNEX

### 6.1 Annex 1: Terms of Reference

#### MID-TERM REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

#### Position Information

Post Title:	Mid Term Evaluation Consultant
Practice Area:	Environment and Livelihoods
Post Level:	International Consultant
Duration of the assignment:	Maximum 30 working days spread over 7 weeks (25 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2024)
Duty station:	Thimphu, with travel to the target field sites (about 10-14 working days)
Cluster/Project:	Environment & Livelihood Portfolio
Supervisor:	Portfolio Manager, Environment & Livelihood Portfolio

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the *full*-sized project titled “Mainstreaming biodiversity Conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan” (PIMS 6319) implemented through the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan, which is to be undertaken from 2021-2026. The project started on the August 11, 2021 and is in its *third* year of implementation. **In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated after the submission of the First Project Implementation Report (PIR).** This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).



## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bhutan has adopted a unique cautious approach to tourism development guided by “High value, Low volume” since its inception in the early 1970s. This unique approach has consistently sought to ensure tourism growth consistent with the carrying capacity of our physical, socio-cultural, and natural environment and ensure that the benefits from tourism are maximized with minimal negative impacts while providing a rewarding experience for our visitors.

Bhutan’s tourism industry continued to grow, albeit the halt created by the COVID-19 pandemic, to become one of the major economic sectors contributing significantly toward socio-economic development of the country through revenue and foreign currency generation and employment creation amongst others. Prior to the pandemic, in 2019 a total of 315,599 foreign individuals visited Bhutan which is an increase of 15% over 2018 contributing in excess of US\$300 million in tourism receipts and US\$23.42 million in direct tourism revenue through the Sustainable Development Fees. This has created employment opportunities for over 52,000 individuals and business opportunities for over 6,500 tourism establishments in the country. The growth in tourism has also promoted growth in other sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, entertainment, transport and related services across the diverse tourism value chain.

The Department of Tourism (erstwhile Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) is implementing the UNDP-Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Ecotourism project on “Mainstreaming biodiversity Conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan”. The project seeks to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development in Bhutan as a long-term strategy for mitigation of threats to biodiversity and to generate sustainable conservation financing and livelihoods. The project intends to establish Bhutan as a **model ecotourism destination** to generate livelihood opportunities, sustainable financing for landscapes within and outside protected areas, facilitate human-wildlife coexistence, and mitigate the negative impacts of increasing tourism on Bhutan’s socio-cultural heritage and globally significant biodiversity.

The project landscape includes two protected areas of Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in eastern Bhutan and five Dzongkhags (districts) of Lhuentse, Mongar, Trashigang, Trashy Yangtse and Zhemgang that covers 19 gewogs/blocks. The project has a total budget of USD 13,926,690 comprising of a grant from GEF resources of USD 4,854,128 and co-finance from UNDP CO and the government of USD 9,072,562.

**The project has three main components:**

**Component 1:** Enabling and coordinated policy and institutional framework for ecotourism and wildlife tourism.

**Component 2:** Demonstration of innovative and diversified ecotourism within the landscape that supports human-wildlife coexistence.

**Component 3:** Ecotourism capacity, promotion, knowledge management and M&E

The project implementing partner is the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MOICE). Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS), Ministry of Energy & Natural Resources (MoENR), District administrations and gewogs and community members are also involved in implementation process. The collaborative arrangement has been set up at the technical level through the designation of focal persons in the line ministries and departments.

The project implementation was slightly delayed in the first year due to COVID-19 and national transformation and reform initiatives. However, the project implementation has picked up from second year.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE MTR**

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, action plans, and its risks to sustainability.

- The main purpose of the MTR is to assess whether the project is on course in line with its project strategic target setting and UNDP Country Programme Document, and make recommendation to enhance and improve the project performance as well as suggestion for future improvement (i.e. in the areas related to the appropriate project design, process of implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, partnership and sustainability).
- Using the results findings and lessons learnt to improve the project document and framework to reflect on the current project context and situation with strong connection to the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) / Country Programme Document and related current strategic country focused areas.

### **3. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

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

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

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach<sup>1</sup> ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the

---

<sup>1</sup> For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.<sup>2</sup> Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to (*Department of Tourism, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Department of Forests and Park Services, District Administrations of Tashiyangtse, Tashigang, Mongar, Lhuntse and Zhemgang, Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary*); 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. Considering the COVID-19 situation, the MTR team should consider using technologies and tools to effectively engage stakeholders virtually.

Additionally, the MTR team may require conducting field missions to the project landscapes that include the following:

- **Five districts:** covering Tashiyangtse, Tashigang, Mongar, Lhuntse and Zhemgang
- **Two Protected areas and three forestry divisions:** , covering Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary and Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, forestry divisions of Mongar, Tashigang and Zhemgang.

The final MTR report should 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

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

A 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.

#### **4. 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.

##### **i) 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 impact of global pandemic (Covid -19) to the project and potential opportunities for post Covid recovery actions.**
- 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?
- Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country.

- Review how the project addresses country priorities including the 13 FYP and country ownership.
- Review the opportunities the project should adapt to achieve the outcomes.
- 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 and safeguard 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.

If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

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

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, biodiversity conservation, 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.

#### **ii) Progress Towards Results**

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

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator <sup>3</sup>	Baseline Level <sup>4</sup>	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target <sup>5</sup>	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment <sup>6</sup>	Achievement Rating <sup>7</sup>	Justification for Rating
<b>Objective:</b>	Indicator (if applicable):							
<b>Outcome 1:</b>	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
<b>Outcome 2:</b>	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
<b>Etc.</b>								

**Indicator Assessment Key**

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

<sup>3</sup> Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

<sup>4</sup> Populate with data from the Project Document

<sup>5</sup> If available

<sup>6</sup> Colour code this column only

<sup>7</sup> Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

**In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:**

- Review the project’s alignment/transition to GEF Core Indicators in accordance

with the GEF 2019 Guidelines on Core Indicators and Sub-indicators.

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicator 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

### iii) **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

#### **Management Arrangements:**

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

#### **Work Planning:**

Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.



- Review and propose an acceleration plan that would help project to achieve results as well as financial delivery
- 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, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

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

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

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

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

### **Stakeholder Engagement:**

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

participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

### **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.

### **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<sup>8</sup> (in the SESP).
- The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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.

#### **iv) Sustainability**

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

#### **Financial risks to sustainability:**

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating

---

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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 team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

### **Ratings**

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

**Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for “Mainstreaming biodiversity Conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan” Project**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>MTR Rating</b>	<b>Achievement Description</b>
<b>Project Strategy</b>	N/A	
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
<b>Sustainability</b>	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

### **TIMEFRAME**

The MTR consultancy will be approximately 25 working days over a time period of seven weeks starting from 25th December 2023- 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and shall not exceed TWO months from when the consultant is hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
10 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Application closes
20 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Select MTR Team
25 <sup>th</sup> December, 2023	Contract Signing
28 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 ( 4 days)	Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report
2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024 (3 days)	Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report
7 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (8 days)	MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits[1]
17 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (4days)	Submission of draft report
25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (4 days)	Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report/Finalization of MTR report (note: accommodate time delay in dates for circulation and review of the draft report) and preparation of management Response
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (1 day)	Concluding Stakeholder Workshop with the MTR team and the stakeholders.
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024 (23days)	Expected date of full MTR completion

## 5. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission: 2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission: 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit

3	<b>Draft Report</b>	<b>Final</b>	Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission: 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
4	<b>Final Report*</b>		Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft: 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

\*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.

## 7. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP Bhutan Country office. Supervision and monitoring performance of the consultant shall be provided by UNDPBTN CO. The Portfolio Manager of Environment & Livelihood Cluster will provide overall quality assurance on the draft reports.

The commissioning unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements in Bhutan for the MTR team, if the travel is permitted. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

The Commissioning Unit and Project Team will provide logistic support in the implementation of remote/ virtual meetings if travel to project site is restricted. An updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email) will be provided by the Commissioning Unit to the MTR team.



## 6. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one international team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one local expert 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 National Consultant will be recruited separately to support the International Consultant, who will be the team leader. The International Consultant will be required to work with the National Consultant as a team to complete the assignment.

The national consultant will work closely with the International Consultant in supporting any work that needs to be undertaken as laid out in this ToR, and other tasks, as required. The National Consultant will also act as a focal point for coordinating and working with relevant stakeholders in Bhutan. In the case of international travel restriction and the mission is not possible, the MTR team will use alternative means of interviewing stakeholders and data collection (i.e. Skype interview, mobile questionnaires, etc.) including the field visit by the National Consultant under the International Consultant's guidance.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;

- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to GEF focal areas including Biodiversity, Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Forest Management, ecotourism.
- Experience working with the GEF or GEF-evaluations;
- Experience working in the least developed countries particularly in Asia Region;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;

- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and GEF focal areas such as Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Forest Management, ecotourism; 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.
- A Master's degree in fields of Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, ecotourism, and Climate Change Adaptation, or other closely related field.

### Qualification Criteria

**The Team Leader/International Consultant** should possess the following qualifications and experience:

Education:	At least Master's degree or equivalent in fields related to Biodiversity conservation, Natural Resource Management, Ecotourism, Agriculture, Tourism, Policy and development, Environment Management, Climate Change, and Community development and relevant field.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of 10 years of relevant experience is required.</li> <li>• Strong technical background in ecotourism, biodiversity conservation, protected areas management, livelihoods, or related areas of natural resource management in the Asia-Pacific region, preferably experience working in Bhutan.</li> <li>• Substantive experience in reviewing and evaluating similar projects, preferably those involving UNDP/GEF or other United Nations development agencies or major donors;</li> <li>• Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;</li> </ul>

Competencies:	<p>Demonstrate ability to assess complex situations, succinctly distills critical issues, and draw forward-looking conclusions and recommendations;</p> <p>Ability and experience to lead multi-disciplinary and national teams, and deliver quality reports within the given time;</p> <p>Highly knowledgeable of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, and experience in evaluation of technical assistance projects with major donor agencies;</p> <p>Familiarity with the challenges developing countries face in adapting to climate change; livelihood and economy, and Familiarity with Bhutan or similar countries;</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal, coordination and planning skills, and ability to work in a team.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to travel to districts.</p>
Language Requirements:	Excellent English writing and communication skills

## 10. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

*First payment:* 20% of the contract lump-sum amount will be paid within 15 days after submission and acceptance of the consultancy inception report which includes work-plan, key milestones and approach of conducting the assignment consistent with the Terms of Reference.

*Second payment:* 40% of the contract lump-sum amount will be paid within 15 days after submission the draft evaluation report and draft revised RRF.

*Last payment:* 40% of the contract lump-sum amount will be paid within 15 days after submission and acceptance of the final evaluation report and final revised RRF.

Every payment is subject to receipt of certification of payment and performance evaluation for the last payment duly completed and signed by Portfolio Manager, Environment and Livelihood Cluster, UNDP – Bhutan.

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.

### 11. Criteria for selection

A combined scoring method will be used to evaluate the offers. Technical Evaluation Criteria will be weighted a maximum of 70% and combined with the price offer which will be weighted a maximum of 30%.

1. Academic qualification and specialization of the national Consultant		Points (10)
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum of Master’s degree or equivalent in fields related to project management, Monitoring and evaluation, Biodiversity conservation, Natural Resource Management, Ecotourism, Tourism, Policy and development, Environment Management, Climate Change, and Community development and relevant field.</li> </ul> <p>Points allocation:</p> <p>Proven qualification in Project management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Community Development, Policy and Planning. Biodiversity conservation and Environment management: 10 points</p> <p>Proven qualification in Policy and Planning, Biodiversity conservation, Environment Management and other relevant field: 5 points</p>	10

	<b>TOTAL SECTION 1</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>2. Technical competency of the International Consultant (prior consulting experience)</b>	<b>Points (30)</b>
2.1	<p>Should have at least 10 years of relevant work experience in Experience/knowledge in Project management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender mainstreaming, Social and Environmental safe guards, Policy and planning, ecotourism, biodiversity conservation, protected areas management, livelihoods, or related areas of natural resource management in the Asia-Pacific region. Substantive experience in reviewing and evaluating similar projects, preferably those involving UNDP/GEF or other United Nations development agencies or major donors. <i>(maximum points 15)</i></p> <p>Points allocation:</p> <p>More than 15 years of relevant work experience with proven record of evaluation of project of similar scope, nature and complexity: <i>15 points.</i></p> <p><i>Completed more than 10 years of relevant work experience with proven record of evaluation of project of similar scope, nature and complexity: 10 points.</i></p> <p><i>Completed at least 10 years of relevant work experience with proven record of evaluation of project of similar scope, nature and complexity: 5 points.</i></p>	15
2.2	<p>Shall have completed at least five projects related to Monitoring and Evaluation for projects. <i>(maximum points 15)</i></p> <p>Points allocation:</p> <p>Completed 10 to 15 such assignments (M&amp;E and Mid-term review): <i>15 points.</i></p> <p>Completed 7 to 10 such assignments (M&amp;E and Mid-term review): <i>10 points.</i></p> <p>Completed at least 5 such assignments (M&amp;E and Mid-term review): <i>5 points.</i></p>	15
	<b>TOTAL SECTION 2</b>	<b>30</b>

3. Quality of technical proposal (methodology)		Points (30)
3.1	<p>Detailed elaboration and understanding of requirements (<i>maximum points 15</i>)</p> <p>Points allocation:</p> <p>Methodology fully addresses all tasks specified and demonstrates no weakness: <i>15 points.</i></p> <p>Addresses all aspects of the ToR but and demonstrates only a few minor weaknesses: <i>10 points.</i></p>	15
3.2	<p>Appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed timeline (<i>(maximum points 15)</i>)</p> <p>Points allocation:</p> <p>Proposed timeline is in line with the tasks as specified in the TOR and supported by clear evidence to demonstrate feasibility = 15 points</p> <p>Proposed timeline is slightly deviating from the tasks as specified in the TOR and demonstrated minor weaknesses = 10 points</p>	15
<b>TOTAL SECTION 3</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Sub Total Technical</b>		<b>70</b>
<b>Sub-Total Financial</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Total (Technical + Financial)</b>		<b>100</b>

## 12. APPLICATION PROCESS

### Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- a) Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability using the template<sup>10</sup> provided by UNDP;
- b) CV or a Personal History Form (P11 form<sup>11</sup>);

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 the address (UNDP Country Office, Bhutan) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference “Consultant for (Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience of Forest and Agriculture Landscape and Community Livelihoods in Bhutan) Midterm Review” or by email at the following address ONLY: ([procurement.bt@undp.org](mailto:procurement.bt@undp.org)) by (12.00 pm and September 20, 2020). Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

---

10

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

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11\\_Personal\\_history\\_form.doc](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc)

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal: 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 Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

## 6.2 Annex 2: Logical Framework

<p>This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal(s):            Primary focus: Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (Target 15.4: By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development; Target 15.9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts).            Secondary contributions to: Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products). Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Target 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership). Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Target 12.12b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products)</p>				
<p>This project will contribute to the following country outcome of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework for Bhutan 2019-2023:            Outcome 4: By 2023, Bhutan’s communities and its economy are more resilient to climate-induced and other disasters and biodiversity loss as well as economic vulnerability (Output 4.1: Inclusive, risk-informed systems and capacities in place to enable people to benefit from conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and reduced environmental and health risks; Output 4.2: National policies foster innovative financing, an inclusive business environment and improved livelihoods through climate resilient and nature-based solutions)</p>				
	<b>Objective and Outcome Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Mid-term Target</b>	<b>End of Project Target</b>
Project Objective: Ecotourism development Mainstreams biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector in Bhutan	Indicator 1: Number of direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender: a) Total b) People living in demonstration landscape Gewogs c) Local private sector personnel d) National private sector personnel e) Local RGoB Officials f) National RGoB Officials (GEF Core Indicator #11)	a) 0 people b) 0 c) 0 d) 0 e) 0 f) 0	a) 8,233 (4,266 female) b) 5,181 (2,592 female) c) 114 (76 female) d) 2,775 (1,564 female) e) 105 (12 female) f) 60 (22 female)	a) 16,467 people (8,534 female) b) 10,361 (5,185 female) c) 227 (152 female) d) 5,550 (3128 female) e) 210 (25 female) f) 119 (44 female)
	Indicator 2: Area of landscapes under improved management for ecotourism and	a) 0 ha b) 0 ha c) 0 ha	a) 297,101 ha b) 226,200 ha c) 70,901 ha	a) 368,002 ha b) 226,200 ha c) 141,802 ha



	<p>biodiversity conservation:  a) Total  b) Terrestrial protected areas:  Area under improved management effectiveness (Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary) (see Indicator 3 for METT targets)  c) Areas outside of PAs under improved management for biodiversity (as measured by adoption and implementation of integrated landscape-level tourism plan and site-specific tourism management plans with standard environmental and social safeguards in place to benefit biodiversity) (GEF Core Indicator #1.2 and #4.1)</p>			
	<p>Indicator 3: Management effectiveness (METT) at Bumdeling and Sakteng WS  a) Overall METT score (GEF Core Indicator 1.2)  b) Tourism specific score (Maximum = 39).  Specific improvements related to better ecotourism management (particularly on revenue generation, visitor management, community engagement and threat reduction).  NB. Applies to questions 3, 10, 14, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, 24a, 24b, 24c, 25, 27, 28, 29 of GEF-7 METT</p>	<p>a) Bumdeling WS = 67  Sakteng WS = 72  b) Bumdeling WS = 22  Sakteng WS = 24</p>	<p>a) Bumdeling WS = 78  Sakteng WS = 80  b) Bumdeling WS = 28  Sakteng WS = 28</p>	<p>a) Bumdeling WS = 86  Sakteng WS = 86  b) Bumdeling WS = 31  Sakteng WS = 31</p>

	Indicator 4: Number of indirect project beneficiaries indirectly benefitting from improved ecotourism or biodiversity conservation: a) Total b) People in local communities c) Private sector personnel d) RGoB Officials	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0 d) 0	a) 50,129 (24,445 female) b) 48,816 (23,952 female) c) 889 (416 female) d) 425 (77 female)	a) 101,444 (49,444 female) b) 97,631 (47,903 female) c) 2,963 (1,387 female) d) 850 (154 female)
<b>Project Component 1:</b>	<b>Enabling and coordinated policy and institutional framework for ecotourism and wildlife conservation</b>			
Project Outcome 1: Effective policy and institutional framework for ecotourism that incentivizes and integrates biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector	Indicator 5: Extent to which biodiversity conservation is integrated into tourism policy: a) Status of establishment of National Ecotourism Master Plan with national level Multi-sector Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the tourism sector b) Number of guidelines for ecotourism incorporating biodiversity conservation	a) No strategic direction on ecotourism development. Tourism policy under development. TCB does not include representation from the environment sector and protected areas b) 12 guidelines are under the implementation of which 6 need revision to include ecotourism principles and safeguards	a) Ecotourism Master Plan adopted by the TCB and being piloted in the demonstration landscape, with MTAC established b) 6 existing guidelines revised and adopted by TCB; 6 new guidelines developed and adopted (see Annex 5)	a) Ecotourism Master Plan under implementation across Bhutan, with MTAC fully functional with clear governance and operational mechanisms b) 18 Guidelines under implementation (6 existing without revision; 6 existing with revision and 6 new guidelines). See Annex 5
	Indicator 6: Extent of operationalized mechanisms and guidelines for enhancing revenue generation for biodiversity through ecotourism: a) Status of establishment and implementation of ecotourism concessions framework b) Status of adoption and implementation of operational guidelines for Park Fees, Activity Fees and User Fees	a) A conceptual framework for concessions mechanism developed and under discussion (see Annex 5) b) Operational mechanisms for sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation at local levels do not exist except for visitor fees collected at the Royal Takin Preserve in	a) Concessions mechanism finalized and adopted by Cabinet and operational guidelines for concessionary licensing arrangements within and outside PAs developed b) Operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a	a) At least two concessionbased initiatives operational in the demonstration landscape with lessons shared for national replication and upscaling b) Operational guidelines for the establishment of Park Fees, Activity Fees and other user fees for ecotourism products and services and retention of a

		Thimphu and a certain percent of cordyceps collection permit fees are deposited in the HWC endowment fund. No formal mechanism in place for retaining such revenues for local biodiversity conservation	portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at local level developed and approved	portion of such fees and a certain portion of revenue from concession-based enterprises for biodiversity conservation at local level implemented
	Indicator 7: Number of entities certified under ecotourism certification schemes delivering environmental and social safeguards: a) Number of tour operators certified under Voluntary Green Certification system for certifying accommodation, tour operators and other tourism service providers. b) Number of accommodation operators certified (eco-lodges/hotels/homestays)	a) 0 tour operators certified b) 0 hotels certified as green hotels; 0 homestays certified as green homestays	a) 20 tour operators certified in demonstration landscape b) 20 hotels and lodges certified as green; 5 homestays certified as green in demonstration landscape	a) 50 tour operators certified across Bhutan b) 70 hotels and lodges and 30 homestays certified as green across Bhutan
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 1:</b>	1. 1 Ecotourism master plan developed and inclusive Multi-sector Technical Advisory Committee established to mainstream biodiversity across tourism sectors. 1.2 National Zero Poaching strategy and HWC management strategy implementation strengthened through enhanced advocacy, coordination and monitoring, and analysis and incorporation of best practices and lessons learned 1.3 Investment framework and sustainable financing mechanisms developed and operational including a private sector concessions framework for PAs and wider landscape conservation 1.4 Ecotourism guidelines and certification system established to safeguard biodiversity and communities (particularly women) from inappropriate tourism development, and reduce human wildlife conflict			
<b>Project component 2:</b>	<b>Demonstration of innovative and diversified ecotourism within the landscape that supports human-wildlife coexistence</b>			
Outcome 2 Wildlife-based ecotourism strengthens biodiversity	Indicator 8: The status of establishment of multi-sector coordination mechanisms for: a) The integration of biodiversity conservation (including	No such multi-sector mechanism exists	a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce established and trained in the application	a) Landscape-level Ecotourism Coordination Taskforce applying safeguarding guidelines and standards to

conservation, enhances	safeguarding guidelines and standards) into ecotourism development and operation b) Cross-agency cooperation across nature conservation and law enforcement sectors to combat poaching and human-wildlife conflict		of safeguarding guidelines and standards b) Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees established and landscape level baseline on HWC and poaching provides information for SMART patrolling	ecotourism businesses, and lessons learned shared with national level MTAC for upscaling b) Landscape PA Wildlife Conservation Committees fully operational and providing a model for national replication
	Indicator 9: Extent of livelihoods improvement from ecotourism: a) % of local households within the demonstration landscape communities benefitting from ecotourism b) Number of jobs through ecotourism in landscape Gewogs, segregated by gender (total including baseline employment; number of new jobs created) c) Number of local nature/wildlife-based economic enterprises related to ecotourism d) Average annual household income (\$U\$)	a) TBC in Year 1 b) 1,559 (estimated as 30% of employment baseline) c) 119 (estimated as 50% of tourism related enterprises baseline) d) TBC in Year 1, with indicative baseline of \$2,000 (as defined by the Bhutan Living Standards Survey)	a) 30% (369 households) b) 1,715 (857 = women) (includes 156 new jobs created; 78 = women) c) 137 (18 new) d) At least 10% increase in household income	a) 50% (1,230 households) b) 2,027 (1,013 = women) (includes 468 new jobs created; 234 = women) c) 179 (60 new) d) At least 20% increase in household income
	Indicator 10: Targeted reduction of threats to biodiversity and human-wildlife coexistence: a) % reduction in annual incidences of HWC impacting crops, livestock and people in targeted communities within the demonstration landscape b) Habitats improved for flagship species in the demonstration landscape	a) Local communities in the demonstration landscape are currently not implementing measures according to the national HWC Management Strategy. (HWC incidences in target communities to be established in Year 1)	a) At least 15% reduction in annual HWC incidences in the target communities b) Habitat enrichment plans prepared for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, blacknecked crane, golden langur and golden mahseer c) Reduction in the loss of wildlife through snares by 50%	a) At least 50% reduction in annual HWC incidences in the target communities b) Habitats improved for Ludlow butterfly, red panda, black-necked crane, golden langur and golden mahseer c) Reduction in the loss of wildlife through snares by >90%

	c) Reduction in the incidence of wildlife loss through snares	b) Habitats are under threat with no conservation measures c) Snares are difficult to locate and wildlife is often caught by poachers through snare devices (Baseline for loss of wildlife through snares will be determined in Year 1 through HWC baseline)		
	Indicator 11: Extent of revenues / financial flows generated for biodiversity conservation from ecotourism: a) Status of established financial mechanisms and financial flows (\$US) for biodiversity conservation inside PAs b) Status of established financial mechanisms and financial flows (\$US) for biodiversity conservation outside PAs	a) Entry fees implemented in Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary only which is deposited in general government revenue and not retained for local biodiversity conservation (local collection in 2019 estimated at US \$ 700) b) Khoma Gewog started collecting Nu. 50 from each visitor to Singye Dzong which is maintained within the Gewog Administration for waste management along the Singye Dzong trail (collection in the second half of 2019 estimated at US\$ 300)	a) New mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted in BWS and SWS b) New mechanisms developed under Component 1 ready to be piloted outside PAs and at least 2 Youth/community enterprises established demonstrating sustainable nature-based business operational and contributing to the sustainable management of domestic tourism within the demonstration landscape	a) At least \$45,000/year generated in BWS and SWS through new mechanisms on Financial flows for biodiversity conservation inside PAs b) At least \$155,000/year generated in demonstration landscape areas outside PAs through new mechanisms on financial flows for biodiversity conservation outside PAs including nature-based ecotourism
	Indicator 12: Level of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of target stakeholders towards wildlife conservation and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism, as measured by KAP surveys:	a) XX% for communities (Male = XX%, Female = XX%) b) XX% for private sector (Male = XX%, Female = XX%) (KAP baseline to be completed in Year 1)	(No mid-term target. KAP survey will not be repeated at mid-term)	a) 20% improvement from baseline b) 20% improvement from baseline

	a) KAP score for communities in the demonstration landscape (genderdisaggregated) b) KAP score for private sector in the demonstration landscape (genderdisaggregated)			
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 2:</b>	<p>2.1 Ecotourism concessions framework and sustainable financing mechanisms demonstrated at the landscape level (including PAs), providing local livelihood benefits and increased financing for PA management and biodiversity.</p> <p>2.2 High-quality Ecotourism products and services developed across the demonstration landscape through an integrated plan and value chain approach delivering local livelihood benefits and biodiversity gains.</p> <p>2.3 Conservation of biodiversity including flagship species enhanced for the promotion of wildlife-based economy through habitat improvement and threat reduction.</p> <p>2.4 Awareness campaigns, educational materials and outreach with local communities on biodiversity values result in positive attitudes towards human-wildlife coexistence and increased participation in practical measures to reduce HWC, poaching, forest offences and other threats to biodiversity conservation.</p>			
<b>Project component 3:</b>	<b>Ecotourism capacity, promotion, knowledge management and M&amp;E</b>			
Outcome 3: Effective capacity, marketing and knowledge exchange to establish Bhutan as a model ecotourism destination	Indicator 13: % of international tourists who have opted for nature-based tourism products including trekking, homestays, birding, rafting, endurance/adventure sports – as measured by the National Tourism Monitor	12.86% international tourists (actual as per Tourism Monitor 2018)	15% international tourists	20% international tourists
	Indicator 14: Capacity of national and local stakeholders to mainstream biodiversity into ecotourism development and operation as measured by the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard (see Annex 12j) a) National level (Relevant National laws and policies; Agencies include TCB, DoFPS, RSPN): b) Local level: (BWS, SWS, Five landscape Dzongkhags)	a) 29% b) 27 %	a) 36 % b) 31 %	a) 72 % b) 63%

	Indicator 15: Number of best practices and key project lessons documented and shared through TCB and project website and social media for upscaling including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits	0	At least 3 best practices developed and at least 250 downloads of project documents and initial results and lessons learned (Ecotourism Master Plan, Ecotourism Concessional Framework, Ecotourism Guidelines, HWC policy briefs)	At least 6 best practices developed and at least 800 downloads of project documents, results and lessons learned (MT target list, plus management plans for products and services in the demonstration landscapes, flagship species habitat enrichment plans, HWC reduction reports, documents on gender mainstreaming etc
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 3:</b>	3.1 Key actors (national and Dzongkhag governments, private sector and local communities) capacitated and equipped to support ecotourism development and apply ecotourism safeguards and standards. 3.2 Ecotourism marketing and promotional strategy developed and implemented. 3.3 Knowledge sharing platforms, events and networks established at local and national levels to enhance ecotourism collaborations and best practice exchanges including with regional and international networks, particularly the Global Wildlife Program. 3.4 M&E system incorporating gender, youth and vulnerable groups developed and implemented for adaptive project management.			

### 6.3 Annex 3: Base Documents for Review

#	Item
1	PIF
2	UNDP Initiation Plan
3	UNDP Project Document
4	UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)
5	Project Inception Report
6	All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7	Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8	Audit reports
9	Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm
10	Oversight mission reports
11	All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12	Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team
13	Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
14	UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
15	Minutes of the Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
16	Project site location maps
17	M&E System
18	Sample of project communications materials
19	Data on relevant project website activity – e.g. number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc. over relevant time period, if available
20	Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions
21	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
22	Project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes



## 6.4 Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Relevance</b>			
<b>Does the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities?</b>	Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of local stakeholders	- Local stakeholders - Document review of local development strategies, environmental policies, etc.	- Local level field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Does the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities?</b>	Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents	National policy documents.	- Desk review - National level interviews
<b>Did the project concept originate from local or national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development?</b>	Level of involvement of local and national stakeholders in project origination and development (number of meetings held, project development processes incorporating stakeholder input, etc.)	- Project staff - Local and national stakeholders - Project documents	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Does the project objective fit GEF strategic priorities?</b>	Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities (including alignment of relevant focal area indicators)	- GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved - Current GEF strategic priority documents	- Desk review
<b>Was the project linked with and in-line with UNDP priorities and strategies for the country?</b>	Level of coherence between project objective and design with UNDAF, CPD	- UNDP strategic priority documents	- Desk review
<b>How relevant and effective has this project's strategy and architecture been? Is it relevant? Has it been effective? Does it need to change?</b>	- Links to international commitments and national policy documents, relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach.	- Project documents - National policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners - Data collected throughout the mission	- Desk study - Interview with project staff - Observation - Focus groups
<b>What are the decision-making processes -project governance</b>	- Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders in project implementation.	- Project documents - National policies or strategies, websites, project staff,	- Desk study - Interview with project staff - Observation

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>oversight and accountabilities?</b>	- Partnership arrangements.	project partners - Data collected throughout the mission	- Focus groups
<b>What extent does the project contribute towards the progress and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?</b>	Project alignment with the SDGs	- Project documents	- Desk study
<b>What extent does the Government support (or not support) the Project, understand its responsibility and fulfil its obligations?</b>	Meetings of the Project Board, Technical Team, Consultation Groups	- Minutes - Project documents	- Desk study
<b>Effectiveness</b>			
<b>Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met?</b>	Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement?</b>	Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits?</b>	Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met?</b>	Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p><b>What has been (to date) this projects progress towards the expected results and log frame indicators?</b></p> <p><b>How do the key stakeholders feel this project has progressed towards the outcome level results (as stated in the original documents- inception report)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress toward impact achievements</li> <li>- Results of Outputs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Consultation with Project Board Members</li> <li>- PMU</li> <li>- Field Observation and discussion with beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<p><b>What has been the progress to date and how has it led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e., income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...).</b></p> <p><b>How cross cutting areas been included in the project are results framework and monitored on an annual basis?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder involvement effectiveness</li> <li>- Gender gap</li> <li>- Plans and policies incorporating initiatives</li> <li>- Record of comments and response of stakeholders</li> <li>- Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Consultation with Project Board Members</li> <li>- PMU</li> <li>- Field Observation and discussion with beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline indicate when compared with the one completed right before the Terminal Review.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline indicate when compared with the one completed right before the Terminal Review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the remaining barriers to achieving the expected results as told by stakeholders interviewed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of barriers in the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<p><b>What aspects of this project s implementation approach (pilots) (enabling activities) has been particularly successful or negative (as told by consults)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of project achievements</li> <li>- Progress toward impact achievements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>and how might the project stakeholders further expand or correct these benefits.</b>			
<b>Do the results framework indicators have a SMART focus?</b>	Results framework indicators	M&E reports	- Desk review
<b>Are the mid-term and end-of-project goals achievable?</b>	% of results and results achieved: Progress towards the results framework	- M&E reports - ProDoc	- Desk review
<b>Efficiency</b>			
<b>Is the project cost-effective?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality and adequacy of financial management procedures (in line with UNDP, UNOPS, and national policies, legislation, and procedures)</li> <li>- Financial delivery rate vs. expected rate</li> <li>- Management costs as a percentage of total costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	- Desk review
<b>Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms?</b>	Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Is the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequacy of implementation structure and mechanisms for coordination and communication</li> <li>- Planned and actual level of human resources available</li> <li>- Extent and quality of engagement with relevant partners / partnerships</li> <li>- Quality and adequacy of project monitoring mechanisms (oversight bodies' input, quality and timeliness of reporting, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- National and local stakeholders</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> <li>- Interviews with national and local stakeholders</li> </ul>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Is the project implementation delayed? If so, has that affected cost-effectiveness?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project milestones in time</li> <li>- Planned results affected by delays</li> <li>- Required project adaptive management measures related to delays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?</b>	Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources?</b>	Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>What is project related progress in the following 'implementation' categories?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of project achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>Management Arrangements and Implementation Approach (including any evidence of Adaptive management and project coordination and km with pilots)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project management and coordination effectiveness</li> <li>- Number of project achievements in pilots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>How has the finances been managed, delivered and spent per outputs per year? What percentage is delivered to date? Is it low?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of expenditures in proportion with the results</li> <li>- Financial Systems and effectiveness transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>			
<b>Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation</li> <li>- Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective?</b>	Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental indicators</li> <li>- Level of progress through the project's Theory of Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>			
<b>To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits</li> <li>- Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits</li> <li>- Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of "ownership" of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained?</b>	Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained?</b>	Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?</b>	Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>To what extent are the project results dependent on issues</b>	Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>relating to institutional frameworks and governance?</b>			
<b>Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?</b>	Existence of environmental risks to project benefits	- Project documents	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>What are the financial risks to sustainability?</b>	Financial risks;	- Project documents	- Desk review
<b>What are the Socio-economic risks to sustainability?</b>	Socio-economic risks and environmental threats.	- Project documents	- Desk review
<b>Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability?</b>	- Institutional and individual capacities	- Project documents	- Desk review
<b>Gender equality and women's empowerment</b>			
<b>How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?</b>	Level of progress of gender action plan and gender indicators in results framework	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>In what ways did the project's gender results advance or contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes?</b>	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Were women's groups, NGOs, civil society orgs and women's ministries adequately consulted and involved in project design? If not, should they have been?</b>	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Were stakeholder engagement exercises gender responsive?</b>	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>For any stakeholder workshops, were women-only sessions held, if appropriate, and/or were other considerations made to ensure</b>	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>women's meaningful participation?</b>			
<b>Cross-cutting and UNDP Mainstreaming Issues</b>			
<b>How were effects on local populations considered in project design and implementation?</b>	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Extent to which the allocation of resources to targeted groups takes into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized.</b>	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations (e.g. income generation/job creation, improved natural resource management arrangements with local groups, improvement in policy frameworks for resource allocation and distribution, regeneration of natural resources for long term sustainability).</b>	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Extent to which the project objectives conform to agreed priorities in the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and other country programme documents.</b>	Links between the project and the priorities of the UNDP Country Program.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review
<b>Whether project outcomes have contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk</b>	Risk mitigation	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Field visit interviews - Desk review



Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Extent to which poor, indigenous, persons with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups benefited from the project</b>	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>The poverty-environment nexus: how the environmental conservation activities of the project contributed to poverty reduction</b>	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field visit interviews</li> <li>- Desk review</li> </ul>

## 6.5 Annex 5: Evaluation Scales

**Evaluation rating table**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy		
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating:	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating:	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating:	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating:	
	Outcome 4 Achievement Rating:	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management		
Sustainability		
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability		

Rating scale used:

Ratings for Progress Towards Results:		
<b>6</b>	<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	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”.
<b>5</b>	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
<b>4</b>	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
<b>3</b>	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
<b>2</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
<b>1</b>	<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	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		
<b>6</b>	<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	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”.
<b>5</b>	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	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	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	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	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	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	<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

<b>Ratings for Sustainability:</b>		
4	<b>Likely (L)</b>	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	<b>Moderately Likely (ML)</b>	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	<b>Moderately Unlikely (MU)</b>	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	<b>Unlikely (U)</b>	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

## **6.6 Annex 6: Interview questions**

### **Questions to PMU and project board members and other stakeholders**

#### **Relevance**

1. How does the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities?
2. How does the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities?
3. Where and how did the project concept originate from? How are relevant stakeholders involving in the project development process?
4. How relevant and effective has this project's strategy and architecture been? Is it relevant? Has it been effective? Does it need to change?
5. What are the decision-making processes -project governance oversight and accountabilities?

#### **Effectiveness**

6. Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met?
7. What key factors are contributing to project success or underachievement?
8. What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits?
9. To what extent are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met?
10. How do the key stakeholders feel this project has progressed towards the outcome level results (as stated in the original documents- inception report)?
11. How cross cutting areas have been included in the project's results framework and how do they monitor on an annual basis?
12. What are the remaining barriers to achieving the expected results as told by stakeholders interviewed?

#### **Efficiency**

13. Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
14. How does the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results?
15. Is the project implementation delayed? If so, has that affected cost-effectiveness?

16. What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
17. To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources?
18. What is project related progress in the following 'implementation' categories?

### **Results**

19. Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives?
20. Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective?
21. Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?

### **Sustainability**

22. To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
23. Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of "ownership" of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? What measures have been implemented for creating project ownership among relevant stakeholders?
24. Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained?
25. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors or on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance or environmental? What kind socio-political factors influence the project results?

### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

26. How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?
27. In what ways did the project's gender results advance or contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes?

### **Cross-cutting and UNDP Mainstreaming Issues**

28. How did the considered project design and implementation process effect on local population?

29. Which cross-cutting and UNDP mainstreaming issues were more considered by project implementation?

**Annex 6.7: List of people met and interviewed for the MTR**

**MoICE (19<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Dasho Tashi Wangmo, Secretary
2. Dorji Dradul, Director General, Dept. of Tourism
3. Tashi Tenzin, Project Manager
4. Jigme Dorji, Project Technical Specialist
5. Sita Devi Gautam, M&E Officer

**Department of Forest and Park Services (19<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Lobzang Dorji, Director & PSC Member
2. Sonam Wangdi, Chief, NCD & MTAC Member

**Trashigang Dzongkhag (5<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Ugyen Dorji, Dzongda
2. Kinley Dorji, EDMO (Project Focal)
3. Chimi Tshering, AMCO (Project Focal)
4. Karma Lekhi, Divisional Forest Office Trashigang
5. Kinley Dorji, Divisional Forest Office Trashigang
6. Tenzin Wangdi, Divisional Forest Office, Trashigang
7. Sonam Wangmo, Divisional Forest Office, Trashigang
8. Pema Longdhen, Dzongkhag Forest Office, Trashigang
9. Pema Rinzin, Sakten Wildlife Sanctuary, Trashigang

**Trashiyangtse Dzongkhag (6<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Baburam Sherpa, Dzongda
2. Sithup Lhendup, Chief Forestry Officer, Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary
3. Phurba Tshering, Dzongkhag Livestock Officer (Project focal)
4. Tempa Gyeltshen, Forestry Officer (Project Focal), Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Mongar Dzongkhag (7<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Lungten Jamtsho, Dzongda
2. Karma Tempa, Chief Forestry Officer
3. Tshewang Tenzin, Forest Ranger, (Project Focal)

**Lhuentse Dzongkhag (8<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Jigme Choden, Dzongda
2. Tshewang Zangmo, EDMO (Project Focal)

**Zhemgang Dzongkhag (15<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Kesang Jigme, Dzongdag
2. Pelden Wangmo, Chief DEO
3. Norbu Jamtsho, Planning Officer and Project Focal
4. Ugyen Zangmo, EDMO
5. Tashi Wangchuk, Divisional Forest Office

**Berti Ecolodge (15<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Pema Dorji, Manager
2. Yeshey Pelden, Housekeeping In-charge
3. Sangay Choden, Kitchen In-charge

**Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (24<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Sonam Dorji, Executive Director

**Trayana Foundation (24<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Sonam Pem, Executive Director

**Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (13<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Dr. Kinley Tenzin, Chief Executive Officer.

**Bhutan Trust Fund for Environment Conservation (13<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Dr. Karma Tshering, Managing Director
2. Phuntsho Choden, Programme Services
3. Singye Dorji, Investment and Financial Services

**Bhutan for Life (12<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Dr. Kunzang Choden, Program Manager
2. Tobgay, Manager-Finance and Administration

**WWF Bhutan (12<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Chimi Rinzin, Country Representative

**Guides Association of Bhutan (13<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Garab Dorji, Chairperson
2. Keshap Gurung, Manager

**Handicrafts Association of Bhutan (12<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Chorten, Chairperson

**Bhutan Tshar Institute, Mongar (9<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Sonam Jamtsho, In-charge

**UNDP Bhutan (19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Mohamad Younus, Resident Representative
2. Khurshid Alam, Deputy Resident Representative
3. Lhap Dorji, Portfolio Manager
4. Sangay Chophel, RBM Specialist
5. Mani Prasad Nirola, Project Manager
6. Netra Sharma, NAP Project Manager/ UNCDF
7. Lhendup Tharchen, Ex-Project Manager, UNDP (14<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

#### **UNDP, BRH (29<sup>th</sup> February 2024)**

1. Solene Le Doze, RTA

#### **6.7 Annex 7: Evaluation consultant code of conduct agreement form**

##### **Evaluators:**

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



**MTR Consultant Agreement Form**

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

**Name of Consultant:** \_\_\_\_\_ José Fernando Galindo Zapata

**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** \_\_\_\_\_ Quito Ecuador \_\_\_\_\_ **on** \_\_\_\_\_ 16/02/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(Date)**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

