



FINAL END OF TERM EVALUATION REPORT FOR MALAWI GREEN CORPS (MGC) PROJECT



SUBMITTED TO:

**THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - UNDP
P.O BOX 30135
LILONGWE,
E-MAIL: procurement.mw@undp.org**

JULY 2024

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SUBMITTED BY:

Emmanuel Charles Mkomwa (MSc) – Individual Consultant

P.O Box 129,

Lilongwe, MALAWI

Cell: +265 888 474 006

E-mail: nafemko@yahoo.co.uk

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PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT TITLE	Malawi Green Corps Project
CONTRACT NUMBER	PSC2021/012
START DATE	02/01/2021
END DATE	01/08/2024
PROJECT SITES	Karonga, Mzimba North (Mzuzu), Salima, Lilongwe, Dedza, Ntcheu, Mangochi, Machinga and Blantyre
EXECUTING AGENCY	Catholic Relief Services
IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change

PROFILE OF THE CONSULTANT

Mr. Emmanuel Charles Mkomwa holds an MSc in Environmental Science from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College (2014), coupled with over 10 years of extensive professional experience in diverse development sectors. His expertise spans areas such as environment and natural resources management, waste management, agriculture, climate change, disaster risk management, and local governance.

Since May 2020, Mr. Mkomwa has been engaged as an Environmental Specialist, providing consulting services to the Government of Malawi on two World Bank-funded projects: The Malawi Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Project (MRDRMP) and the Malawi Watershed Services Improvement Project (MWASIP). His role has been instrumental in guiding these projects towards their environmental objectives and ensuring their alignment with international standards and best practices.

Prior to his consultancy role, Mr. Mkomwa served as a Project Officer from 2017 to 2020 for the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF IV) Public Works Programme (PWP) at M'mbelwa District Council, Mzimba District. MASAF IV was financed by the World Bank and implemented under the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development through the Local Development Fund - Technical Support Team (LDF-TST), now known as the National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGC). In this capacity, he played a key role in designing the Public Works Programme for Youth, which later evolved into the Malawi Youth Afforestation Programme, contributing significantly to youth empowerment and environmental sustainability initiatives in the country.

Contact details: Mr. Emmanuel Charles Mkomwa – MSc in Environmental Sciences
Community Action for Environmental Management (CAEM)
P.O. Box 199,
Lilongwe, Malawi
Cell: +265 888 474 006
Email: nafemko@yahoo.co.uk

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Area Development Committee
CO	Country Office
DESC	District Environment Sub Committee
EAD	Environmental Affairs Department
EDO	Environmental District Officer
ETE	End of Term Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoM	Government of Malawi
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
IR	Inception Report
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGA	Local Government Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGC	Malawi Green Corps
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MTR	Mid-Term Review
OECD	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
ProDoc	Project Document/Concept Note
RSG	Resilience and Sustainable Growth
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
VAP	Village Action Plan
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committees
VDC	Village Development Committee
VNRM	Village Natural Resources Management Committee
VSL	Village-Savings and Loans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the End of Term Evaluation of the UNDP financed Project called Malawi Green Corps Project implemented in 10 districts of Karonga and Mzimba in Northern Region, Salima, Lilongwe, Dedza and Ntcheu in central Region and Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba and Blantyre in Southern Region. The aim of MGC was to provide over 2,000 youth aged 18 to 30 with employment opportunities for up to four months per year focused on environmental restoration of critical hotspots areas across Malawi. The ETE was performed by an Individual Consultant and below is the summary of the key findings

Table 1: Summary of MGC Project Information

Project Title	Malawi Green Corps Project
Contract Number	PSC2021/012
Start Date	02/01/2021
End Date	01/08/2024
Country	Malawi
Project Funds	U\$2,492,131.90
Project Sites	Karonga, Mzimba North (Mzuzu), Salima, Lilongwe, Dedza, Ntcheu, Mangochi, Machinga and Blantyre
Executing Agency	Catholic Relief Services
Implementing Partners	Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change

Malawi faced severe economic challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in significant impacts on livelihoods, businesses, and job opportunities, particularly among the youth. In response, Malawi implemented policy actions focused on protecting lives, livelihoods, and the future, investing in recovery and resilience efforts. To address these challenges, Malawi launched the Malawi Green Corps initiative, in partnership with UNDP, aiming to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for youth aged 18 to 30 through environmental management and ecosystem-based adaptation. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) supported the project's implementation in 10 selected districts, focusing on addressing youth unemployment, providing technical training, and fostering green job creation in areas such as forest restoration and conservation. Overall, the initiative was monitored by UNDP Malawi in collaboration with government technical departments through Nation Taskforce to ensure effective implementation and impact.

The MGC project had four outputs: Output 1: Malawi Green Corps Launched Output 2: Recruitment and Mobilization of Green Corps Cohorts, Output 3: Restoration of Environmental Hotspots and Output 4: Youth Skills Development and Peer Learning.

Table 2: Terminal Evaluation Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

Evaluation Ratings			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	2. IA & EA Execution	Rating
M&E Design at entry	S	Quality of UNDP Implementation	S
M&E Plan Implementation	MS	Quality of Execution-Executing Agency	MS
Overall quality of M&E	MS	Overall Quality Implementation	MS
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	4. Sustainability	Rating
Relevance	R	Financial Resources	U
Coherence	C	Environmental	ML
Effectiveness	S	Institutional framework and governance	ML
Efficiency	MS	Socio-Economic	ML
Overall MGC project Outcome Rating	S	Overall Sustainability rating	ML

Relevance: R – Relevant, NR – Not Relevant Coherent: C-Coherent NC- Not Coherent
 HS – Highly Satisfactory, S – Satisfactory, MS – Moderately Satisfactory, MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory, U – Unsatisfactory, HU – Highly Unsatisfactory
 Sustainability: L – Likely, ML - Moderately Likely, MU - Moderately Unlikely, U – Unlikely

	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU	Comments
Overall MGC Project Performance		S					

Rating: HS – Highly Satisfactory, S – Satisfactory, MS – Moderately Satisfactory, MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory, U – Unsatisfactory, HU – Highly Unsatisfactory

Project Strategy

The Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project was well aligned with key national and international frameworks, addressing climate change management and community-based natural resource management in line with MGDS III and the Sustainable Development Goals. The project effectively tackled local challenges identified in District Development Plans, such as environmental degradation and youth unemployment, through targeted interventions like afforestation and waste management. Despite lacking comprehensive gender mainstreaming during development, the project made strides in promoting gender equality and social inclusion by offering equal opportunities for young women and men. Additionally, the MGC's Strategic Results Framework provided a clear roadmap for achieving objectives, with effective resource allocation and risk management throughout implementation. UNDP's robust administrative and project

management capacity, coupled with its broader initiative for nationwide ENRM programs, underscores its commitment to environmental sustainability and resilience-building in Malawi and beyond.

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Through the Key Informant Interviews with GoM Staff it was revealed that during the concept note formulation phase with UNDP and inception meeting for MGC, it was communicated that GoM through Environmental Affairs Department and Department of Forestry will lead the implementation of MGC on the technical aspects and CRS will handle the administration aspects. However, in the due course, UNDP altered the arrangement that was communicated in the inception report, without communicating/consulting key government agencies as the main beneficiary of the project, shifting CRS's role into a comprehensive project. This shift led to operational challenges limited coordination between CRS and other stakeholders, notably observed in district-level activities. The KII with DESC members revealed that in other instances, CRS could go straight to the community members thus MGC Corps without going through district council, which is not in line with Decentralisation Policy of 1998. However, proactive measures by UNDP, such as stakeholder engagement and collaborative efforts to address equipment quality concerns, underscored its commitment to project effectiveness and sustainability.

The Project Concept Note outlined key implementation partners and stakeholders for the MGC Project, including the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Local Government, and various district councils. However, challenges arose in realizing the full potential of these partnerships, hindering effective coordination and collaboration.

The overall MGC project execution and the quality of M&E was rated moderately satisfactory.

Project Results

The Malawi Green Corps (MGC) Project effectively achieved its primary objective of providing employment opportunities to over 2,000 youth aged 18 to 30 across Malawi. The project engaged 2027 youth both male and female participants, with the majority involved in catchment management interventions like afforestation and natural regeneration. The majority of MGC participants were females (1098 female youths) representing 54.2 percent. The comprehensive training programs by MGC covered essential topics such as forest restoration techniques, waste management strategies, and entrepreneurship, aiming to equip youth with diverse skills for environmental restoration and sustainable management. However, challenges arose regarding the duration of training sessions, as none of the youth could attend all sessions, impacting their ability to fully grasp the intricacies of green ventures and make informed decisions. Suggestions were made to address this limitation by allowing participants to attend all training sessions, potentially enhancing their understanding and decision-making abilities regarding environmental initiatives.

The efficiency of MGC project was rated moderately satisfactory as activities were done on time such

as trainings and delivery of tools and materials. However, some grievances were resolved a bit late more than stipulated time of seven days to resolve an issue. There was delay payment of wages or stipend to the youth. The evaluation was unable to assess resource use efficiency as CRS was using its own resources to achieve some deliverables and UNDP disbursed the funds to CRS upon satisfaction and approval of the deliverables. The evaluation of the MGC project also identified three significant barriers to achieving long-term outcomes: the lack of machinery for briquette production, limited training on composting techniques, and community resistance to eco-friendly products like whisky glasses made from recycled bottles. Investing in briquette-making machinery, incorporating composting training, and reassessing initiatives like plastic brick production are essential steps to overcome these barriers. By addressing these challenges through strategic interventions tailored to local contexts, the MGC project can enhance its effectiveness and ensure the long-term sustainability of its outcomes, benefiting environmental conservation and community empowerment in Malawi.

The impact assessment of the MGC Project highlights its success in enhancing environmental status and mitigating environmental stress. The project rehabilitated 5226.5 hectares of land through natural regeneration and afforestation. By providing crucial cover to bare soils through tree planting and regeneration, the project has effectively reduced soil erosion risks. Additionally, it has contributed to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by enhancing carbon sequestration. Moreover, the project has fostered entrepreneurship among youth, leading to improved income levels and promoting sustainable practices aligned with environmental conservation goals. Overall, the MGC Project has demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing both socio-economic and environmental challenges, ultimately benefiting the well-being and resilience of the communities involved. The overall effectiveness of the MGC project was rated satisfactory.

Project Sustainability

The sustainability of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) Project faces various risks across financial, socio-economic, institutional, and environmental domains. The project build capacity of the youth through the trainings in various aspects such as tree nursery management, forest management and general safeguards aspects including gender based violence and HIV and AIDS among others. The project also provided tools and materials to the youth including well equipped first aid kit box, panga knives, slashers, wheelbarrows and work suits among others. The capacity in various spheres shall ensure carrying on of the project activities. However, financially, the absence of a structured savings and loans program poses a threat to the project's ability to procure essential tools and materials post-project. Socio-economic sustainability is moderately likely, with concerns about the government's formal agreement with youth clubs regarding benefits from forest enrichment. In terms of institutional framework and governance, gaps in coordination between youth groups and established governance structures present a risk, although strong leadership within certain youth groups offers promise. Environmental risks, particularly drought and water stress, could impact sustainability, but proactive

management and adaptive strategies can mitigate these challenges, ensuring the project's overall viability.

Lessons learnt and Best Practices

- a) Community engagement is vital for the success and sustainability of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project, yet there was a missed opportunity in fully utilizing existing local committees like the Village Natural Resources Management Committees and Catchment Management Committees. Rectifying this gap by actively involving these community structures in project planning and implementation will enhance effectiveness and ensure long-term sustainability.
- b) The Malawi Green Corps Project effectively empowered youth to lead environmental initiatives within their communities, utilizing youth network leaders to disseminate knowledge and foster peer-to-peer learning. Through this strategic approach, the project not only expanded its reach but also cultivated a culture of environmental stewardship among young people, ensuring a sustainable legacy of positive impact.
- c) Quantifying the value of ecosystem services through economic valuation and scientific assessments is crucial for the Malawi Green Corps project to prioritize conservation efforts effectively and garner support from stakeholders. Effective communication strategies are also vital for conveying the benefits of conservation initiatives to diverse audiences, ultimately fostering a culture of environmental stewardship within local communities

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evaluation highlights the Malawi Green Corps Project's alignment with national development strategies and its effectiveness in addressing environmental degradation, youth unemployment, and climate change resilience. However, areas for improvement in gender mainstreaming and project management were identified, emphasizing the need for enhanced gender-sensitive approaches and stronger collaboration with key stakeholders. To ensure long-term sustainability, efforts should focus on addressing financial, socio-economic, institutional, and environmental risks through robust financial mechanisms, strengthened governance structures, improved coordination, and adaptive strategies to mitigate environmental risks.

Recommendations

UNDP

- To enhance project management and partnership coordination, UNDP should actively improve communication through regular meetings and reporting mechanisms, while formalizing coordination through agreements that clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Building on the success of the MGC Project, UNDP should develop a comprehensive youth restoration program, incorporating lessons learned and proven methodologies to ensure

sustainability and scalability.

UNDP and CRS

- Collaborate to enhance gender mainstreaming by conducting a comprehensive gender analysis in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare. This analysis is essential to understand and address the specific needs and constraints faced by women and men within project communities, ensuring their full and equitable participation in all activities.
- Prioritize capacity building initiatives to strengthen local institutions and empower community members. This includes providing training on sustainable environmental practices, entrepreneurship, and gender equality, thereby fostering long-term resilience and self-reliance.
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track project progress, measure outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. This includes regular data collection, analysis, and reporting, as well as feedback loops to ensure adaptive management and continuous learning throughout the project lifecycle.
- Actively engage with local communities to promote ownership, participation, and stewardship of natural resources. This involves establishing community-based management structures, fostering dialogue and collaboration, and supporting initiatives that enhance local livelihoods and environmental conservation efforts.

CRS

- Implement savings and loans programs for project participants to ensure financial sustainability beyond the project's duration. This will enable community members to invest in maintaining essential tools and materials, thereby fostering self-reliance and long-term project impact.
- Explore alternative financing mechanisms to diversify funding sources and reduce reliance on external support. This proactive approach will enhance financial resilience and sustainability, ensuring the continuity of project activities and benefits for project participants and communities.

GoM

- Foster partnerships between youth groups and established institutions to enhance project effectiveness and sustainability. This can be achieved by actively promoting participatory decision-making processes, which empower local communities and leverage existing resources to maximize impact.

GoM and CRS

- Develop adaptive strategies, including the implementation of climate-smart practices and community capacity building for climate adaptation, to enhance the project's resilience to

environmental risks such as drought and water stress. This proactive approach is crucial for ensuring the long-term success of the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

The end of term evaluation of Malawi Green Corps Project was commissioned by UNDP as a standard mandatory requirement for UNDP supported projects-. The end of term evaluation mission took place in January and February 2024 and draft evaluation report was submitted in April,2024 following the debriefing field mission in February 2024.

The objective of the evaluation was twofold: to furnish evaluation evidence regarding the extent of the project's achievement of its intended results and to offer insights, lessons learned, and recommendations aimed at enhancing the design and implementation of similar initiatives in the future.

The 2012 UNDP document on "Project-Level Evaluation - Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, Financed Projects" outlines five complementary evaluation purposes for UNDP-supported -financed projects

- a) Enhance accountability and transparency by evaluating and disclosing the extent of project accomplishments.
- b) Extract valuable lessons to enhance the selection, design, and implementation of future - financed UNDP activities.
- c) Provide feedback on recurring issues within the UNDP portfolio, requiring attention, and improvements related to previously identified concerns.
- d) Contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving UNDP strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.
- e) Evaluate the extent of project alignment with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.

1.2 Scope and methodology of the evaluation of MGC Project

The evaluation methodology for the project's terminal assessment is grounded in the 2012 UNDP "Project-Level Evaluation - Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, and Financed Projects" and encompasses the following key components:

- a) Review of project documents before the evaluation mission, culminating in the development and submission of the Terminal Evaluation Inception Report for approval.
- b) Conducting an evaluation mission, including on-site visits and interviews with project management, UNDP Country Office (CO), project implementing partners, government representatives, steering committee/project board members, project beneficiaries, and other pertinent stakeholders, along with insights from independent experts.
- c) Presenting preliminary findings to UNDP CO representatives and receiving feedback.

- d) Drafting the terminal evaluation report, with ad-hoc clarification of gathered information and additional data collection if necessary.
- e) Circulating the draft terminal evaluation report for review and comments.
- f) Finalizing the terminal evaluation report, incorporating received comments.

The End of Term evaluation methodology adheres to the standard evaluation practices of UNDP-supported and financed projects. It involves a comprehensive approach, incorporating the review of project documents, deliverables, interviews with relevant stakeholders, analysis of collected information, presentation of preliminary findings and conclusions during the End of Term Evaluation (ETE) mission, drafting the ETE report, and the incorporation of received comments into the final TE report.

The data collection methodology for the End of Term Evaluation relies primarily on document analysis, situation analysis from open sources, on-site findings, and interviews with project stakeholders during the ETE mission. This methodology combines quantitative data with qualitative data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact. To mitigate the risk of misinterpretation, internal verification and triangulation of collected data have been implemented, involving cross-checking information across different sources. A three-step process of external validation includes feedback from diverse interviewed parties, the project team, and UNDP Country Office (CO).

Qualitative data analysis follows thematic areas aligned with guiding questions developed for the study. Evaluation site visits covered six districts —Karonga, Mzimba, Lilongwe Ntcheu, and Machinga and Blantyre —selected systematically and randomly from a sampling frame of 12 districts provided by the Client. Multi-stage sampling was used to draw respondents from the districts. The districts were purposefully grouped into three based on regions (Northern, Central, and Southern), with allocations predetermined to ensure representation from each region. District selection within regional groupings was done using simple random sampling. Interviews with technical staff were conducted at both district and national levels, involving key institutions such as CRS, EAD, Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, UNDP, as well as national-level key informants from various organizations. The list of institutions and contact persons interviewed is provided in Annex 2.

Table 3: Data Collection Method Used for SWOT Analysis:

SN	THEMATIC AREA	METHOD
1	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of all relevant available sources, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as hard-fact and soft-fact information.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of information from individuals representing diverse interests, providing a comprehensive perspective.
2	Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability in the reliability of information provided, influenced by the accuracy and unbiasedness associated with different sources.
3	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal verification and external validation processes offer the opportunity to enhance the reliability of collected and interpreted information in the End of Term Evaluation (ETE).
4	Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of misinterpretation of data and information due to a potential lack of understanding of the local development context, posing a threat to the accuracy and validity of the evaluation findings.

1.3 Evaluation Criteria

The terminal evaluation utilized key evaluation criteria outlined in the 2012 UNDP "Project-Level Evaluation - Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported and Financed Projects." These criteria are as follows:

1. Relevance

- a. Evaluation of the alignment of the activity with local and national development priorities, organizational policies, and its consistency with changes over time. This criterion also assesses how well the project aligns with the Operational Programs or the strategic priorities under which it was funded.

2. Effectiveness

- a. Examination of the extent to which the project objective has been achieved or the likelihood of achieving it.

3. Efficiency

- a. Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of funds expended to attain project objectives and results. This criterion evaluates how efficiently results have been delivered using the least costly resources possible.

4. Results

- a. Analysis of both positive and negative, anticipated and unanticipated changes and effects produced by the development intervention. In UNDP terms, results encompass direct project outputs, short to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impact, including global environmental benefits, replication effects, and other local effects.

5. Sustainability

- a. Evaluation of the probable ability of the intervention to continue delivering benefits for an extended period post-project completion. Sustainability considerations cover environmental, financial, social-political, and institutional framework and governance sustainability

6. Impact

- a. Assessment of environmental status improvement, environmental stress reduction, and progress towards environmental status improvement and stress reduction. This criterion encompasses the overall impact of the project on the environmental conditions it seeks to address.

1.4 Organization of MGC ETE Evaluation Report

The structure of this terminal evaluation report adheres to the guidelines outlined in the "Project-Level Evaluation, Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported and Financed Projects," UNDP 2016. The report encompasses the following sections:

- a) Executive Summary
- b) Introduction
- c) Project Description and Development Context
- d) Findings, covering aspects such as project design/formulation, project implementation, and project results
- e) Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons Learned
- f) Annexes

2 ROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND CONTEXT

2.1 Background Contexts

Located in Southern Africa, Malawi is a landlocked country bordered by Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania, with an estimated population of 20.41 million as of 2022 and an annual growth rate of 2.6%. (NSO, 2023)

Despite undergoing significant economic and structural reforms, Malawi remains one of the world's poorest countries. The economy heavily relies on agriculture, employing over 80% of the population and making it vulnerable to external shocks, especially climatic ones.

Malawi's economy faces challenges, including frequent exogenous shocks and macro-fiscal imbalances. Growth is projected to improve in 2023, reaching 1.6%, but persistent foreign exchange shortages hinder sustained progress. Despite anticipated economic growth in 2024, around 2.8%, challenges such as high poverty levels persist. Climate-related shocks, like Tropical Cyclone Freddy, have impacted agriculture, leading to minimal growth in output. Inflation remains high, reaching 28.4% in July 2023, primarily due to supply constraints. Rising interest rates and low foreign exchange reserves further complicate the economic landscape. Fiscal consolidation reforms have slightly reduced expected deficits, but public debt remains distressingly high, estimated at 80.3% of GDP in 2023. Interest expenditure is projected to consume a significant portion of the budget. (World Bank, 2024)

Low agricultural productivity and limited commercialization contribute to stagnant income growth for many Malawians. Market distortions, trade restrictions, and poorly targeted subsidies hinder sector development. Tropical cyclones, such as Cyclone Freddy, exacerbate these challenges, causing substantial losses. External imbalances and declining exports as a share of GDP pose obstacles to economic growth. Weak public financial management systems lead to missed fiscal targets and high deficits, while rising domestic interest rates contribute to escalating debt servicing costs.

2.2 Project Contexts

Malawi faced significant economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated measures implemented to curb its spread, leading to severe economic damage and impacting the livelihoods, businesses, and job opportunities of Malawians, especially the youth. The country experienced a multitude of crises, both internal and external, affecting its economy, public services access, and health and education outcomes. Data revealed a 26% decrease in imports in April and May 2020 compared to 2019, with reduced demand from key trade partners affecting exports. Domestic factors, including risk aversion and social distancing policies, further contributed to the socio-economic crisis, leading to substantial job losses, particularly among women.

In response to these challenges, Malawi's policy actions aimed at three objectives: protecting lives, protecting livelihoods, and protecting the future. The government focused on supporting livelihoods during the economic slowdown while simultaneously investing in broad-based recovery and resilience in the medium term. Addressing Malawi's vulnerability to climate and other shocks, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, was crucial for protecting the future. The country's dependence on rain-fed agriculture, biomass for household energy, and widespread ecosystem degradation contributed to slow economic growth and low resilience to disasters.

To address these issues, Malawi launched the Malawi Green Corps, aligned with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the National Resilience Strategy, and the Landscape Restoration Strategy. The initiative aimed to provide youths aged 18 to 35 with skills and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through engagement in environmental management and ecosystem-based adaptation. The Malawi Green Corps, launched in partnership with UNDP under the Transformative Adaptation for Climate Resilience (TRANSFORM) program, employed at least 2,000 youth for up to four months per year in environmental restoration activities across critical hotspot areas in Malawi.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was contracted by UNDP to provide financial management and human resource services for the project in 10 selected districts of Malawi namely Karonga, Mzimba, Salima, Lilongwe, Ntcheu, Dedza, Mangochi, Zomba, Machinga and Blantyre. The objective of the Malawi Green Corps was to address youth unemployment, provide on-the-job technical training, and create a pathway to green jobs by focusing on forest restoration, tree planting, site management, tool safety, conservation, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and other relevant topics. The recruited Malawi Green Corps members were supervised by CRS under the overall monitoring of UNDP Malawi in collaboration with the government's technical department namely Environmental Affairs Department, Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change.

2.3 Project Strategy outcomes and expected results

This initiative aimed at empowering youths by providing them with skills and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through engagement in environmental management and ecosystem-based adaptation. The was launched and piloted in a multi-phase approach which expanded in subsequent phases through access to finance and technologies, upskilling, and mentoring of youths as part of a long-term green economy process in Malawi.

The partnership further provided mentorship and hands-on environmental leadership training, facilitating Malawian youth in developing future skills and building diverse networks with environmental organizations and businesses. UNDP and its partners played important role, through the MGC project facilitated the transition of the youths and Malawi towards a greener economy by connecting Green Corps members with a growing network of environmental organizations and green businesses supported by various initiatives, including the Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund, the

Malawi Growth Accelerator, and the Zanchito entrepreneurship, vocational training, and business incubation initiative.

Following the identification of prioritized hotspots under existing frameworks, cohorts of youth in proximity to these areas were employed by the service provider-CRS in staggered phases for deployment after induction into the Malawi Green Corps. This sets the groundwork for the phased expansion to involve 2,000 youths based on lessons learned from initial cohorts. Four key outputs were expected from the CRS:

Output 1: Malawi Green Corps Launched

- Signing partnership agreements with the Government of Malawi and the selected service provider.
- Identification and rehabilitation of environmental hotspots aligned with national priorities.
- Establishment of roles and responsibilities for district and community engagement.
- Implementation of an accountability and tracking system for salary payments.
- Design and dissemination of an online mentor and peer platform.
- Development of an M&E framework for measuring biophysical improvements.
- Implementation of an outreach and branding plan.

Output 2: Recruitment and Mobilization of Green Corps Cohorts

- Prioritizing the localization of economic benefits to host communities.
- Utilizing biometric national ID cards for personnel validation and transparent remuneration.
- Finalizing recruitment guidelines in consultation with UNDP and the Government of Malawi.
- Adhering to health and safety protocols, including those for COVID-19, and protection safeguards.

Output 3: Restoration of Environmental Hotspots

- Restoration of up to 5,000 hectares of degraded land by the Malawi Green Corps.
- Cleanup of illegal dump sites containing non-hazardous waste.
- Diversion of recyclable materials for repurposing, recycling, or sale.
- Afforestation and reforestation focusing on vulnerable watersheds and using fast-growing indigenous species.

Output 4: Youth Skills Development and Peer Learning

- Providing peer learning and transfer of employable skills.
- Offering opportunities for youth engagement in environmental networks and coalitions.
- Training in social accountability, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and civic engagement.
- Gender mainstreaming and delivery of protection and gender equality training.

- Identifying opportunities to build skills for nature-based businesses, including collaboration with the Zanchito initiative.

A phased approach was adopted for the Malawi Green Corps, with progressively higher levels of skills development and youth ambition linked to more diverse employment opportunities. Successful graduates would access tailored training through UNDP to support the initiation of green MSME start-ups. Subsequent phases will focus on sustainability through the state budget and long-term management of a cohort of Green Corps graduates willing to mentor newly inducted youth.

2.4 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the Malawi Green Corps project was constructed around the crucial need to utilize financial resources, technical expertise, and stakeholder collaboration to address environmental degradation and climate change, while simultaneously promoting youth employment and sustainable development. Below is a conceptual framework outlining how the inputs from UNDP and partners were envisioned to be employed for implementing various activities, generating outputs, and ultimately realizing the anticipated benefits of this project. A visual representation of the ToC is provided in Figure 2-1.

2.4.1 Inputs

1. *Financial Contribution from UNDP:* The \$1,500,000 financial injection from the UNDP was meant to serve as the primary resource to kickstart the project, covering operational costs, capacity building, and implementation activities.
2. *Implementation Period:* With a timeline from February 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022, the project set a defined period to achieve its objectives, ensuring focused efforts and efficient resource allocation.
3. *Partnership Agreements:* The Project sought collaboration agreements with the Government of Malawi (GoM) and other stakeholders to establish a framework for cooperation, resource sharing, and coordinated action, leveraging the strengths of each partner.
4. *Recruitment Guidelines and HR Partners:* It planned to have established recruitment guidelines and engagement with HR partners to ensure a transparent and efficient process for selecting eligible youth participants, maximizing inclusivity and diversity.
5. *Procurement of Necessary Equipment and PPE:* Project has planned to procure essential equipment, tools, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for environmental restoration activities, ensuring the safety of participants and effective implementation of activities.
6. *Technical Support:* Technical expertise from UNDP, EAD, the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources (MFNR), and other partners would provide guidance, training, and capacity building support to implement activities effectively and sustainably.
7. *National Youth Service Initiative and Frameworks:* Leveraging existing frameworks such as the National Youth Service initiative would facilitate alignment with national priorities and enhance the project's impact by tapping into established networks and resources.

2.4.2 Activities

The implementation of the Malawi Green Corps project envisioned implementation of a series of dynamic activities aimed at addressing environmental degradation, promoting youth empowerment, and fostering sustainable development as presented hereafter.

- a. **Launch Malawi Green Corps:** Activities focus on finalizing legal agreements, developing an online platform for communication and coordination, selecting priority areas for intervention, and developing comprehensive communication plans to engage stakeholders and raise awareness.
- b. **Recruitment and Mobilization:** Implementation of recruitment guidelines and engagement with HR partners facilitate the identification and mobilization of eligible youth participants, ensuring their readiness and commitment to the project objectives.
- c. **Restoration of Environmental Hotspots:** Through a series of targeted activities, including cleanup of illegal waste sites, afforestation/reforestation efforts, and vegetative cover regeneration in watersheds, the project aims to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems and enhance their resilience to climate change impacts.
- d. **Youth Skills Development and Peer Learning:** Skills training, business support, safeguard training, and gender mainstreaming activities empower youth participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to contribute effectively to environmental restoration efforts while fostering entrepreneurship and gender equality.

2.4.3 Outputs

The project had four outputs focused on different aspects:

- a. *Establishment of Malawi Green Corps:* Tangible outputs include signed partnership agreements, a functional online platform, identification of priority areas for intervention, and finalized communication plans to facilitate project implementation.
- b. *Recruitment and Mobilization Success:* Quantifiable outputs include the recruitment of eligible youth participants, provision of necessary equipment and PPE, and the fulfillment of essential consumption needs, ensuring their readiness and well-being during project activities.
- c. *Environmental Restoration Achievements:* Outputs include the cleanup of illegal waste sites, afforestation/reforestation activities, and improved vegetative cover in targeted watersheds, demonstrating progress toward the project's environmental objectives.
- d. *Youth Skills Development:* High client satisfaction with the Malawi Green Corps program, demonstrated through feedback mechanisms, indicates successful skills development and peer learning outcomes among participants, leading to positive behavioral changes.

2.4.4 Outcomes

The project expected to result in four outcomes:

- 1) *Increased Youth Employment Opportunities*: The project aimed to create green job opportunities for youth, particularly in environmental restoration and related sectors, contributing to reduced youth unemployment rates and improved livelihoods.
- 2) *Environmental Improvement*: Outcomes included enhanced environmental conditions through the restoration of degraded land, improved waste management practices, and increased resilience to climate change impacts, benefiting local communities and ecosystems.
- 3) *Enhanced Skills and Knowledge*: Empowered youth participants developed skills and knowledge in environmental conservation, entrepreneurship, and gender mainstreaming, enhancing their long-term employability, resilience, and contribution to sustainable development.
- 4) *Strengthened Partnerships*: The project fostered collaboration and partnerships between UNDP, GoM, technical partners, and other stakeholders, promoting sustainable environmental and economic development initiatives and ensuring their long-term impact and sustainability.

2.4.5 Impact

The project was expected to contribute to four broader and long-term changes in human development and the environmental sustainability:

- 1) *Reduced Youth Unemployment and Poverty*: By creating green job opportunities and enhancing youth skills, the project aims to contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment and poverty levels, fostering inclusive and sustainable development.
- 2) *Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change*: Improved environmental conditions and enhanced community resilience contribute to climate change adaptation efforts, reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing the overall resilience of local communities and ecosystems.
- 3) *Transition to a Green Economy*: The project supports Malawi's transition toward a green economy by promoting sustainable employment, environmental conservation, and green business opportunities, aligning with national development priorities and global sustainability agendas.
- 4) *Improved Well-being and Livelihoods*: Ultimately, the project seeks to improve the well-being and livelihoods of communities, particularly those living in environmental hotspots, by addressing key environmental challenges, creating employment opportunities, and promoting sustainable development practices.

2.4.6 Key Assumptions

The project concept for the Malawi Green Corps project contained inherent assumptions that were essential for the success of the initiative. Here are the main assumptions:

- a. *Green Economy Transition*: The concept assumed that Malawi saw an opportunity to

- transition to a green economy as part of its COVID-19 pandemic response. It assumed that investing in environmental restoration and green jobs could address both immediate employment needs and long-term environmental challenges.
- b. *Partnership Readiness*: The concept assumed that there was readiness among various stakeholders, including UNDP, the Government of Malawi, technical partners, and other development agencies, to collaborate on implementing the Malawi Green Corps project. It assumed that partnership agreements could be finalized and that resources could be mobilized effectively.
 - c. *Youth Engagement*: The concept assumed that there was a pool of eligible youth interested in participating in the Green Corps initiative. It assumed that the youth were willing to engage in environmental management activities and receptive to skills training for green jobs.
 - d. *Resource Availability*: The concept assumed that the financial resources allocated for the project, including the \$1,500,000 contribution from UNDP would be sufficient to support the planned activities. It also assumed that necessary equipment, inputs, and technical support could be procured within the implementation period.
 - e. *Employment Opportunities*: The concept assumed that there would be demand for the services provided by the Malawi Green Corps, such as environmental restoration and waste management. It assumed that the project would ultimately create meaningful employment opportunities for youth, contributing to poverty reduction and economic resilience.

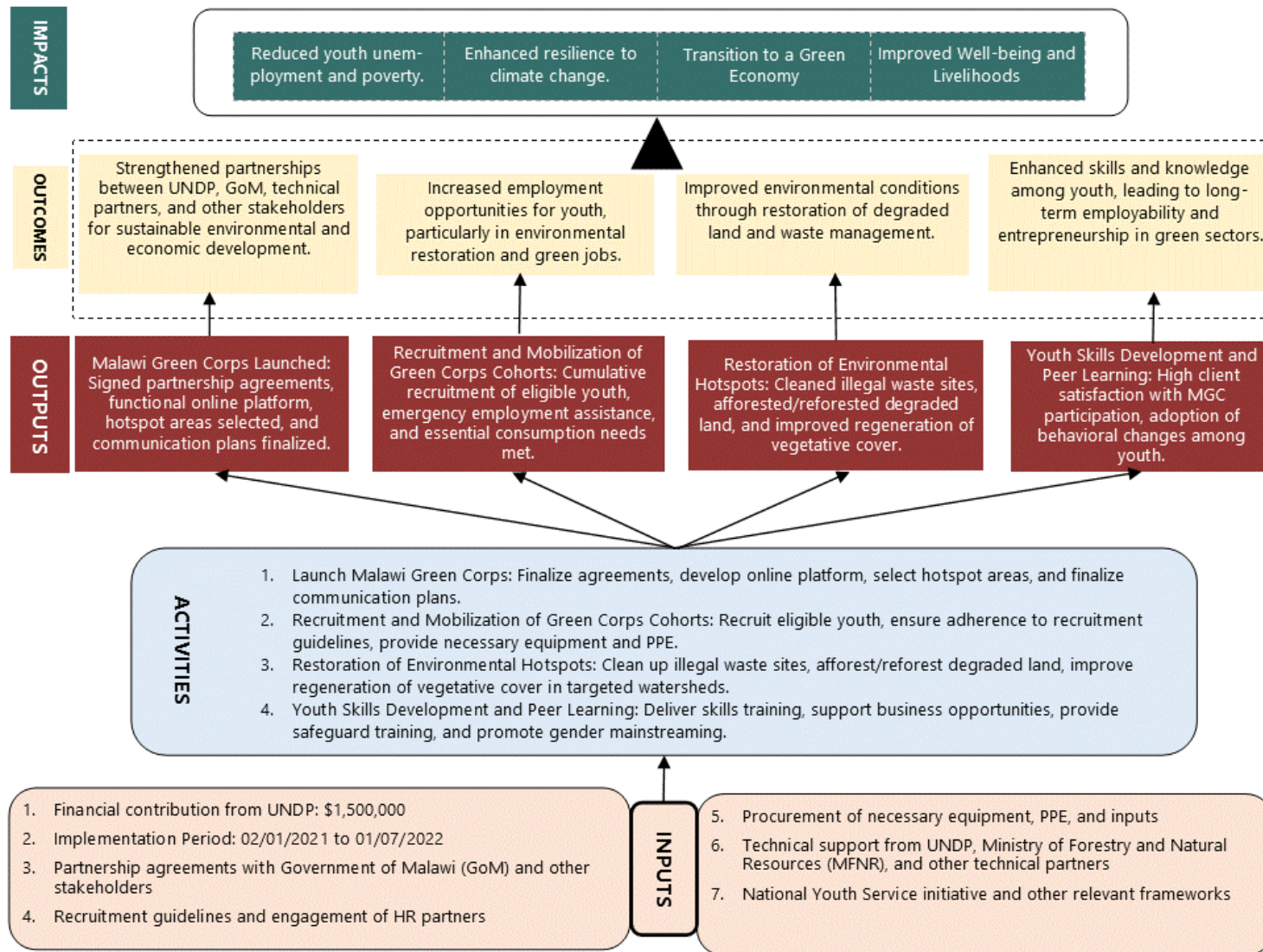


Figure 2-1. Malawi Green Corps Project Theory of Change

3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Project Strategy

3.1.1 Project Design, Coherence and Relevance

Overall, the Malawi Green Corps Project was rated to be relevant and coherent.

The End-of-Term Evaluation (ETE) indicated that the project's objective and activities aligned well with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030), Malawi Vision 2063, and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II). The intervention is consistent with Malawi 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1), particularly in its focus on promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience, aligning with enabler 7 of Malawi 2063 advocating for environmental sustainability.

The Malawi Green Corps (MGC) was in harmony with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III (2017-2022), where the government commits to addressing the impacts of climate change through enhanced investments in integrated and community-based natural resource management, decentralization, and local governance at the district levels. The project specifically contributes to MGDS III's priority area 1 on climate change management, aligning with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Malawi (2019-2023), pillar 3 on Inclusive and Resilient Growth.

MGC also aligned coherently with various policies, strategies, and plans in environment, natural resources, and climate change management due to its focus on landscape restoration, climate change mitigation, and resilience building. It aligns with the

- The Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for achieving Malawi's commitment to restoring 4.5 million hectares, with the potential for multiple benefits, including improved food security, increased biodiversity, enhanced water supply, job creation, income generation, carbon sequestration, and improved resilience to climate change.
- The National Resilience Strategy (NRS) aims to create a country free of chronic vulnerability and nutrition insecurity, promoting sustainable economic development, resilience to economic and environmental shocks, and opportunities for all.
- The overall Policy Goal for Climate Change Management Policy is to promote climate change adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building for sustainable livelihoods through Green Economy measures for Malawi. The policy outcome 2 is reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The policy objective 2 is contribute towards the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human-induced interference with the climate system within a timeframe that enables social, economic and environmental development to proceed in a sustainable manner;

National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy Climate Change Management Policy and the National Resilience Strategy (2018 – 2030).

The project's alignment with the Decentralization Policy was evident in its focus on strengthening Local Government Authorities (LGAs) for governance outcomes, youth empowerment, and climate management. The Decentralization Policy aims to enhance accountability and good governance at the local level, reducing poverty and mobilizing communities for socio-economic development.

At the local level, the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) seamlessly aligned with the District Development Plans of all 12 councils. These plans had identified environmental degradation, climate change, youth unemployment, and poor waste management as significant challenges faced by the district councils. The MGC effectively addressed these challenges by offering job opportunities to the youth, implementing afforestation programs, and promoting natural regeneration, thereby contributing to enhanced natural resources management. Additionally, the waste recycling and clean-up campaign conducted by MGC partially addressed the issue of poor waste management in the targeted areas.

The End-of-Term Evaluation (ETE) affirmed that MGC interventions were well aligned to the needs of the project beneficiaries. Through Focus Group Discussions, it was revealed that the youth participating in the project identified poverty and unemployment as major challenges they were facing. The MGC played a pivotal role in mitigating these challenges by providing employment opportunities for the youth. Notably, the project contributed to breaking down barriers and promoting equality between young women and men, offering both groups equal opportunities to participate in the MGC Project.

3.1.2 Analysis of Results Framework or Log frame

The Malawi Green Corps Strategic Results Framework, established during the project's design phase, presents a well-defined and coherent set of anticipated results. No modifications were made to the framework during the inception phase of MGC project. Upon reviewing the objective and outcomes, a logical "chain of results" is evident, outlining the progression from MGC project Activities to Outputs, Outcomes, and ultimately the Objective. Though the information is scanty, KII revealed that project resources have been effectively allocated to implement planned activities, yielding a set of expected outputs. These outputs, in turn, have contributed to the attainment of expected outcomes, collectively working towards fulfilling the overall project objective. The Strategic Results Framework includes a comprehensive set of indicators with baseline and target values for both the objective and each outcome, serving as benchmarks to gauge project performance. These indicators and targets have been instrumental in monitoring the project's progress

Risks and corresponding mitigation measures were identified in the project's formulation phase and were subsequently outlined in the Inception Report by CRS. These identified risks were not recorded

in the UNDP-Atlas system but were actively monitored throughout the project's implementation. The original set of risks identified during the project's formulation is detailed in the table 1.

Table 4: MGC Risks and Mitigation Measures

SN	RISK	RATING	SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES
1	Employment demand among youth exceeds available resources, leading to dissatisfaction of youth and criticism of government and partners.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted selection of hotspot areas for rehabilitation to pre-determine recruitment needs and strong management of the recruitment exercise. Recruitment guidelines will outline eligibility criteria for Malawi Green Corps, remuneration rates, and terms of employment, ensuring transparency and public awareness of the initial scope of the initiative. Creating employment opportunities for women, persons with disabilities, HIV and AIDS, or other vulnerabilities will be prioritized, with measures in place to ensure a safe working environment. Regular engagement and open communication with MGC cadre to manage expectations, problem solve, and promote continued support for the importance of the MGC to green jobs, environmental restoration, and youth civic engagement
2	Lack of equipment, nursery materials, and/or delivery of poor-quality rehabilitation services.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seedlings will be sourced in proximity to rehabilitation sites from pre-existing nurseries to reduce transport and maintenance costs (while stimulated local markets); indigenous species suitable to micro-climates will be selected; Technical partners will formulate detailed site rehabilitation plans, protocols for adherence by MGC members (e.g., spacing of saplings and seedlings, safety procedures, maintenance, proper waste disposal; UNDP will undertake timely and direct procurement of goods and equipment (e.g., protective clothing, gloves, shovels) for use by MGC cadres.
3	Poor adherence to COVID-19 prevention guidelines.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP delivery partners, as part of signing partnership agreements, will commit to observing Government of Malawi and UN health and safety protocols to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. UNDP will conduct regular spot-checks to ensure adherence to guidelines and will provide masks, sanitizers and other safety equipment, including through existing support to local manufacturers of PPEs. Physical distancing will be observed at all times, including during outdoor work by MGC members. Training and awareness raising on COVID-19 prevention will be delivered by Ministry of Health and WHO personnel on a regular basis to each MGC cohort group.

3.1.3 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming in the MGC project was not comprehensively addressed during the project development phase, as noted in the Concept Note. There was a lack of a standardized gender analysis aligned with UNDP requirements, leading to non-gender-segregated targets. In Malawi, women are typically the primary users of natural resources, with studies indicating their active involvement in conservation efforts compared to men. Recognizing this, most Environment and Natural Resources Management Projects in the country acknowledge gender-specific roles in forest and pasture management, as well as overall natural resources management.

Despite these recognized gender dynamics, the MGC project fell short in conducting a thorough stakeholder analysis during its formulation phase, particularly regarding gender mainstreaming. Notably, there was limited participation from the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, which holds the mandate to promote gender equality and protect the welfare of Malawian women, men, girls, and boys. The absence of representation from these key stakeholders at both the national and district levels highlights a significant gap in addressing gender issues within the project framework. However, gender mainstreaming was achieved at the level of representation as evidenced by the targeting of more girls than boys in the youth groups. This helped girls to benefit more from the project. As seen in Table 4: Out of 2026 youths that participated in the MGC project, 1098 were young women and girls representing 54.2 percent.

Table 5 Distribution of Youth by Gender in MGC Project:

SN	DESCRIPTION	Total	Male	Female
1	Total number of MGC youths recruited so far (Out of 2000)	2026	928	1098
2	Percentage(%) :	100	45.8	54.2
3	Average age for MGC youths so far	25	25	25

Among the ten districts encompassed by the MGC project, it is notable that only four districts namely Karonga, Dedza, Lilongwe, and Ntcheu exhibited lower levels of participation among female youth, as indicated in Figure 3-1. This observation underscores the importance of further examination to understand the underlying factors contributing to this disparity. Despite the commendable overall engagement in the project, the relatively lower involvement of female youth in these specific districts warrants attention and targeted interventions. By delving deeper into the socio-economic dynamics and cultural contexts within these regions, tailored strategies can be devised to enhance inclusivity and ensure equitable participation across all demographics. This proactive approach aligns with the project's overarching objectives of fostering community empowerment and sustainable development, ultimately contributing to more impactful outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

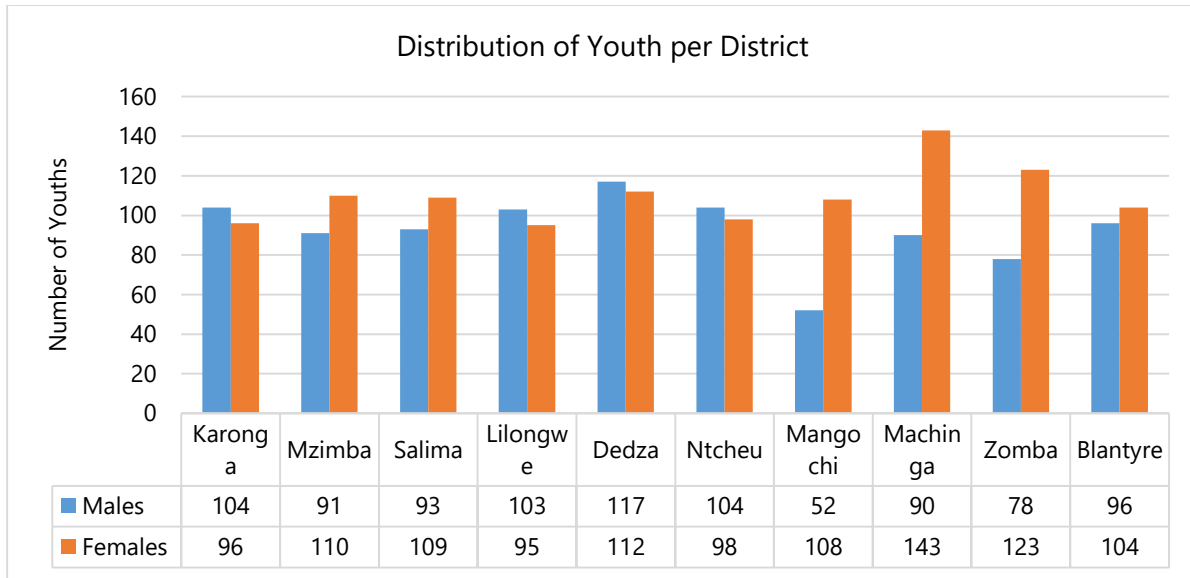


Figure 3-1: Distribution of Youth by Gender per District

3.1.4 UNDP comparative advantage

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) showcases a robust administrative and project management capacity, making it a trusted implementer of Environmental and Natural Resources Management (ENRM) Projects. As a neutral Global Environment Facility (GEF) implementing agency, UNDP brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the table. Leveraging its substantial in-country and regional knowledge, UNDP has successfully executed ENRM projects not only in Malawi but also across various regions worldwide.

The inception of the MGC Project stems from UNDP's broader initiative aimed at implementing similar programs focused on ENRM and Climate Change Management nationwide. This strategic approach allows UNDP to capitalize on its existing network of projects, facilitating the exchange of experiences and expertise among various initiatives supported by the organization throughout the country.

Furthermore, UNDP's involvement in the MGC Project not only demonstrates its commitment to environmental sustainability but also underscores its role as a catalyst for knowledge sharing and capacity building within the ENRM sector. By harnessing its extensive in-country and regional experience, UNDP continues to play a pivotal role in advancing environmental initiatives and fostering resilience in communities across Malawi and beyond.

3.2 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

3.2.1 Management Arrangements

The management of the MGC project diverged significantly from the planned scheme as communicated in the inception meeting of the MGC Project and as agreed during concept note formulation phase. Initially, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) in collaboration with the Department of Forestry (DoF) were designated as the key implementing partners and leading agencies. These government entities were entrusted with a technical leadership role, including formulating annual work plans and budgets, conducting trainings for cohorts, procuring materials, and supervising MGC activities. On the other hand, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was tasked with administering the project's payroll, managing youth recruitment, and ensuring timely wage payments, as part of their consultancy role under the MGC project.

However, without consulting or communicating with the government agencies, the UNDP altered the arrangement. The CRS consultancy was transformed into a comprehensive project, where all components related to the implementation of MGC were handled by CRS with EAD and the Department of Forestry providing only a supervisory role.

CRS employed Project Coordinators to oversee the day-to-day operations of the MGC Project, with contracts terminated upon project phase-out. This presents high project operational cost as the salaries and other benefits are shouldered by the project. The Government of Malawi expressed a preference for utilizing government staff on a regular basis rather than relying on hired experts and establishing dedicated time-bound Project Implementation Units. They believed this approach would facilitate the development of expertise that could be sustained beyond the project's duration. However, this organizational model in other instances posed challenges, as regular staff were often burdened with other work obligations and lacked experience in certain project-related activities.

The approach adopted by UNDP necessitated effective cooperation and information sharing across vertical and horizontal levels, encompassing central project management, district, and community levels. However, the evaluation revealed significant shortcomings in coordination between CRS and other relevant stakeholders. Apart from occasional meetings and annual project review sessions, there was limited engagement with stakeholders. In certain instances, CRS conducted project activities at the district level without informing council officials, as observed in Karonga. According to the decentralization principles, CRS was expected to halt initiatives at the district level, allowing district councils to cascade initiatives to the community level.

Furthermore, the evaluation highlighted the absence of formal project management activities, such as comprehensive work planning, reporting mechanisms, and approval processes. Disbursement of resources from UNDP to CRS was contingent upon CRS submitting deliverables to UNDP. Consequently, CRS relied on its own resources to implement initiatives, potentially compromising

intervention quality. CRS predominantly receives funding from various public donors, including USAID, USDA, CDC, DFID, and UN agencies such as UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, with resources strictly earmarked for activities across different portfolios. For instance, technical support from the Department of Forestry and EAD was only provided during CRS field visits, indicating a lack of dedicated budget lines for these sectors to offer continuous technical guidance as needed.

The UNDP Country Office took on the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of MGC Project activities, reviewing progress, and ensuring the proper utilization of disbursed funds. While UNDP was not directly involved in project implementation, its focus on results was evident primarily through its participation in National Level Committee meetings, ad hoc communication with project implementing partners, and the provision of feedback. UNDP Malawi remained vigilant regarding potential issues, particularly at the district level, concerning the quality of tools and materials procured and distributed to the cohorts.

During the initial phases, UNDP identified shortcomings in the quality of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), notably gumboots, and found certain tools such as slashers and panga knives to be of subpar durability. Recognizing the importance of addressing these concerns, stakeholder engagement sessions were conducted, particularly involving CRS and UNDP. Through collaborative efforts, including feedback mechanisms and joint initiatives, the quality of tools and materials, including PPE, underwent significant improvement.

This proactive approach underscores UNDP's commitment to ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the MGC Project. By actively engaging with implementing partners and stakeholders, UNDP played a pivotal role in addressing challenges and enhancing the quality of project outputs.

3.2.2 Partnership and Collaboration

The Project Concept Note outlined key implementation partners and stakeholders, delineating their respective responsibilities and areas of collaboration within the MGC Project framework. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), operating under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, was designated as the lead institution responsible for overseeing technical project implementation. This role was to be carried out in collaboration with the Department of Forestry, which also falls under the same Ministry. However, the actualization of this arrangement did not materialize as expected.

Additionally, other crucial project implementation partners and beneficiaries included the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Local Government, particularly district councils in areas such as Karonga, Mzimba (M'mbelwa), Salima, Lilongwe, Ntcheu, Dedza, Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, and Blantyre.

These governmental bodies were expected to play vital roles in various aspects of project execution and coordination.

Moreover, the Concept Note identified additional project partners, including the District Environment Sub-Committee (DESC), the Area Development Committee, and the Village Natural Resources Management Committee. These entities were envisioned to contribute at the grassroots level, ensuring community engagement and participation in project activities aimed at environmental conservation and youth empowerment.

Despite the intended collaboration outlined in the Project Document and Concept Note, challenges arose in realizing the full potential of these partnerships, particularly regarding the coordination between lead institutions and other stakeholders. Addressing these challenges would require concerted efforts to enhance communication, strengthen collaboration mechanisms, and ensure active engagement of all relevant parties. By fostering effective partnerships and coordination among stakeholders, the MGC Project can maximize its impact and contribute significantly to sustainable environmental management and youth development initiatives across Malawi.

3.2.3 MGC Linkage with Other Similar Project Interventions

Over the past decades and particularly in recent years, Malawi has seen the implementation of several initiatives aimed at youth empowerment and landscape restoration, many of which were established before the inception of the MGC Project. Noteworthy among these interventions are:

- **Enhancing Community Resilience Project (ECRP)** Funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID), Irish Aid, and the Norwegian government, ECRP, and its follow-up project, DISCOVER, were implemented by NGOs with a focus on building community resilience through landscape restoration efforts. These projects aimed to enhance ecosystem health and livelihoods through sustainable land management practices.
- **Shire River Basin Management Programme Phase I and II (SRBMP).** Supported by the World Bank, SRBMP focused on developing a planning framework for the Shire River Basin and improving land and water management for ecosystem and livelihood benefits. The project aimed to reduce erosion in priority catchments, mitigate sedimentation and flooding downstream, and enhance environmental services and agricultural productivity.
- **Malawi Watershed Services Improvement Project (MWASIP)** funded by the World Bank. The objective of the Watershed Services Improvement Project for Malawi is to increase adoption of sustainable landscape management practices and improve watershed services in targeted watersheds.

- **Malawi Youth Forest Restoration Programme.** Funded by the Malawian Government, this program aimed to raise awareness about the importance of ecosystem maintenance and engage young people in sustainable land management practices. With a significant investment of 1.42 billion Kwacha (approximately US\$2 million), the program aimed to empower youth while promoting environmental conservation.
- **Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forest in Malawi (PERFORM).** A five-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by a consortium led by Tetra Tech ARD, PERFORM focused on advancing REDD+ readiness and promoting forest restoration efforts. The project aimed to mitigate deforestation and degradation while enhancing ecosystem services and livelihood opportunities.

These initiatives, driven by both national governmental agencies and international NGOs, typically include components targeting landscape restoration and youth empowerment at the national and/or local levels. However, despite the abundance of projects, there is often limited coordination among state agencies and between project objectives and Malawi's actual needs. Donor-driven agendas sometimes overshadow local priorities, highlighting the need for better alignment between donor proposals and national development strategies.

Moving forward, efforts should be made to enhance coordination among stakeholders, ensuring that projects align with Malawi's development priorities and effectively address the needs of local communities. By fostering collaboration and synergy among various initiatives, Malawi can maximize the impact of youth empowerment and landscape restoration efforts, contributing to sustainable development and environmental conservation in the country.

3.3 Efficiency

UNDP defines project efficiency (cost-effectiveness or efficacy) as an extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. The evaluation study assessed the effectiveness of the intervention in achieving results in an efficient and timely manner. It investigated how inputs, including funds and time, were transformed into outputs and impacts, considering cost-effectiveness and comparing it to viable alternatives within the given context. "Timely" delivery refers to staying within the initially planned timeframe or making reasonable adjustments to align with the evolving context's demands.

3.3.1 Utilization of financial resources

The consultant's assessment did not delve into the utilization of financial resources to ascertain the absorption rate by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and whether expenditures fell within the budget lines and allocated resources. Financial resources were disbursed to CRS upon the achievement and

submission of deliverables to UNDP, with funds transferred once UNDP verified satisfaction with the deliverable. However, it is important to note that CRS primarily receives funding from various public donors, including USAID, USDA, CDC, DFID, and UN agencies like UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, with resources strictly designated for activities across different portfolios. This suggests that CRS may not have had idle funds allocated for the implementation of MGC project activities, raising questions about the efficient utilization of resources and the potential impact on project outcomes especially on monitoring aspects.

3.3.2 Time efficiency

The assessment of technical reports indicates that the majority of activities were completed within the stipulated timeframe. Focus Group Discussions revealed that training sessions on nursery establishment, tree management, waste management, and environmental and social safeguards were conducted punctually. Moreover, the delivery of tools and materials was reported to be on schedule. From the Individual Interviews with the youth, 99% of the youth indicated that activities were done on time while 1% indicated that they were delays in the implementation of the initiatives. However, youth clubs in Karonga and Mzimba reported delays in the delivery of seedlings, impacting their survival rates as they were planted towards the end of the rainy season. Additionally, delays in the disbursement of monthly stipends for the youth were noted by clubs in Karonga, Mzimba, and Machinga. These delays were attributed to poor preparation of wage sheets by supervisors and network challenges, as observed in Katili, Karonga, among other factors.

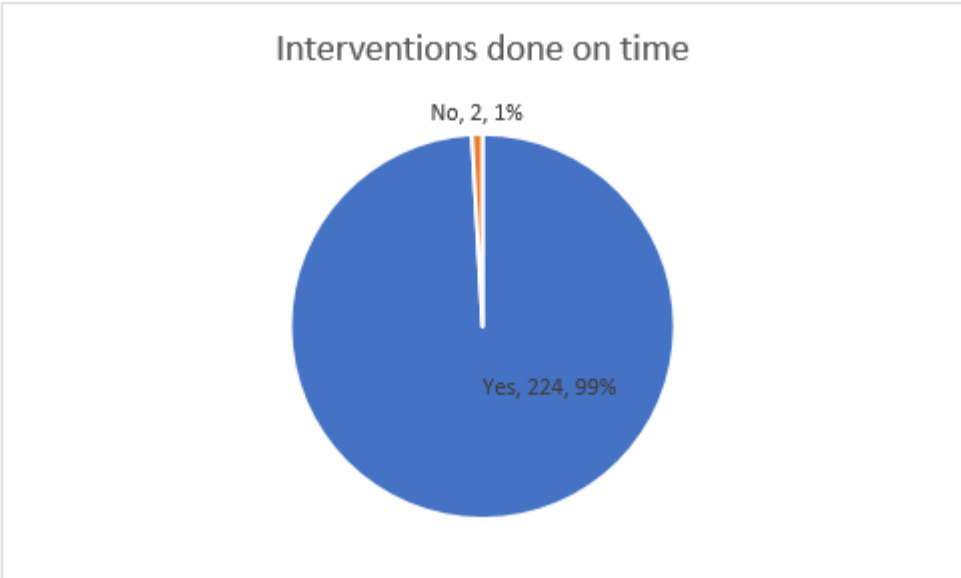


Figure 3-2: Perception of the Youth on Project Activities done on Time

3.3.3 Satisfaction of the Malawi Green Corps beneficiaries

The interviews conducted with youth across all six districts visited revealed a high level of satisfaction with the MGC project and its objectives (on a 5-point scale of not satisfied to extremely satisfied). Notably, the project has positively influenced their mindset towards waste management and provided employment opportunities that deter them from engaging in negative behaviors such as substance abuse, promiscuity, and political manipulation, particularly evident in Karonga district. Despite facing challenges such as low wages amidst currency devaluation, the youth expressed gratitude for the transformative impact of the MGC project on their lives.

According to the study findings, 15% of the youth reported being extremely satisfied, 53% expressed being very satisfied, and 25% indicated satisfaction with the project. Only 1% expressed dissatisfaction, primarily stemming from the observation that not all individuals participated in all three project phases or cohorts. They argued that comprehensive participation across all cohorts would have provided a deeper understanding of forest management approaches, beyond just nursery establishment. Such holistic understanding is deemed crucial for making informed decisions about future enterprises once the MGC project concludes.

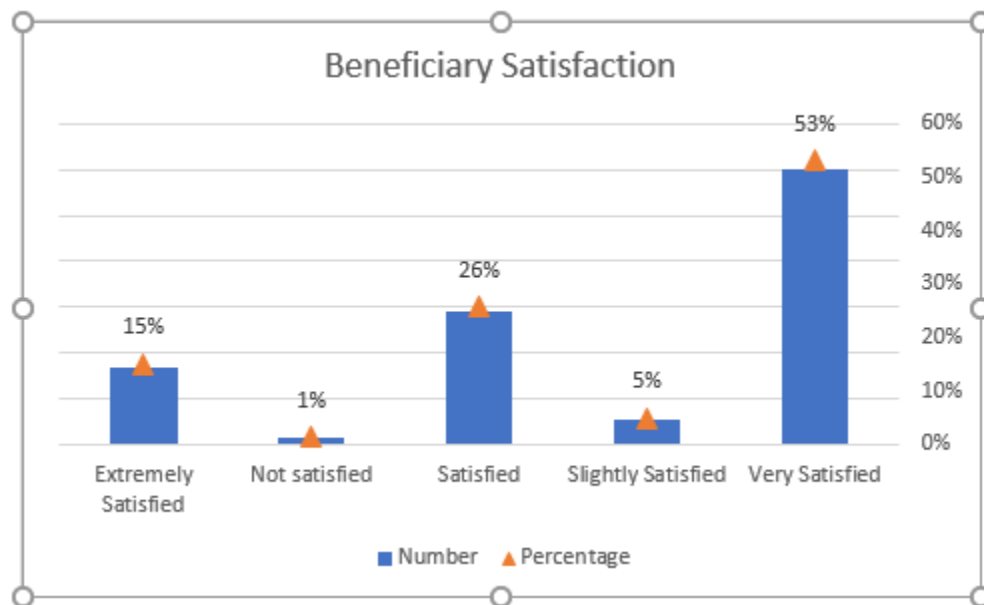


Figure 3-3: Satisfaction of the Project Beneficiaries with MGC Interventions

Consultations with selected members of the District Environment Sub-Committees (DESC) and Traditional Chiefs further underscored satisfaction with the project's outcomes. They highlighted how the project has addressed various challenges outlined in the District Development Plans (DDP), particularly in mitigating environmental degradation caused by issues like soil erosion and poor waste management. The MGC project's interventions have offered practical solutions to these pressing issues faced by local councils.

3.4 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the MGC project implementation is evaluated based on the extent to which its objectives have been accomplished. The primary objective of the project, which aimed to provide employment opportunities to over 2,000 youth aged 18 to 30 for up to four months per year, focusing on environmental restoration in critical hotspot areas across Malawi, has been successfully achieved. A total of 2027 youths, comprising both males and females, were employed under the project.

The vast majority of these youth, constituting more than 80% (1622 individuals), were engaged in catchment management interventions, predominantly afforestation and natural regeneration activities. Additionally, approximately 20% (405 youth) participated in waste management initiatives. The MGC Project demonstrated a commitment to empowering youth through comprehensive training programs, covering a wide range of topics essential for environmental restoration and sustainable management.

These training sessions encompassed various aspects such as forest restoration techniques, high-quality tree planting and maintenance, site management practices, tool safety protocols, conservation of native plant species, identification of invasive species, environmental advocacy and communication skills, entrepreneurship, and waste management strategies. Employing participatory approaches, the project facilitated both theoretical and practical training sessions to ensure a comprehensive learning experience for the youth involved.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the training, several challenges were identified. Stakeholders reported that the duration of the training sessions (2 days) was insufficient. Ideally, they suggested that 5 days would have been necessary to cover all materials adequately. Additionally, contrary to the training design within the MGC project, none of the youth were able to attend all training sessions. This limitation impeded the youth from gaining a complete understanding of various green ventures and their associated time and capital investment requirements. A suggestion was made that allowing youth to attend all training sessions would have better equipped them to make informed decisions regarding their choice of green ventures.

3.4.1 Progress Towards Results

3.4.1.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

The Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project was designed to achieve four key outcomes: the launch of the Malawi Green Corps initiative, the successful recruitment and mobilization of Green Corps cohorts, the restoration of environmental hotspots, and the development of youth skills through peer learning. To gauge the progress of implementation, a comprehensive set of 11 indicators was established, with each indicator assigned a specific target to be reached by the project's conclusion.

The progress made by the MGC project against each expected outcome is provided in Table 6, which showcases the key results achieved alongside the corresponding targets. To provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of the project's advancement, a color-coded "traffic light system" has been adopted. This system utilizes different colors to represent the level of progress achieved by the project against each indicator. Green indicates that the target has been met or exceeded, yellow suggests progress but with room for improvement, and red signifies areas where progress has fallen short of the target and requires attention and intervention.

Through this structured approach to monitoring and evaluation, the MGC project aims to ensure transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in its implementation, ultimately contributing to the sustainable environmental conservation efforts in Malawi while simultaneously empowering its youth population.

Table 6: Progress Towards Achievement of the Results

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
1	Outcome 1: Malawi Green Corps Launched						
1.1	Number of project launch sessions held	Number	1	1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Malawi Green Corps (MGC) Project received a significant boost with its official launch by the esteemed State President, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, on the 26th of February 2022. This momentous occasion marked a pivotal milestone in Malawi's commitment to environmental conservation and youth empowerment. 	The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework lacked an indicator to measure this specific outcome. However, recognizing its significance, a proposed indicator has been put forth by the consultant to address this gap
2	Outcome 2: Recruitment and Mobilization of Green Corps Cohorts						
2.1	Number of youths recruited (aiming for gender parity and providing employment opportunities for people including people living with HIV/AIDS, other health conditions and vulnerabilities).	Number	2000	2027		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MGC Project successfully recruited 2027 youths from across all 12 districts in Malawi. Additionally, the project provided job opportunities for project staff who were recruited by CRS 	The MGC is commended for surpassing the target. This entails that more youths were reached and benefited from the project
2.2	Percentage of turnover rate of MGC members on monthly basis (to monitor retention).	Percentage	100% (2027)	0.4% (8)		The MGC project tried to monitor retention and at least 8 MGC members were discovered to be able to utilise the business capital and grow it.	Much as this indicator was not the focus of the project, it is important to monitor the members to ensure retention because this can

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
							ensure sustainability
2.3	Percentage of HR issues and complaints resolved within a given time (submission of monthly updates based on the complaints and feedback received from the hotline and the established monitoring system).	Percentage	100%	100%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youths involved in the MGC Project voiced a range of concerns to CRS, encompassing issues such as delayed payment of wages and dissatisfaction with the quality of tools and materials provided, particularly regarding personal protective equipment like gumboots. Prompt action was taken, and all HR-related grievances were successfully addressed, ensuring a smoother working environment for the participants. However, despite the resolution of these HR-related matters, some grievances persist in certain areas. Notably, in Machinga district, reports emerged indicating that the youth had yet to receive 	The Youth and other stakeholders were happy that the system was effective and this helped in resolving the issues on time.

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
						<p>their lunch allowances. This delay stemmed from an incomplete requisition process, resulting in frustration among the youth who were left without this crucial support. Interestingly, it was observed that only Chiefs and Extension workers had received their allowances, exacerbating the sense of inequity among project participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing these lingering issues in a timely and equitable manner is essential to maintaining the morale and commitment of all participants involved in the MGC Project. CRS should prioritize resolving these outstanding grievances to ensure the smooth continuation of project activities and uphold the principles of fairness and 	

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
						<p>accountability. By promptly addressing concerns related to logistical support and ensuring equitable distribution of resources, CRS can foster a positive working environment conducive to the success of the MGC Project's objectives.</p>	
2.4	Percentage of MGC members receiving medical support within 12 hours.	Percentage	100%	100%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout the duration of the MGC project, no members required medical support, as there were no reported major incidents or accidents. 	Fully achieved/met
2.5	Percentage of MGC member provided with the workplace & accident insurance.	Percentage	100%	100%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major incidents or accidents were reported during the course of the project, thus no MGC member was provided with workplace or accident insurance. However, CRS has engaged a dedicated service provider for health insurance or a 	Fully achieved/met

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
						medical scheme for his staff.	
2.6	MGC member satisfaction survey at the end of each phase with at least 10 percent of cohort sampled.	Number	946	809		The MGC Project managed to reach out to more than 85% of the targeted youth on satisfaction survey to determine their satisfaction on the project implementation	Good progress and achievement made
3 Outcome 3: Restoration of Environmental Hotspots							
3.1	Number of rehabilitated/restored hotspots.	Number	58	26		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MGC project has made significant strides in its rehabilitation efforts, successfully restoring 26 out of the 58 identified hotspots. These rehabilitated areas encompass a diverse range of environments, including both dump sites and catchment areas. 	The target of 58 hotspots did not take into account the varying sizes of each site. This ambitious number proved challenging to achieve within the project's limited two-year timeframe and resource constraints
3.2	Size of rehabilitated/restored hotspots.	Number	5000	5226.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MGC project has successfully rehabilitated a total of 5226.6 hectares of degraded land, comprising both tree-planting initiatives and natural regeneration efforts. The tree-planting activities 	The target was over achieved

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
						<p>primarily focused on areas surrounding schools and other communal lands, such as dambos, aiming to enhance environmental sustainability and provide green spaces for the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, natural regeneration efforts were undertaken in protected forests, notably in locations like Ntcheu. Furthermore, forest enrichment initiatives were implemented, involving the strategic planting of trees within existing forested areas to bolster biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. 	
3.3	Frequency of watering and maintenance of rehabilitated plots	Number	4 times a week	2 times a week		Watering was carried out twice a week and did not meet the target because of other domestic chores and scarcity of water especially during dry period (between September and December) of the year	This is 50% achievement. There is need to improve on the frequency of watering and maintenance

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
3.4	Survival rate of plantings (at 3-month intervals).	Percentage	100% survival rate of plantings	66% survival rate of plantings		On average, the survival rate of plantings is at 66% against a target of 100%. There will be a	need to ensure improved survival of plantings through enhanced watering and maintenance of the restoration plots
3.5	Certification of proper disposal of waste (including estimate of kilograms and waste composition).		No data	No data		Unable to assess	
4 Youth Skills Development and Peer Learning							
4.1	Number of peer learning on-line platforms established and operationalized	Number	1	0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the concept note, the MGC project had initially planned to develop an online platform for peer learning, but this initiative did not come to realization. 	The outcome number four, as noted in the concept note, was lacking an indicator for measurement. However, recognizing this gap, the consultant has proposed an indicator to address the deficiency.
4.2	Number of peer learning visits conducted	Number	1	1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was reported that the youth in Lilongwe actively participated in the Youth Day event held at CIVO Stadium in Lilongwe. During the event, the youth had the opportunity to showcase their products at a designated 	The outcome number four, as noted in the concept note, was lacking an indicator for measurement. However, recognizing this gap, the consultant has proposed an indicator to address the deficiency.

SN	INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT	ETE ASSESSMENT	RESULTS	REMARKS
						<p>pavilion and engage in meaningful discussions, serving as a platform for exchanging ideas with fellow youth from other districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, district council officials, as reported by the Blantyre District Council, undertook a visit to Balaka to gain insights into Catchment Management practices. This visit aimed to facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building among district officials, fostering collaborative efforts towards effective environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management. 	

3.4.1.2 Unplanned effects/results

Youth participation in the Youth Day event in Lilongwe was robust, with active engagement in product showcasing and discussions, promoting idea exchange among youth from various districts.

District council officials from Blantyre visited Balaka to learn about Catchment Management practices, facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity-building among officials, fostering collaborative efforts for environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management.

3.4.1.3 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

The evaluation assessment of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project has uncovered three significant barriers that could impede the achievement of long-term outcomes. Firstly, the lack of machinery or equipment for the production of briquettes poses a considerable challenge. Briquettes, typically made from organic waste like groundnut leftovers, are crucial for sustainable energy solutions. However, the manual molding process used currently results in suboptimal pressing, affecting the quality of the briquettes. Consequently, consumers may prefer machine-pressed briquettes due to their higher durability. Addressing this barrier by investing in briquette-making machinery could significantly enhance both the quality and marketability of the product, ensuring its sustainability in the long run.

Secondly, the evaluation highlighted the limited focus on training youth in manure making or composting from household waste, particularly for the production of Mbeya fertilizer. While the project primarily utilizes maize bran, ash, and animal waste for Mbeya fertilizer production, neglecting to tap into household waste as a resource is a missed opportunity. By incorporating training on composting techniques, the MGC project could not only contribute to waste reduction but also enhance soil fertility sustainably, thereby promoting agricultural productivity in the long term.

Lastly, the evaluation underscored a resistance among community members towards using whisky glasses made from recycled bottles. Despite growing demand in urban areas, the prevailing perception in rural communities may hinder widespread adoption of such eco-friendly products. Additionally, proposed initiatives like plastic brick production from plastic bottles were deemed unfeasible due to their resource-intensive nature and reliance on energy sources like firewood. Given the rural context's limited access to such resources, the sustainability of these initiatives becomes questionable. Consequently, the MGC project may need to reassess its approach and explore alternative solutions that align more closely with the local socio-economic and environmental realities.

To sum up, addressing these barriers will require strategic interventions that prioritize investment in appropriate technologies, comprehensive training programs, and community engagement initiatives tailored to local contexts. By overcoming these challenges, the MGC project can enhance its effectiveness and ensure the long-term sustainability of its outcomes, ultimately contributing to environmental conservation and community empowerment in Malawi.

3.5 Impact

The impact assessment of the MGC Project focuses on enhancing environmental status and mitigating environmental stress. The MGC project was primarily designed to target environmental status improvement. Notably, it has yielded significant impacts by providing crucial cover to bare soils, thereby mitigating soil erosion risks. Through the planting of new trees and regeneration of existing ones, the project has created a natural barrier that intercepts rainfall, effectively halting splash erosion and safeguarding soil integrity. Table 3-4 shows area under natural regeneration and afforestation per district.

Figure 3-4; Area under natural regeneration and afforestation per district

SN	DISTRICT	HOTSPOTS	TOTAL HA
1	Karonga	Katiri	738.8
		Mpata	
2	Mzimba	Njakwa	1766.3
		Bwabwa	
3	Salima	Mpitolira	179.2
		Mtunthama	
4	Lilongwe	Dzalanyama	320.1
		Maliri	
5	Dedza	Mua tsanya forest reserve	820.1
		Dedza plantation	
6	Ntcheu	Dzodzi mvai	107.4
7	Mangochi	Chikolowondo	115.8
		Chiwaula	
8	Machinga	Chifefe	127.8
		Molipa	
		Chigona	
9	Zomba	Chipini	422.8
		Minama	
10	Blantyre	Michiru I	628.2
		Michiru II	
		TOTAL	5226.5

Source: CRS dashboard

Furthermore, the MGC Project has contributed to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, thereby playing a role in mitigating climate change. By enhancing carbon sequestration through tree planting

and forest regeneration, the project has helped decrease the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thereby contributing to global efforts in combating climate change.

The MGC project has not only facilitated an increase in the number of businesses among the targeted youth, both individual and group ventures, but has also led to a notable improvement in their income levels within the targeted districts. This positive development signifies a significant step forward in environmental restoration efforts, as the youth are actively engaged in green businesses that have the potential to contribute to the conservation of natural resources. By fostering entrepreneurship and economic empowerment among the youth, the project is not only enhancing livelihoods but also promoting sustainable practices that align with environmental conservation goals. This dual impact underscores the project's effectiveness in addressing both socio-economic and environmental challenges, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and resilience of the communities involved. Overall, the impact assessment rates the project's impact as moderate on a three-level scale, which corresponds to a significant positive effect in terms of environmental improvement. This evaluation underscores the project's effectiveness in addressing environmental concerns and highlights its contribution to sustainable environmental management and climate change mitigation efforts.

3.6 Sustainability

3.6.1 Financial risks to sustainability

Financial risk, particularly the common concern of insufficient or nonexistent post-project funding for the procurement of essential tools and materials—primarily wheelbarrows, pangas, slashers, polythene tubes, tree seeds, and personal protective equipment like work suits and gloves—poses a significant threat to the sustainability of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) Project. The absence of a structured savings and loans program at the youth club level was a missed opportunity, as it could have provided a means for the clubs to generate partial interest from their savings. This interest could then have been utilized for the maintenance of tools and materials. Unfortunately, this crucial financial sustainability measure was not considered nor implemented.

The oversight in establishing a financial mechanism such as savings and loans may impede the MGC Project's ability to independently maintain the necessary tools and materials, potentially jeopardizing its long-term impact and success. The prospects of financial resources sustainability is rated Unlikely.

3.6.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

No substantial social or political risks to project sustainability were identified. Nevertheless, the government's ownership of forest-protected areas, while officially declared, lacked a formal agreement with youth clubs regarding the benefits that the youth could derive from forest enrichment and natural regeneration. The socio-political and economic sustainability is rated moderately Likely.

3.6.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

The evaluation highlighted the significant role of strong and committed leadership within certain youth groups as a pivotal factor contributing to the long-term sustainability of the MGC project's activities. This leadership was particularly evident in the regions of Karonga, Lilongwe, and Machinga. However, it also raised concerns regarding the inadequate coordination and linkage between these youth clubs and established local governance structures such as the Village Natural Resources Management Committee (VNMCs) and Catchment Management Committees (CMCs). These governmental bodies play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of catchment management initiatives at the village and area levels, respectively. Unfortunately, in some areas like Ntcheu and Lilongwe, the VNMCs were found to be non-functional or even nonexistent, indicating gaps in the local institutional framework. Furthermore, the evaluation revealed that many of the youth clubs were already engaged in similar activities prior to the initiation of the MGC project. This suggests that while there is existing enthusiasm and initiative among youth, there is a risk of duplication of efforts and potential inefficiencies in resource allocation. Overall, the assessment rated the institutional framework and governance risks to the sustainability of the project as moderately likely, underscoring the need for concerted efforts to strengthen coordination between youth groups and established governance structures while leveraging existing community resources and initiatives.

3.6.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

The evaluation identified drought or water stress as a significant environmental risk that could potentially impact the sustainability of the project. This risk was particularly evident in Machinga, where observations revealed instances of tree nurseries being either transplanted or seedlings not being planted due to the adverse effects of drought or water scarcity. Despite this notable challenge, no other environmental risks to the project's sustainability were identified during the evaluation process.

Environmental sustainability, as assessed, is considered to be moderately likely based on the findings. This rating reflects the recognition of the potential impact of environmental factors, such as drought or water stress, on the project's long-term viability. However, it also acknowledges that while these risks exist, they are not insurmountable and can be addressed through appropriate mitigation measures and adaptive strategies. Thus, while challenges may arise, the project's overall sustainability remains feasible with proactive management and responsive interventions to mitigate environmental risks.

4 LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

4.1 Community Engagement Matters:

Community engagement stands as a cornerstone of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project's success, as it relies heavily on active participation from local communities. Recognizing the intrinsic link

between community involvement and project sustainability, the MGC project prioritized engaging community members in decision-making processes, planning, and implementation efforts. This approach was crucial for fostering a sense of ownership among the communities, thereby enhancing the project's long-term viability. Moreover, the project recognized the invaluable traditional knowledge possessed by community members regarding ecosystems, which was leveraged to inform and enhance environmental management practices.

Despite these overarching goals, it is important to acknowledge a missed opportunity within the MGC project's implementation strategy. Specifically, the project did not fully capitalize on the existing Village Natural Resources Management Committees and Catchment Management Committees available in the project sites. These committees serve as vital platforms for local stakeholders to collaborate, share knowledge, and coordinate efforts related to natural resource management. By not actively engaging these established community structures, the MGC project may have overlooked valuable channels for grassroots involvement and support.

Furthermore, while the project engaged with the Area Development Committee (ADC), which is undoubtedly important for broader coordination and oversight, it should be noted that this engagement does not fully substitute for the nuanced, community-level insights and connections that could have been gained through direct involvement with the Village Natural Resources Management Committees and Catchment Management Committees.

Moving forward, recognizing and rectifying this gap in community engagement will be crucial for the MGC project to enhance its effectiveness and ensure its long-term sustainability. By actively involving local committees and community members at various levels of project planning and implementation, the MGC project can tap into invaluable local knowledge, strengthen community buy-in, and ultimately maximize its positive impact on environmental conservation efforts in Malawi.

4.2 Youth as Change Agents

Empowering youth to take on roles as environmental stewards not only amplifies their direct contributions but also sparks inspiration within their communities. The Malawi Green Corps Project served as a compelling demonstration of how young individuals can emerge as catalysts for positive change in their localities. A particularly commendable aspect of the project's design was its utilization of youth network leaders, as exemplified in the case of Karonga. These leaders played a pivotal role in disseminating crucial skills and knowledge acquired through the project to other youth club members who may not have had the opportunity to participate fully in the MGC Project activities.

By leveraging the leadership capabilities of these youth network leaders, the project not only expanded its reach but also fostered a culture of peer-to-peer learning and empowerment. Through mentorship and skill-sharing initiatives spearheaded by these leaders, a ripple effect was generated, inspiring a

broader cohort of young people to engage actively in environmental conservation efforts. This multiplier effect is particularly noteworthy, as it extends the project's impact far beyond its initial scope, creating a sustainable legacy of youth-driven environmental stewardship within communities.

Furthermore, the involvement of youth network leaders served to bridge potential gaps in participation, ensuring that the benefits and knowledge gained from the MGC Project were widely disseminated and accessible to all interested youth, regardless of their initial level of involvement. This inclusive approach not only enhances the project's effectiveness but also cultivates a sense of ownership and agency among young people, empowering them to become effective agents of change in addressing environmental challenges within their communities.

In essence, the strategic utilization of youth network leaders within the Malawi Green Corps Project exemplifies a best practice in youth empowerment and community engagement. By harnessing the enthusiasm and leadership potential of young individuals, the project not only achieves its immediate objectives but also lays a strong foundation for sustained environmental stewardship and positive social impact in the long term.

4.3 Ecosystem Services Valuation

Quantifying the value of ecosystem services, including essential functions such as clean water provision, soil fertility maintenance, and biodiversity preservation, is paramount for prioritizing conservation efforts effectively. Within the context of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project, exploring methods to assess and communicate these values is vital. By doing so, the project can illuminate the tangible benefits that stem from its conservation initiatives, thereby enhancing awareness and support from the general public and key stakeholders.

One approach the MGC project could consider is employing economic valuation techniques to assign monetary values to ecosystem services. This involves assessing the economic benefits that society derives from these services, such as the cost savings associated with water purification provided by intact ecosystems or the economic contributions of biodiversity to industries like agriculture and tourism. By quantifying these values, the project can demonstrate the concrete economic returns on investment in environmental conservation, thereby making a compelling case for its initiatives.

Furthermore, the MGC project could utilize scientific assessments and modeling tools to evaluate the ecological impacts of its conservation actions. This could involve monitoring changes in key indicators of ecosystem health, such as water quality, soil fertility, and species diversity, and quantifying the associated benefits to human well-being. By employing robust scientific methodologies, the project can provide credible evidence of the positive outcomes of its efforts, bolstering its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders.

In addition to quantitative assessments, the MGC project should prioritize effective communication strategies to convey the value of ecosystem services to various audiences. This could involve leveraging multimedia platforms, community outreach events, and stakeholder engagement sessions to disseminate information in a clear, accessible manner. By fostering a deeper understanding of the connections between ecosystem health and human well-being, the project can garner broader public support and mobilize resources more effectively.

Overall, by quantifying and communicating the value of ecosystem services, the Malawi Green Corps project can enhance its impact and sustainability. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of conservation efforts, the project can galvanize support from stakeholders and cultivate a culture of environmental stewardship within local communities.

4.4 Long-Term Monitoring and Succession Planning

Ensuring the sustained impact of the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) project necessitates the establishment of mechanisms for long-term monitoring beyond its official completion. While the project's interventions may yield immediate benefits, true sustainability demands ongoing vigilance and adaptive management. To achieve this, the MGC project should identify and engage champions who can carry forward its vision even after its official closure.

One approach is to cultivate partnerships with local institutions, such as universities, research organizations, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with a vested interest in environmental conservation. By collaborating with these entities, the MGC project can leverage their expertise and resources to establish monitoring protocols and data collection systems that endure beyond the project's lifespan. These partnerships can also facilitate the integration of MGC project outcomes into broader research agendas, ensuring that the knowledge generated continues to inform policy and practice long into the future.

Furthermore, the MGC project should prioritize capacity-building efforts aimed at empowering local stakeholders to take ownership of monitoring and conservation initiatives. This could involve training community members, government officials, and other relevant stakeholders in monitoring techniques, data analysis, and project management skills. By equipping these individuals with the necessary tools and knowledge, the project can foster a cadre of empowered champions who are invested in the continued success of environmental conservation efforts in their communities.

In addition to building institutional and human capacity, the MGC project should explore strategies for mobilizing financial resources to sustain monitoring activities over time. This could involve advocating for the allocation of dedicated funding streams within government budgets or seeking support from international donors and development agencies committed to environmental sustainability. By securing long-term funding commitments, the project can ensure the continuity of monitoring efforts and the preservation of hard-won conservation gains.

Ultimately, by establishing mechanisms for long-term monitoring and engaging champions to carry forward its vision, the Malawi Green Corps project can maximize its impact and leave a lasting legacy of environmental stewardship in the communities it serves. Through strategic partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, and sustainable financing mechanisms, the project can pave the way for a future where vibrant ecosystems and thriving communities coexist harmoniously for generations to come.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, the evaluation findings underscore the Malawi Green Corps (MGC) Project's significant alignment with national development strategies and its effectiveness in tackling environmental degradation, youth unemployment, and climate change resilience. The project demonstrates clear relevance and coherence with Malawi's development agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and international frameworks, indicating a well-conceived intervention.

However, the evaluation also highlights areas for improvement, particularly in gender mainstreaming and project management. The project's lack of comprehensive gender integration and limited involvement of key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare signal a need for enhanced gender-sensitive approaches and stronger collaboration with relevant authorities.

Furthermore, deviations from planned management arrangements and limited coordination among stakeholders reveal challenges in project implementation and partnership management. Addressing these issues through improved communication, formalized coordination mechanisms, and increased stakeholder engagement will be essential for maximizing the project's impact and sustainability.

Despite these challenges, the evaluation underscores the project's effectiveness in achieving its objectives, notably in providing employment opportunities to over 2,000 youth and restoring critical environmental hotspots. The high level of beneficiary satisfaction and positive environmental impacts demonstrate the project's success in contributing to sustainable development goals.

To ensure the project's long-term sustainability, efforts must focus on addressing financial, socio-economic, institutional, and environmental risks. Establishing robust financial mechanisms, strengthening local governance structures, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, and implementing adaptive strategies to mitigate environmental risks are crucial for sustaining the project's impact beyond its duration.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations made from the evaluation exercise;

UNDP

- In order to enhance project management and partnership coordination, a concerted effort should be made to improve communication channels among project stakeholders. This may involve regular meetings, updates, and reporting mechanisms to foster transparency and accountability. Formalized coordination mechanisms, such as memoranda of understanding or partnership agreements, should be established to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations among all relevant parties. Additionally, active engagement of stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, civil society organizations, and community leaders, is essential to foster collaboration and synergy in project implementation.
- Given the success demonstrated by the MGC Project as a pilot initiative, it is imperative for the UNDP to take proactive steps towards preparing and implementing a comprehensive youth restoration program. This program should strategically adopt and upscale the invaluable lessons learned and best practices gleaned from the MGC Project. Emphasizing the importance of sustainability, the program should incorporate proven methodologies and approaches that have yielded positive outcomes within the MGC Project framework.

UNDP and CRS

- To strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts, it is imperative to conduct a thorough gender analysis to understand the specific needs, roles, and constraints faced by women and men within project communities. This analysis should involve close collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare to ensure alignment with national gender policies and priorities. Furthermore, active efforts should be made to ensure the full and equitable participation of women in all project activities, including decision-making processes, training sessions, and leadership roles.

CRS

- To ensure financial sustainability beyond the project's duration, it is recommended to implement savings and loans programs for project participants. These programs can help community members save and invest in maintaining essential tools and materials post-project, thereby ensuring the longevity of project benefits. Furthermore, exploring alternative financing mechanisms, such as community-based funds or income-generating activities, can help diversify funding sources and reduce reliance on external support.

GoM

- In strengthening local governance structures, it is crucial to foster partnerships between youth groups and established institutions, such as local government bodies or community-based organizations. This collaboration can leverage existing resources, expertise, and networks to enhance project effectiveness and sustainability. Additionally, promoting participatory

decision-making processes and empowering local communities to take ownership of project activities can strengthen governance structures and promote inclusive development.

GoM and CRS

- To address environmental risks such as drought or water stress, it is essential to develop adaptive strategies that enhance the project's resilience to changing environmental conditions. This may involve incorporating climate-smart agricultural practices, promoting water conservation measures, and diversifying livelihood options to reduce vulnerability to environmental shocks. Furthermore, building community capacity for climate adaptation and disaster preparedness can help mitigate the impacts of environmental risks and ensure the project's long-term success.

UNDP, GoM and CRS

- To ensure the sustained impact of the Malawi Green Corps project, long-term monitoring mechanisms must be established beyond its completion, involving partnerships with local institutions and capacity-building efforts. By cultivating champions and securing financial resources for ongoing monitoring, the project can leave a lasting legacy of environmental stewardship and community engagement in Malawi.
- Moving forward, it is imperative for the MGC project to prioritize gender mainstreaming efforts by promoting the full and equitable participation of women in conservation and landscape management approaches. This can be achieved through targeted interventions aimed at addressing gender disparities, ensuring the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, and providing them with equal access to project benefits and opportunities. Additionally, strengthening collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and other relevant stakeholders will be essential to effectively integrate gender considerations into project activities and enhance the project's overall impact on sustainable development and gender equality in Malawi.
- Moving forward, continued vigilance and collaboration will be essential to maintain high standards and achieve meaningful impact in environmental conservation and youth empowerment efforts.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

SN	INDICATORS ³	BASELINE LEVEL ⁴	LEVEL IN 1 PIR (SELF-REPORTED)	END-OF-PROJECT TARGET	ETE LEVEL & ASSESSMENT ⁶	ACHIEVEMENT RATING ⁷	JUSTIFICATION FOR RATING	COLOUR CODE
1	Number of youths recruited (aiming for gender parity and providing employment opportunities for people including people living with HIV/AIDS, other health conditions and vulnerabilities).	0	0	2000	2027	101%	S-Target	
2	Percentage of turnover rate of MGC members on monthly basis (to monitor retention).	0%	0%	2027	8	0.4%	S-Minimal turn over of cohort participants	
3	Percentage of HR issues and complaints resolved within a given time (submission of monthly updates based on the complaints and feedback received from the hotline and the established monitoring system).	0%	0	100%	100%	100%	S-All HR issues resolved within timeframe	
4	Percentage of MGC members receiving medical support within 12 hours.	0%	0	100%	100%	100%	No major incident was reported	
5	Percentage of MGC member provided with the workplace & accident insurance.	0%	0		0	0		
6	MGC member satisfaction survey at the end of each phase with at least 10 percent of cohort sampled.	0	0	946	809	86%	S-More than 10% of cohort sampled	
7	Number of rehabilitated/restored hotspots.	0	0	58	26	45%	MS - over ambitious target	

SN	INDICATORS ³	BASELINE LEVEL ⁴	LEVEL IN 1 PIR (SELF-REPORTED)	END-OF-PROJECT TARGET	ETE LEVEL & ASSESSMENT ⁶	ACHIEVEMENT RATING ⁷	JUSTIFICATION FOR RATING	COLOUR CODE
8	Size of rehabilitated/restored hotspots.		0	5000	5226.6	105%	S - target achieved	
9	Frequency of watering and maintenance of rehabilitated plots	0	0	4 times a week	2 times a week	50%	Watering was carried out twice a week and did not meet the target because of other domestic chores and scarcity of water especially during dry period (between September and December) of the year	
10	Survival rate of plantings (at 3-month intervals).	0%	0	100% survival rate of plantings	66% survival rate of plantings	66%	On average, the survival rate of plantings is at 66% against a target of 100%. There will be a need to ensure improved survival of plantings through enhanced watering and maintenance of the restoration plots. This is 50% achievement. There is need to improve on the frequency of watering and maintenance	
11	Certification of proper disposal of waste (including estimate of kilograms and waste composition).	0	0	0	0	0%	US - Data not available	

Green=Achieved Red= Not on target to be achieved

Annex 2: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

SN	Name	Institution	Designation/Position	Contact Phone
1	Golivati Gomani	Environmental Affairs Department	Environmental Officer	+265 999 38 36 51
2	Bruno Kamanga	Environmental Affairs Department	Principal Environmental Officer	+265 999 65 67 28
3	Moses Mjiwawo	Department of Forestry	Principal Forestry Officer	
4	Chikondi Chasukwa	Ministry of Youth	Principal Youth Officer	
5	Alice Chilenga	Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change		+265 995 13 89 39
6	Guadalupe Matias Kabia	United Nations Development Programme - UNDP	Programme Analyst	+265 999 34 62 30
7	Peter Kulemeka	United Nations Development Programme - UNDP	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (MHSRP)	
8	Baxton Chirombo	Catholic Relief Services	Project Manager	+265 999 00 37 35
9	Khumbo Mbye	Karonga District Council	District Environmental Officer	+265 888 68 55 73
10	Christopher Chirwa	Karonga District Council	District Forest Officer	+265 884 40 46 66
11	Simon Manda	Karonga District Council	Forest Assistant	
12	Kettle Simkonda	Karonga District Council	Forest Assistant	
13	Lapken Liwago	Karonga District Council	District Youth Officer	
14	Wellos Mphande	Karonga District Council	Forest Assistant	
15	Sunday Kondowe	Karonga District Council	Assistant Labour Officer	
16	James Pelani	M'mbelwa District Council	Environmental District Officer	+265 999 76 93 95
17	Geoffrey Simlemba	M'mbelwa District Council	Forest Officer	+265 999 47 93 41
18	Russell Mhone	M'mbelwa District Council	Senior Labour Officer	
19	Isaac Mbizi	M'mbelwa District Council	Chairperson - ADC	
20	Agness Dziwapo	M'mbelwa District Council	Forestry Officer	
21	Misheck Misonzi	M'mbelwa District Council	District Youth Officer	
22	Bonniface Chimwanza	Lilongwe District Council	Senior Environmental Officer	+265 991 86 67 00
23	Donnex Ntambo	Ntcheu District Council	District Forest Officer	+265 883 70 41 75
24	Siyabonga Kunkumbira	Ntcheu District Council	Environmental Office	
25	Fransisco Sadyantambe	Ntcheu District Council	District Trade Officer	
26	Andrew Hamuza	Machinga District Council	Environmental District Officer	0881072110
27	Marriam Abdul	Machinga District Council	District Trade Officer	0881144065
28	Davie Mulema	Machinga District Council	Assistant Forest Officer	0997624181

SN	Name	Institution	Designation/Position	Contact Phone
29	Hope Mwafuriwa	Machinga District Council	District Youth Officer	0884286299
30	Maxwe Mbulanje	Blantyre District Council	Environmental District Officer	+265 882 62 78 66

Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed

Concept Note: *Malawi Green Corps*: Green Jobs For Environmental Restoration And Climate Adaptation
Entrepreneurship Field Manual Malawi Green Corps Project

Establishment and management of Tree Nurseries and Woodlots. Field Manual-Malawi Green Corps Project

Malawi Green Corps Initiative Project Brief: Green jobs for environmental restoration and climate adaptation

Minutes for MGC Interface Meeting with Government Stakeholders: Date: 01/02/2022

Inception Report for the Provision of Human Resource and Financial Management Services (2021), Catholic Relief Services, Lilongwe Malawi

Social and Environmental Screening Template (2021 SESP Template, Version 1)

United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. New York: UNEG. available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/2016-Norms-and-Standards>.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (2008)

United Nations Evaluation Group UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (2010)

United Nations, The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals:

UNDP - CRS Progress Update Meeting Minutes: 20 June 2022,

Annex 4: Rating Scales

<p>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency,</p> <p>6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems</p>	<p>Sustainability ratings:</p> <p>4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks</p>	<p>Relevance ratings</p> <p>2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p>Impact Ratings:</p> <p>3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)</p> <p>Coherence ratings</p> <p>Coherent Not Coherent</p>
<p><i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		

Annex 5: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by	
UNDP Country Office	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
UNDP GEF RTA	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____

Annex 6: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹

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

Name of Consultant: EMMANUEL CHARLES MKOMWA

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT

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

Signed at *place* on date *LILONGWE, MALAWI 10 JANUARY, 2024*

Signature:  _____

¹www.unevaluation.org/uneocodeofconduct

Annex 9. End of Term Evaluation ToRs (as shared by Client – UNDP)



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE END-OF-TERM EVALUATION OF THE MALAWI GREEN CORPS PROJECT

Assignment Title	Individual Consultant for the End Term Evaluation of Malawi Green Corps Project
Project	Malawi Green Corps Project
Type of Contract	Individual Contract
Contract Period	25 days
Supervisor	Rabi Narayan Gaudo
Location	Lilongwe
Country	Malawi

1. Background

Malawi was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 exerted heavy economic damage on livelihoods, business and job opportunities available to Malawians, especially youth. Multiple crises stemming from the epidemic folded, with a host of external and internal factors dampening Malawi's economy, access to public services, and health and education outcomes. Data indicates that Malawi's imports were 26 percent lower in April and May 2020 compared to 2019, with decreased demand from key trade partners weighing heavily on exports. Domestic factors continued contributing to Malawi's socio-economic crisis through increased risk aversion and social distancing policies. COVID-19 cases arose due to increased community transmission, with secondary and tertiary effects of containment efforts constraining domestic economic demand and contributing to massive job loss, particularly among women, with up to a million jobs that were at risk by the end of 2020. Though projections evolved as the crisis unfolded, Malawi's GDP growth declined sharply, aggravated by the country's large informal sector reliant on natural resources and high rates of poverty and food insecurity.

Malawi's policy actions aim at three objectives: protecting lives, protecting livelihoods, and protecting the future. Complementary to life-saving health interventions, the government was focused on supporting livelihoods during the economic slowdown while also scaling up investments to support broad-based recovery and resilience in the medium term. Protecting the future means addressing Malawi's ongoing vulnerability to climate and other exogenous shocks which have a strong impact on poverty, and which the COVID-19 pandemic was aggravating as a poverty multiplier.

Malawi is faced with persistently low resilience to disasters and economic shocks, and slow economic growth due to its high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, over-reliance on biomass for household energy, and widespread ecosystem degradation. In the face of widespread income loss owing to the pandemic, and in the absence of affordable alternatives, many poor communities are being forced to accelerate stress on already degraded forests, watersheds and other ecosystems.

Laying a foundation for a sustainable and green recovery, while addressing lost income and employment among its vulnerable youth population, presents Malawi with the opportunity to place green growth and nature-based solutions at the center of its pandemic response. A national Green Corps, as outlined herein, contributes to ongoing efforts by the Government of Malawi to safeguard and expand employment opportunities across the country, particularly for young women and men, while accelerating a green economic transition. The initiative also dovetails with ongoing efforts by UNDP to strengthen domestic networks of young climate champions and entrepreneurs in green business. 2 3. Aligned to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), Malawi's National Resilience Strategy, and its Landscape/Forest Restoration Strategy, the Malawi Green Corps was aimed to provide youths with skills and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through an approach that engages them in environmental management and ecosystem-based adaptation, while building their capacity and skills to take up and create green jobs themselves and/or enter the job market with a foundation in environmental restoration and innovation.

Under the existing partnership agreement between the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources and UNDP for the Transformative Adaptation for Climate Resilience (TRANSFORM) programme, UNDP and the Government of Malawi jointly launch the Malawi Green Corps in the first quarter of 2021 to provide at least 2,000 youth¹ aged 18 to 30 with employment opportunities for up to four months per year focused on environmental restoration of critical hotspot areas across Malawi. UNDP contracted Catholic Relief Services to provide financial management services for the project for a period of 24 months in 10 selected districts of Dedza, Lilongwe, Salima, Blantyre, Zomba, Mangochi, Machinga, Mzimba and Karonga in Malawi.

The objective of the Malawi Green Corps is to provide youth with employment and on-the-job technical training to address youth unemployment, and create a pathway to green jobs by linking with business incubation programmes being supported by GoM, UNDP, ILO, the EU, FCDO, Royal Norwegian Embassy, African Development Bank and others. The initiative aims to deliver training focused on forest restoration, high-quality tree planting and care, site management, tool safety, native plant species conservation, invasive plant identification, environmental advocacy and communications, entrepreneurship, and other specialized topics to be agreed with the GoM to equip members of the Malawi Green Corps to conduct environmental restoration. The Malawi Green Corps members are recruited by CRS over the contract period to perform environmental restorations activities. The recruited MGCs members are supervised on a day-by-day basis by CRS under the overall monitoring of UNDP Malawi in collaboration with the government technical department under the ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change (NRCC) formally Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources (MFNR).

2. PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION

The purposes of the evaluation are:

- (a) Determine the extent to which the outputs and outcomes of the project have been achieved and the impact made.
- (b) Document the achievements and lessons learnt during the implementation to inform future decisions in the design, implementation, and management of similar interventions.
- (c) Review project implementation modality and document associated bottlenecks
- (d) Fulfil UNDP's accountability requirement to national stakeholders.

The primary users of the evaluation results include: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Catholic Relief Services, Ministry of Youth, Department of Economic Planning and Development and UNDP.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

a. Scope

The evaluation will assess the project's performance using the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and impact. Besides looking at the project strategies and outputs, the evaluation will also assess and analyse application and implementation of cross-cutting themes including, women and youth empowerment, innovation and human rights. The evaluation will identify and document lessons learnt best practices and challenges to inform future interventions. The evaluation will cover the impact areas of Mzimba Karonga, Lilongwe, Dedza, Salima, Ntcheu, Machinga, Mangochi, Zomba and Blantyre districts. The exercise will cover the period from August 2021 to August 2023.

b. Objectives

The objective of the evaluation is to provide evaluative evidence of the extent to which the project has achieved its intended results and provide lessons learnt and recommendations for improving the design and implementation of similar initiatives in future. More specifically, the objectives of the endline evaluation will be to:

- Assess the extent to which project outputs and outcomes have been achieved.
- Determine the impact, both positive and negative, from contributions of the project.
- Assess the relevance of the project to the development needs of the people and global and national development goals.
- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation and approach in achieving the specific expected results and analyse any factors contributing to and hindering its progress.
- Assess to what extent were gender equality, women and youth empowerment, innovation and human rights and other cross-cutting themes promoted or addressed in project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Propose recommendations that would improve the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of similar projects in future;
- Document lessons learnt to inform future similar projects.

4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

In order to meet the objectives and purpose of the evaluation, the evaluators will, among other tasks, answer the following questions:

I. Relevance and Design

- To what extent was the project aligned with national development priorities and the SDGs?
- Whether the outcome and outputs of the projects were stated explicitly and precisely in verifiable terms with SMART indicators disaggregated by sex, age and location;
- Whether the relationship between outcome, outputs, activities, and inputs of the projects were logically articulated.
- Whether the project intervention and activity design adequately responded to the gender needs and gaps identified through the gender and rights-based approach problem analysis
- Whether the target beneficiaries of the projects are identified.
- Did the design of the projects take to scale and scaling up into consideration?

II. Effectiveness

- To what extent were the project outcome and outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended project outputs and outcomes?
- Have there been any positive and negative unplanned effects/results?
- Were the project strategies effective in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, especially the vulnerable population, women and youth?
- To what extent were human rights, gender and disability issues mainstreamed in the project strategies and implementation?

III. Efficiency

- Whether the project's resources (financial, physical and manpower) were adequate in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Whether the projects are cost-effective compared to similar interventions;
- Whether the technologies selected (any innovations adopted if any) were suitable; and
- The delivery of government counterpart inputs in terms of personnel and premises.

IV. Implementation:

- What partnerships were built or strengthened to improve the performance of project implementation?
- The responsiveness of the project management to significant changes in the environment in which the project functioned (both facilitating and impeding project implementation);
- Determine whether lessons learnt from other relevant programmes/projects were incorporated into the project.
- To what extent did the project oversight structures support the effective and efficient project implementation?
- The role of UNDP CO and its impact (positive and negative) on project delivery.
- To what extent were recommendations from the project steering committee and periodic reviews implemented?

V. Coherence

- Was the project consistent and complementary with other interventions in the areas natural resources management, youth empowerment, youth entrepreneurship and waste management?
- Did the project interventions duplicate existing similar interventions in the targeted areas, and

were there any collaborations with similar interventions?

VI. Sustainability

- To what extent are the project's positive results likely to be sustained after the completion of the project?
- What strategies did the project have to ensure the continuation and sustainability of the project outcomes after completion of the project?
- What are the key factors, if any, that required attention to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcome?
- What are recommendations for similar interventions in future to ensure sustainability?
- Was there an exit strategy for any of the elements of the project?

VII. Impact

- What are the effects of the project on beneficiaries and communities?
- What are the unintended or negative outcomes, if any, resulting from the project?

5. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

a. Preparatory phase

The Consultant will be given key documents of the project to prepare and submit an inception report in consultation with a national consultant and the project management team. She/he will prepare an evaluation work plan and finalize the methodology of the study. During the inception phase, the evaluator will be expected to validate/update or construct a theory of change for the project to provide a conceptual framework for identifying key elements to interrogate. This information will be presented in the evaluation inception report. Note: The project does not have a ToC – It is expected that the consultant will construct one based on his understanding of the project etc.

b. Desk Review

The evaluator will be expected to review key programme documents (e.g. project documents, progress reports, monitoring visits reports, baseline report, disbursement report/financial report etc.) to respond to some of the evaluation questions.

c. Data collection

The evaluator will be expected to meet (physical or virtual) key project stakeholders, including the development partners and implementing partners, in order to collect all the relevant data needed for the evaluation. S/he will also be required to conduct key informant interviews with key stakeholders/implementing partners to understand their perception of the project and validate some of the project interventions and results. The consultant will be expected to interview project beneficiaries and target groups to obtain their views on various aspects of the project.

For each of these interviews, the consultant should first develop and present their ideas for the content and format of the interview forms that will be applied to capture the information required, as well as the method to be used in administering them and tabulating the results.

6. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Country Office Evaluation Management: UNDP CO management is ultimately responsible and accountable for the quality of the evaluation process and products under the leadership of the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (DRR). The DRR will assign an Evaluation Manager (UNDP Programme

Specialist (M&E) who shall be responsible for briefing the evaluator on UNDP's expectations and ensuring compliance with UNDP/UNEG evaluation standards, ethics and code of conduct for evaluations.

The CO management will develop a management response to the evaluation recommendations within two weeks of report finalization.

Project Management: The Programme Analyst responsible for Climate Change and resilience in Malawi will support the evaluator on a daily basis with respect to providing background information and progress reports, and other documentation, setting up stakeholder meetings and interviews, arranging field visits and coordinating with beneficiaries and key stakeholders.

Evaluation Reference Group: An Evaluation Reference Group comprised of officials from Environmental Affairs Department, Department of Youth, Department of Forestry, Catholic Relief Services and UNDP reference group will be established to guide the evaluation to ensure its credibility and utility. The reference group will be expected to assist in key aspects of the evaluation process, including reviewing evaluation Terms of Reference, providing documents, providing detailed comments on the draft inception and evaluation reports and dissemination of evaluation findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.

Evaluator. Will be an independent consultant. He/she should not have participated in the preparation and implementation/management whether directly or indirectly, of the project.

The evaluator will have the overall responsibility for the conduct of the evaluation exercise as well as the quality and timely submission of reports (inception, draft, final etc.). The evaluator will be expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment and supplies, communication, accommodation and transport. Furthermore, the evaluator will be expected to familiarize himself/herself with the United Nations Evaluation Group's standards and norms for conducting project evaluations. The evaluator will provide the Evaluation Manager with regular updates and feedback.

7. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluator is expected to deliver the following:

1. Inception report – to be prepared within 5 days after signing a contract with UNDP;
2. Draft evaluation report – to be submitted within four weeks of signing the contract;
3. Final report, including a 2-4-page executive summary, a set of practical and strategic recommendations (not to exceed 8 recommendations). The final report should not exceed 50 pages, excluding annexes. Contents of the final evaluation report are provided in the annex.

Annex 8. Interview Protocol – Data Collection Tools

(Master Guide – Specific questions shall be isolated for specific people. A skeleton has been provide below)

Part A: Introduction and safeguards

Name of interviewee	
Interviewee contact information	
Interviewee institutional affiliation	
Interviewee position	
Review team interviewer(s)	
Confidentiality/safeguards discussed?	
Interview date	
Interview location	

- a) My name is Emmanuel Charles Mkomwa. I am the Consultant that is working with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and UNDP on the End of Project Evaluation for Malawi Green Corps Project.
- b) You are welcome to this discussion. The End of Term Evaluation has been commissioned by the UNDP in collaboration with Government of Malawi (Environmental Affairs Department) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The main objective of the review is to assess the **“provide evaluative evidence of the extent to which the project has achieved its intended results and provide lessons learnt and recommendations for improving the design and implementation of similar initiatives in future”**. You have been identified by the Project Team as a key stakeholder in this project, and that your thoughts and inputs would help shape the similar project in future.
- c) This interview is confidential and your responses will be integrated with others to ensure anonymity, so please feel free to express your ideas and you are free to stop this interview at any point in time without justifying your action if you don't feel like continuing with the conversation.
- d) **Do you confirm that we may proceed with this discussion?**

Part B: Interviewee's engagement and familiarity with the Malawi Green Corps Project

Please tell us a bit about yourself, your position and how you have been engaged in the design, implementation and oversight of the MGC Project? What specific role have you been playing?

Part C: Interviewee's perception on the following aspects

Given your background and experience with this project, what is your perception of the project regarding the following aspects?

D.1. Design and relevance

- a) Based on your knowledge, what problem is the MGC project addressing? In your view, how important is this problem to Malawi? How is it important to the districts where it being implemented (Mzimba Karonga, Lilongwe, Dedza, Salima, Ntcheu, Machinga, Mangochi, Zomba and Blantyre districts)? Who is benefiting (or is likely to benefit from the intervention)? How many males and how many females? How will they benefit (or how are they benefiting if the benefits are accruing already)?
- b) Are there good practices you have identified in this project? If yes, which ones? If you were to implement a similar intervention, how would you apply the good practices you have just mentioned? How would you have done things better?
- c) Are you aware of the capacity building interventions undertaken under the MGC Project? Which ones are you aware of? Given the capacity building objectives of this projects:
 - a. in what ways has the project changed the way the project beneficiaries think as regards land scape restoration and youth economic empowerment?

- b. in what ways has the project changed the project beneficiaries do things as regards waste management?
- d) What key lessons were imbedded in this project, learnt from other relevant programmes/projects?

D.2. Implementation

- a) What aspects of project management did you find most appropriate to (i.e. enhancing) the delivery of this project? Which ones did you find less appropriate to (i.e. were an obstacle) to the delivery of this project?
- b) How effective was the delivery of the following inputs/aspects for MGC project implementation along the following areas?
 - a. selection of sub-grantees
 - b. institutional arrangements,
 - c. identification of beneficiaries (were males and females equally considered?),
 - d. scheduling of activities and actual implementation?
- c) To what extent has MGC project been successful in meeting its End Term Targets/ commitments as outlined in the project document?
- d) How responsiveness has management been to the obstacles experienced in the execution of this MGC project? Can you give an example of how management assisted in addressing a specific obstacle /challenge?
- e) Has the UNDP and CRS provided monitoring and backstopping of the project as expected? What aspects did you like? What aspects need improvement? How did this affect implementation (project delivery)? How could UNDP/CRS improve in the similar future project?
- f) Has the Government (particularly, EAD and Department of Forestry, Ministry of Youth) provided monitoring and backstopping of the project as expected? What aspects did you like? What aspects need improvement? How has this affected implementation (project delivery)? How could EAD/Department of Forestry/Ministry of Youth improve in the similar future project?
- g) Whether the projects' collaboration with industry, associations, private sector and civil society was appropriate, if relevant.

D.3. Efficiency:

- a) Were the projects resources (financial, physical and manpower) adequate in terms of both quantity and quality to delivering the capability?
- b) Have the projects resources been used effectively to produce planned results? Are the disbursements and project expenditures in line with expected budgetary plans? Are any over-expenditures and/or under-expenditures justifiable?
- c) What effect has the delayed project effectiveness by at least six months in year 1 had on project delivery? (delay was associated with the establishment of the project's dedicated bank accounts by national authorities)²
- d) Is the project a good demonstration of money well-spent (value for money) when compared to similar interventions, particularly within the RSG Portfolio?
- e) Are the technologies and innovations adoptable in the prevalent socio-economic and environmental situation? Are gender aspects fairly considered?
- f) Is data/information on interventions, procurement and other expenditure well captured and managed in ways that would allow easy retrieval for sharing with project and development partners

as way of ensuring UNDP and Government accountability and responsibility. What effect has this had on project spending?

- g) What has been the level of Government counterpart inputs in terms of personnel, premises and equipment towards the project? Does this meet your expectation as per project design? What could be improved and how for speedy delivery of the intervention at a lower cost?

D.4. Effectiveness:

What are the major achievements of the project vis-à-vis its objectives, performance indicators and targets?

- a) Strengthening the capacity of the District Executive Committee/DESC, extension staff, technical officers in sector departments, selected TAs and communities, businesses, and other stakeholders to address environmental degradation through joint action? What has changed and how?
- b) Strengthening monitoring systems to measure impacts and cost-effectiveness of climate adaptation and resilience building investments in target districts? What has changed and how?
- c) Improving district coordination mechanisms for harmonization and coherence of environmental management interventions? What has changed and how?
- d) Raising awareness on waste management? What communication products were produced? What communication channels and/or platforms were used? What has changed and how?
- e) Supporting the formulation, dissemination and enforcement of policies and by-laws in communities that contribute to landscape restoration? What policies and legislative instruments have been formulated and disseminated? What has changed as a result of this policy and legislative enhancement support and how?

D.5. Sustainability:

- a) What has been the extent of contribution by, project beneficiaries?
- b) What is your perception of ownership of interventions by project beneficiaries?
- c) Is there a mutually agreed exit strategy (UNDP, CRS, EAD, other RPs and beneficiaries with SMART indicators, particularly, responsibilities, accountabilities and timeframes? If yes, is it documented and sharable?
- d) What options are there for sustaining and/or expanding the project outputs
- e) What measures are available for identifying and managing risks overall risks to sustainability factors, and specifically to the following risk areas:
 - a. Financial risks to sustainability
 - i. What evidence is there for application of sound fiduciary risk management protocol. If yes, briefly describe these.
 - ii. Evidence of fiduciary risk management plan
 - b. Socio-economic risks to sustainability
 - i. Is there evidence of progressive socio-economic gains or benefits? If yes, briefly describe these.
 - ii. Is there evidence of innovative approaches to maximizing and multiplying benefits. If yes, briefly describe these
 - c. Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
 - i. Is there evidence of strong and progressive governance system and institutions. If yes, briefly describe these. What role have they played and demonstrated in risk reduction and management the project?
 - d. Environmental risks to sustainability.

- i. Is there evidence of the application of environmental and social safeguards? If yes, briefly describe these.



CHECKLIST FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (UNDP, CRS, EAD and DESC Members)

My name is _____ and I work for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). You have been selected by chance for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about **Evaluation of Green Corps Project** which was implemented in 10 districts of Karonga and Mzimba in the Northern Region, Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, and Ntcheu in the Central Region, and Machinga, Mangochi, Blantyre, and Zomba in the Southern Region.

The survey is voluntary and the information that you give will be confidential. The information will be used to prepare reports, but will not include any specific names. There will be no way to identify that you gave this information. Could you please spare some time (around 30 minutes) for the interview? Consent given

PERSON IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

1. District:
2. Village:
3. Traditional Authority:
4. Name of the Respondent (Optional):
5. Position
6. Phone number (optional):
7. E-mail (Optional):
8. Date of Interview

A1: Coherence and Relevance

- a) What known challenges did the intervention seek to address?
- b) Who are adversely affected by this challenge and how?
- c) To what extent are women and the elderly affected by these challenges?
- d) How were the impact areas for the intervention selected? What criteria was used in identification and selection of (a) the interventions and (b) the beneficiaries?
- e) In what ways were the interventions envisioned to address these challenges?
- f) Is the intervention in line with District Development Plan? Government sectoral policies

A2: Effectiveness

- (a) What benefits were expected to be realized from the interventions? Were there specific benefits envisioned for the youth, women and the elderly? If yes, which are these?
- (b) Were the benefits for the target groups (the larger community, the women and the elderly) realized from the interventions? How significant are the benefits?

A3: Efficiency

- (a) How much resources were allocated to each of the interventions? Were the resources adequate (less, or more than adequate) for implementation of the intervention? How does this compare with other similar interventions within your portfolio or with other cases that you are familiar with?
- (b) What specifically were the resources used for (mention the nature of activities undertaken and/or goods and services procured in support of the interventions? Were these according to plan?
- (c) How was the expenditure over the period during which the intervention has been implemented from year 1 to the end of execution? Were there any discrepancies in expenditure in the pattern of expenditure. Can this be justified?
- (d) Was the intervention delivered according to plan? Were there any delays? If yes, could these be justified? If delays had occurred, what effect (and significance) did these have on delivery of the intervention and particularly on realization of the outcomes?

A4: Impact

- (a) What life changes has the intervention brought (or is likely to bring to the beneficiaries)
- (b) How significant is this to the beneficiaries, the area and the nation?
- (c) How much land has been restored? How many trees have planted? How much waste have you recycled? Re-used?
- (d) How many of the youth were employed? How many youth have been trained? Which areas did the training cover?
- (e) How many Village Savings and Loans Groups?

A5. Sustainability

- (a) What do you think are the longer term needs of (a) the youth (b) women, (c) the community at large in the catchment areas? To what extent has the intervention addressed the longer term needs of these groups?
- (b) What exactly has been done to ensure that these groups:
 - a. Are not financially constrained to continue with the interventions?
 - b. Have appropriate capacities to continue the operations?
 - c. Have strong and visionary leadership to support the interventions? Are there champions or advocates for the interventions? Are they capacitated to carry on the work?
 - d. Are protected from destructive environmental forces such as floods and drought?

A6. Factors affecting achievement of outcomes

- (a) What have you liked most about this intervention? and why?
- (b) What have you liked the least about this intervention? And why?
- (c) What could have been done better? And how?
- (d) (If not elaborated already):
 - a. What factors have contributed to the success of the intervention?
 - b. What factors have contributed to the challenges experienced by the project?
- (e) What could have been done better? And how?

Final Remarks

- (c) Are there any further remarks on this intervention that you would wish to make before we close this conversation?

**END OF THE QUESTIONS
THANKS VERY MUCH FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND FOR YOUR TIME**



CHECKLIST FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
(Remember to take the names of the participants and contact details)

A – General information of the Area and people’s livelihood

1. Name of the District, Traditional Authorities, Group Villages and Villages,
2. What social activities and hobbies do most people in this area engage in?
3. What are the main income generating activities in this area?
4. What are the most common agricultural activities in this area? (make sure to document major crops, livestock for the area)
5. What soil, land and forest management practices do people in the area practice? Do people engage in degrading activities such as bush burning for land clearing or charcoal-making from natural forest?

B- Technical information on the intervention

1. Briefly explain your intervention? What are you doing in this intervention? (probe on the specifics as regards: species of trees manages, landscape restoration activities as applicable)
2. How big is the area on which you are practicing this intervention? (e.g. in hectares)
3. How many people or youth are participating in this intervention? Or What is the size of your group (Total members, how many are male? How many are female?)
4. How did you select the members of this intervention? What did you look for to have people participate in this intervention?
5. Since when/for how long have you been engaged in this intervention?
6. How exactly has UNDP/CRS/EAD/District Councils supported in this intervention? Can you be specific on what items you have been supported with including quantities? How about training? How about supervision? Any other support that we have not mentioned?
7. Other than UNDP/CRS/EAD, which other institutions have supported you with resources, training or any other support to run this intervention? How much of support has been provided buy each of such institutions?
8. How exactly has UNDP/CRS/EAD, supported in this intervention? Can you be specific on what items you have been supported with including quantities? How about training? How about supervision? Any other support that we have not mentioned?
9. How have you benefitted from this intervention? What change have you noticed in terms of (a) yield and (b) in your lives as a result of the youth working under MGCs?
10. What do you do with the proceeds from this intervention? Domestic use only? Do you sell? OR both? If sold, what exactly do you sell? where do you sell your proceeds? In what state do you sell the products (raw? Processed?) Do you sell as a group or individuals? At what prices? How do you know if you are making profit or not? Have you received any training on how to determine profitability of your intervention?
11. What do youth need to do in order to participate in MGC project?
12. How do you coordinate the activities of the intervention? Do you have committee? If yes, how was this elected? Was the committee trained? By whom? When did this training take place? Where was the training conducted?

13. In case the support you are receiving from UNDP/CRS/EAD comes to an end:
 - a. Do you have funds to support the activities of the intervention in future? In case of the tools such as hoes/slashers/wheelbarrows how would you service any broken-down components?
 - b. Do you have contacts with Government institutions and/or NGOs including extension workers that support your intervention?
14. What have you liked most about this intervention?
15. What have you liked the least about this intervention?
16. In your view, what are the factors that have contributed to the success of the intervention?
17. In your view, what are the factors that have constrained the success of the intervention?
18. If a similar intervention was to be implemented elsewhere:
 - a. What advice would you give to UNDP/CRS/EAD?
 - b. What advice would you give to fellow youth?

THE END



Individual Respondent Questionnaire (Youth)

Questionnaire ID: _____

Name of Research Assistant: _____ **Field Supervisor:** _____

Date of Interview: _____ **Time of interview:** _____ **To:** _____

CONSENT

My name is _____ and I work for UNDP. You have been selected by chance for this interview. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about evaluation study for Malawi Green Corps Project

While the general conclusions of the survey may be used to help to draw recommendations to enhance current and future project effectiveness, all the specific information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. It will in no way be directly traced to you as an individual. I hope that you will be willing to help us with this study.

SECTIN A. SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

#	Question	Response	Code
A1	Name of District		

A2	Traditional Authority		
A3	Village		
A4	Name of Respondent		
A5	Phone Number		
A6	Sex of Respondent	1. Male 2. Female	
A7	Age of Respondent	1-10-14 2-15-20 3-21-24 4-25-39 5-30-34 6-35-39 7-Above 40	
A8	Marital Status of Respondent	1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Co-habitation 6. Separation 7. Other (specify)	
A9	Level of Education	1. No formal education (None) 2. Primary School Education 3. Secondary School Education 4. Tertiary Education 5. Adult literacy	
A10	Source of Income		
A11	Average Monthly Income		
A12	Did you join any Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Group?		
A13	How are you utilizing the Monthly earnings? And Earnings from the VSL		

Section B: Capacity Building

#	Question	Response	Code
B1	Were you involved or do you participate in MGC Project?		
B2	What role did you play?		

B3	Have you received any trainings under the Malawi Green Corps program?	1. Yes 2. No	
B4	Please list the trainings you have attended under the Malawi green corps initiative	1. Business Management 2. Waste Management 3. Occupational Health and Safety 4. Land Scape Restoration 5. Other	
B5	How satisfied are you with the training received?	1. Not Satisfied 2. Slightly Satisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Very Satisfied 5. Extremely Satisfied	
B6	Did you graduate under the Malawi Green Corps program?	1. Yes 2. No	
B7	If "Yes" above, did you receive any high level training from UNDP on MSME startups?	1. Yes 2. No	
B8	Did you train your fellow youths after graduating with the Malawi Green Corps?	1. Yes 2. No	
B9	How many fellow youths have you trained		
B10	Were the trainings done on time?		
B11	Any remarks on Capacity Building?		

Section C: Restoration of Environmental Hotspots

#	Question	Response	Code
C1	Were you involved in Landscape Restoration?	1. Yes 2. No	
C2	How much land have you restored? (hectares)		
C3	What tree species have you planted and how many?		
C4	How many hotspots have you rehabilitated in this area?		
C5	How many hectares (ha) of degraded land have you restored including those through clean-up of illegal dump sites containing non-hazardous waste.		
C6	Were recycle materials diverted from the waste stream for repurposing, recycling and/or sale, providing further job and income generation opportunities for the youths under the MCG program?	1. Yes No	
C7	Please provide more information on C4?		
C8	How much waste have you recycled or re-used?		
C9	Where do you sell your products?		
C10	What kind of support did you obtain form UNDP/CRS/EAD/District Councils/ Local leaders		
C11	Was the support provided on time?		
C12	What challenges did you experience?		

C13	Which Areas do the MGC project need to improve?		
C14	Were supervision visits conducted during the restoration of hotspots?	Yes No	
C15	If "Yes" above, how often were you supervised?		

Section D: Environmental and social safeguards

#	Question	Response	Code
D1	Did you conduct environmental and social screening for the sub-project?		
D2	What safeguards instruments did you prepare?		
D3	Is Environmental and Social Management Plan in place?		
D4	What kind of mitigation measures have you implemented?		
D5	Where you provided with personal protective equipment (PPE)?		
D6	What kind of PPE did you receive?	1-Work suit 2-Helmets 3-Gum-boots 4-Mask	
D7	Did you receive any training on Occupational Health and Safety		
D8	Did you receive any training on Gender Based Violence?		
D9	What do you know about Gender Based Violence?		
D10	Any comment on Environmental and Social Safeguards?		

Section E: General Questions

#	Question	Response	Code
E1	What have you liked most about this intervention?		
E2	What have you liked the least about this intervention?		
E3	In your view, what are the factors that have contributed to the success of the intervention?		
E4	In your view, what are the factors that have constrained the success of the intervention?		
E5	What role did UNDP/CRS/EAD/District councils play in this project? Was it enough?		
E6	What changes do you want to see in future		
E7	Do you have strong and visionary leadership to support the interventions?		
E8	Are there champions or advocates for the interventions? Are they capacitated to carry on the work		
E9	Are the interventions protected from destructive environmental forces such as floods and drought?		
E10	If a similar intervention was to be implemented elsewhere: -What advice would you give to UNDP/CRS/EAD? -What advice would you give to fellow youth?		
E11	What is your general comment about the Malawi Green Corps Project		