Midterm Evaluation of the Project “Integrated sustainable landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction project in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet Nam”

REPORT

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DISCLAIMER

This report is prepared by the support from EU/UNDP Vietnam. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP Vietnam.

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Summary

Project/outcome Information		
Project/outcome title	Integrated sustainable landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction project in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet Nam – iLandscape	
Project ID	Atlas ID: 00098749 – Quantum ID: 00101967	
Corporate outcome and output	UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) Output 4.1: Natural resources protected and managed to enhance sustainable productivity and livelihoods. CPD Output 2.3: Gender-responsive, sustainable and innovative solutions and practices in natural resources, biodiversity conservation and nature-based tourism adopted	
Country	Vietnam	
Region	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP)	
Date project document signed	29 September 2020	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	24 March 2022	24 March 2026
Total committed budget	€ 5 Million	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	$US 1,300,045 (€ 1,217,376.5 representing a rate of 21%)	
Funding source	EU grant	
Implementing party[1]	UNDP	

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project	
Final/midterm review/ other	Midterm review	
Period under evaluation	**Start**	**End**
	Mar 2022	February 2024
Evaluators	Prof. Aurelian Mbzibain	Dr. Phan Trieu Giang
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Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**
	Feb 2024	June 2024

[1] This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CO	Country officer
CPC	Commune People's Committee
CPD	Country Programme
DARD	Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DPC	District People's Committee
EFI	European Forest Institute
EM	Ethnic minorities
EU	European Union
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
FMBs	Forest Management Boards
FPD	Forest Protection Department
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
GSO	General Statistics Office
IDH	Sustainable Trade Initiative
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MTE	Midterm Evaluation Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
PFES	Payment for Forest Ecosystem Services
PMU	Project Management Unit (for this project)
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPMU	Provincial PMU (for this project)
PPI	Production, Protection and Inclusion
ProDoc	Project Document
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the midterm review of UNDP's project entitled "Integrated sustainable landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet Nam - iLandscape". The project is funded by the European Union, and implemented in in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Dak Nong and Lam Dong provinces and international organizations including the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the European Forest Institute (EFI), the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Project aims to improve environmental sustainability and social inclusion and resilience of food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam. More specifically, the project seeks to enhance ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions; mprove livelihoods, through inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities and women in agriculture, forest-farming, and ecotourism value chains and sustain food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains. The project iLandscape project officially started on the 24 March 2022 and is expected to end on the 24th of March 2026. This midterm evaluation was implemented from the February 2024 to June 2024.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation was therefore, to analyse project targets and approaches, and to propose solutions, methods, and recommendations to UNDP Viet Nam, EU Delegation, MARD, PPCs of Dak Nong and Lam Dong for decision making and adaptive management. Results and recommendations of the MTE will be used by UNDP, EUD and national stakeholders for the remained implementation of the project, and for designing other relevant interventions in the future, ensuring national ownership and sustainability of project results. The MTE is also aligned with UNDP Country Office's evaluation plan. The MTE's observations and recommendations are also expected to align with delivery of 2022-2026 UNDP Country Programme (CPD), and the UN Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (CF). In this direction, the lessons learnt and recommendations from this MTE will be used by the country programme board during its annual and final review of the country programme (2022-2026), to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of project measures and to aid in the overall enhancement of the 2022-2026 UNDP Country Programme (CPD), and the UN Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (CF). The evaluation approach and methods used is detailed out in section three of this report.

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. This included a comprehensive review of secondary sources from the project as well as external sources such as legal frameworks, academic publications, and grey literature. For primary data collection, participatory and consultative techniques were employed to engage with various stakeholders, including government counterparts at national and provincial levels, the project team, the UNDP Country Office team, responsible parties, the private sector, ethnic minorities, men, women, and youth involved in the project. A total of 49 participants were involved in the evaluation, including 19 from ethnic minority groups. Data collection methods comprised a combination of virtual and face-to-face discussions, focus group discussions, and interviews. For data analysis, the team utilized a mix of descriptive statistics, content analysis, and thematic analysis techniques. The major findings and conclusions drawn from the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) are as follows:

Relevance: The ILandscape project aligns robustly with Vietnam's strategic development needs by integrating lessons from the UNREDD Viet Nam Programme and supporting multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment reflects a deep integration with national policies and the

Prime Minister's decisions, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable land management and conservation practices. However, the initial lack of district-level stakeholder involvement during the design phase posed a challenge, which has been addressed through ongoing feedback mechanisms. The project has shown adaptability to regulatory changes in land law, EUDR, and forestry policies, though there is room for enhanced responsiveness. The project remains highly relevant and has demonstrated adaptive capacity to respond to the changing project context. The project must ensure that its interventions align with the expectations of national and provincial authorities to strengthen ownership and sustainability of the intervention.

Coherence: The project's approach to coherence is well-facilitated by integrating knowledge and frameworks from established environmental and sustainability programs like Terra I and REDD+. This strategic choice has leveraged proven practices to enhance the project's effectiveness and ensure continuity. While the project's theory of change remains valid, post-design context and policy changes have necessitated adjustments. However, the M&E team has not yet adapted the horizontal logic of the intervention, particularly regarding indicators, milestones, and targets, which do not fully meet SMART criteria. Additionally, there is a gap in strategic coherence with other ongoing national and provincial initiatives, as efforts by individual partners to connect activities with existing projects appear disjointed and lack a unified strategy. Addressing these gaps in the next phase of the project will further strengthen the internal and external coherence of the project, support the ability of the team to monitor and report on progress, as well as enhance synergies and complementarities with other similar initiatives in the country.

Effectiveness: The effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives is mixed. The project has made significant progress by leveraging technical expertise to develop tools like crop-specific maps and a land use planner, enhancing land management capabilities at district and provincial levels. However, effectiveness has been uneven, with delays and administrative hurdles impacting the implementation of these tools and broader strategic objectives. Key activities such as operationalizing land use plans and establishing multi-stakeholder platforms have faced bureaucratic and budgetary delays. The project has also struggled to formalise monitoring and evaluation frameworks and engage local stakeholders and international partners promptly. Despite these challenges, there is potential for the project to meet its goals of enhancing ecosystems, improving livelihoods, and sustaining food production if progress accelerates. Positive signs include a decline in forest loss in target areas as reported by Global Forest Watch. While foundational work has been done on multi-stakeholder engagement and development of deforestation free and sustainability standards, further efforts are needed to fully align these initiatives with local needs and regulatory frameworks. In conclusion, given the current pace of implementation, it is unlikely that the project will fully achieve its objectives within the initial project period.

Efficiency: The project has faced significant efficiency challenges affecting its capacity to deliver expected outcomes in a timely and cost-effective manner. Delays began with the late approval of essential documents and project plans, creating a cascading effect on subsequent activities. Financial disbursement issues further constrained the project, with Lam Dong receiving only a small fraction of funds and Dak Nong receiving none, severely impacting operational capabilities. Additionally, differences in financial management guidelines between UNDP and CIAT created collaboration difficulties.

Operational inconsistencies across provincial frameworks, particularly between Lam Dong and Dak Nong, resulted in uneven execution and inefficiencies. About 70% of project activities were intended for these provinces, but only 20% of the budget was allocated for field-level implementation, with the rest

for studies and management. Governance and oversight mechanisms faced challenges due to changes in leadership and coordination issues among stakeholders, leading to slow field-level implementation and a disconnect between planning and execution. The project's technical components often did not align well with local authorities' needs or regulatory frameworks, hindering practical application. Integration of sophisticated satellite data with local government data faced difficulties, reducing the usability of project outputs. In conclusion, despite demonstrating adaptive management, the complex context and external factors have resulted in **moderate efficiency** in project delivery.

Cross cutting themes: The iLandscape project has made notable strides in supporting gender equality and including ethnic minorities in promoting sustainable environmental practices. Consultations with beneficiaries and officials during the design phase ensured that the concerns of these stakeholders were addressed. The project has been highly consultative in developing tools, guidelines, and sustainability criteria, ensuring that interventions align with the aspirations of various groups. Through PPI compacts, over 13,000 farmers, including 44% women, have benefited from improved participation in consultations and meetings. However, many initiatives aimed at women and ethnic minorities remain in planning or pilot stages and have not been effectively rolled out.

In conclusion, the project has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity, human rights, and social and environmental safeguards through empowering local communities, enhancing the capacities of duty-bearers, and adhering to UNDP's standards. Significant strides were made in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including ethnic minorities and marginalized groups. The project has effectively implemented social and environmental safeguards, mitigating potential risks. However, the integration of people with disabilities is unclear due to lack of data. While the project has been successful in many areas, continuous efforts to improve transparency, adopt fully disaggregated reporting (gender, ethnic groups, vulnerability, disability), and develop tailored support strategies for all vulnerable populations are crucial. These improvements will enhance the project's ability to achieve its goals and ensure that no one is left behind, fostering equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainability: It is early to assess sustainability considering the numerous challenges this project has faced from its inception. Financial sustainability is precarious due to heavy reliance on external funding and delays in financial disbursement, threatening the project's momentum and consistent results. Economically, the project's outputs need to better align with the realities of local communities to ensure engagement and long-term adoption of its initiatives. Institutionally, the project has potential for integration into local governmental frameworks, but this integration remains complex and insufficient. Enhancing local ownership and embedding project methodologies into routine processes of government are crucial for sustained impact. Environmentally, the success of sustainable land use and deforestation prevention practices depends on the relevance and adaptability of management tools to local conditions, which, if misaligned, could reduce local authorities' commitment. Social sustainability is at risk due to the limited direct impact on disadvantaged groups so far. Without tangible benefits to these communities, local support may wane, jeopardising the project's long-term success.

Progress to impact: The iLandscape Project, aimed at enhancing environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and resilience in food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, has demonstrated promising progress towards its objectives. The 2023 reporting indicates a notable reduction in the rate of forest loss and greenhouse gas emissions, with a 96% decrease in forest loss compared to the baseline scenario. Though not attributed to the project, represents a significant change regarding forest loss in the target area. The adoption of the Terra-i system and further land use planning tools, sustainability standards in the future would further progress in enhancing ecosystem

performance. Progress towards improving livelihoods and sustaining food production is less evident at this stage of the project, due to efforts largely expended on developing evidence, models and decision making tools. Intermediary outcomes emerging from the delivery of numerous training sessions and awareness raising including through implementation of PPI compacts in Lam Dong, would be required to facilitate adoption of evidence, tools and models developed. While no negative impacts have been observed, there are concerns regarding the delayed provision of tangible support and dissemination of agricultural models, which could affect community engagement and trust. Therefore, extending the project timeline is essential to trial the results of initiatives to be promoted, monitor adoption by target groups, and draw lessons to inform broader policy and practice.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The MTE recommends a no cost extension of the project till March 2027 to make up time for the initial start up delays and operational challenges that have plagued the start of the project.

Recommendation 2: UNDP and responsible parties should focus on enhancing the practical application and local acceptance of developed tools and research outputs. Parties should work closely with local authorities to address the gaps and feedback provided on the various project deliverables that have so far hindered progress. The MTE recommends an urgent dialogue bringing together all stakeholders to assess progress with the deliverables, map the gaps and jointly develop the action plans to finalise the various outputs.

Recommendation 3: Sustain focus on awareness raising, development of tailor-made toolkit for selected locations at local level, followed by capacity building activities on changing regulations, such as those related to the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the new land laws. This could involve targeted training programs and the development of compliance toolkits tailored to the needs of local authorities and stakeholders. Additionally, revise the LUP tools to support the midterm review of the LUP master plans for provinces and to assist the formulation of provincial and district annual plans.

Recommendation 4: UNDP and responsible parties should review and revise the horizontal logic of the iLandscape project to ensure that all indicators, milestones, and targets adhere to the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria. Linked to this is developing an operational M&E system for the project to better track progress and adapt strategies as necessary. This involves a clear definition of the project indicators, their measures and units of measurement, roles and responsibilities for data collection, compilation and reporting and guidelines on the use of the data to inform adaptive management of the project. UNDP should progress with establishing the technical network of leading institutions to support learning and delivery as planned in the prodoc.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that a more coordinated approach be developed to enhance the project's external coherence. This should involve establishing a unified strategy that facilitates stronger and more systematic connections between the ILandscape project and other ongoing national and provincial sustainability and environmental initiatives. Such a strategy should include mechanisms for regular communication and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including local organizations, NGOs, social organizations, cooperatives, as well as national and provincial research centres.

Recommendation 6: UNDP needs to monitor the outcome of the letter of the 29th of May 2024 by Dak Nong's Department of Finance to Dak Nong PPC for allocating budget to Dak Nong PPMU. If government delays continue, UNDP should consider reassessing the implementation modality and pivot towards direct implementation. The experience already established with Lam Dong province could then be applied throughout the intervention and consequently reintroducing the umbrella project. This would recentralise the project with financial delivery of field activities assigned to UNDP. This process would be aligned with recommendations 1.

Recommendation 7: Given the operational inconsistencies and coordination challenges across different provincial frameworks, UNDP needs to beef up its human resource allocation to the project. This includes filling current vacant positions. Additionally, International project partners have an opportunity to enhance their engagement with officials. UNDP can facilitate more direct yet coordinated access for international partners to national officials, ensuring alignment with their MoUs, which state they are accountable to UNDP. This approach aims to streamline interactions and minimize any potential delays, enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership. By strategically organising coordination meetings, clear communication channels, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies, this would support improve the overall efficiency and uniformity of the project's impact.

Recommendation 8: Focus on expediting the implementation and scaling of initiatives that promote gender equality and inclusivity. This involves moving beyond studies, research and modelling and demonstrating how it will reach and address the specificities of the poorest and marginalised farmer groups, vis a vis other farming groups involved in the project.

Recommendation 9: Officials also appear to be oblivious of the cost implications related to the acquisition of higher resolution data and the inability of the project to cover such costs. Respondents have suggested a complementary support approach including the use of drones and Lidar which would complement the alert system, but more also appears needed to enhance understanding of the possibilities offered by Terra-I so as to manage the expectations from both sides and facilitate adoption and ownership. To improve the adoption of innovative systems like Terra-i and other project initiatives intended to benefit disadvantaged groups, it is essential to strengthen engagement and trust-building activities with local communities and officials. Fostering local ownership by embedding project methodologies into routine local government administrative processes and training local staff can help sustain project initiatives beyond the initial funding period.

Recommendation 10: Strengthen visibility and learning. Improve communication to improve the visibility of the iLandscape project and its contribution in the IDH PPI compacts. Make the image of UNDP project more recognized. Many people at the locality do not know about UNDP project. In the PPI Compacts farmers recognized Acom and IDH rather than UNDP. There is need for the project to enhance transparency to beneficiaries by providing clarity on when they might be expected to access the promised in-kind support from the project to address demotivation, trust and ownership risks. Similarly, the project should also focus on documenting emerging lessons from implementation in the next phase, creating opportunities for sharing within the project landscapes but also externally. This includes engaging with research institutions, academic and think tanks as initially planned in the prodoc. The pioneering experience of supporting compliance with the EUDR is likely to generate lessons that can inform global enforcement of the EUDR regulations.

Recommendation 11: The government needs to demonstrate stronger engagement and ownership in this project than has been demonstrated so far. Failures to share information, data, base maps,

inconsistencies in participation in project activities, delays feeding back into project deliverables, disbursement of funding are several issues that have constrained efficiency. In line with recommendation 2 above, government at national and provincial levels also need to take responsibility and refocus resources (human and financial) to the project for its successful completion.

1. Introduction

UNDP is implementing the Project "Integrated sustainable landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet Nam" with the support from the European Union (EU) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Dak Nong and Lam Dong provinces and international organizations including the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the European Forest Institute (EFI), the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Project aims to improve environmental sustainability and social inclusion and resilience of food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam. Specific objectives include:

1. Enhance ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions.
2. Improve livelihoods, through inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities and women in agriculture, forest-farming, and ecotourism value chains.
3. Sustain food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains.

To achieve these objectives, the Project has implemented 4 components with 13 outcomes and 35 activities in 4 districts including Lac Duong, Di Linh (Lam Dong province), DaK R'Lap, Dak G'Long (Dak Nong province). These districts serve as suitable targets for the objectives of the project in terms of forest and biodiversity hotspots, agricultural commodities, and ethnic minorities inclusion, with all cross-cutting themes of human rights, gender equality and disability issues. Although the Project was approved by the EU in 2020 with the signing of the Contribution Agreement between UNDP and the EU on 29 September 2020, implementation effectively commenced in March 2022. With a long time from project development to project inception, some activities and outcomes listed in the ProDoc needed to be updated to reflect more recent policy and socio-economic developments in the project sites.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation was therefore, to analyse project targets and approaches, and to propose solutions, methods, and recommendations to UNDP Viet Nam, EU Delegation, MARD, PPCs of Dak Nong and Lam Dong for decision making and adaptive management. Results and recommendations of the MTE will be used by UNDP, EUD and national stakeholders for the remained implementation of the project, and for designing other relevant interventions in the future, ensuring national ownership and sustainability of project results. The MTE is also aligned with UNDP Country Office's evaluation plan. The MTE's observations and recommendations are also expected to align with delivery of 2022-2026 UNDP Country Programme (CPD), and the UN Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (CF). In this direction, the lessons learnt and recommendations from this MTE will be used by the country programme board during its annual and final review of the country programme (2022-2026), to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of project measures and to aid in the overall enhancement of the 2022-2026 UNDP Country Programme (CPD), and the UN Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (CF). The evaluation approach and methods used is detailed out in section three of this report.

This report is structured into eight sections. The first section introduces the project and outlines the need for this evaluation. The second section provides a description of the intervention being evaluated, objectives, and scope of the evaluation. The third section explains the evaluation methodology, highlighting how mixed methods and tools were used to collect and analyze data. The fourth section presents the findings, and the fifth section discusses the conclusions. These findings and conclusions are analyzed based on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, sustainability, human rights, and GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) dimensions. The sixth section offers specific recommendations to stakeholders. The final section summarizes the key learnings from the evaluation.

The annexes include the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), evaluation matrix, data/information collection checklists, list of documents reviewed, list of people interviewed, progress against the project log-frame, and the Code of Conduct signed by the evaluator.

2. Description of the Intervention evaluated

2.1 The problems to be addressed

Vietnam has seen substantial development over the last three decades, marked by significant economic, social, and environmental changes. The economy experienced a strong rebound in 2022, with growth reaching 8.0 percent, exceeding its average rates of 7.1 percent from 2016 to 2019[2]. The country's GDP has grown from $6.3 billion in 1989 to $ 402 billion in 2022[3]. The national average population estimate was 99.46 million persons in 2022, an increase of 957.3 thousand persons, equivalent to a year-on-year increase of 0.97%[4]. Viet Nam's economic advancement is paralleled by notable improvements in human welfare, as evidenced by the increase in the Human Development Index. Viet Nam's HDI value for 2022 was 0.726, positioning it at 107 out of 193 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2022, Viet Nam's HDI value changed from 0.492 to 0.726, an improvement of nearly 50 percent.

Vietnam is a significant global player in the export of agricultural commodities such as rice, rubber, coffee, and aquaculture products. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing have been vital sectors, though its contribution to GDP has declined over the years as the services sector has expanded. In the growth rate of economy-wide total value added in 2022 for instance, the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector increased by 3.36%, contributing 5.11% to GDP[5] compared to 15.3% in 2017[6].

Despite these achievements, the country faces several structural challenges. These include land degradation from chemical pollution and soil erosion, conversion of natural forests into plantations, biodiversity loss, and increased vulnerability to climate change impacts such as droughts and water shortages. These issues are compounded by land conflicts and persistent poverty among ethnic minorities in mountainous areas.

The Central Highlands region of Viet Nam is a landscape of global importance and stands at the forefront of the national battle to fight climate change, halt loss of natural forests and sustain outstanding agricultural potential. According to the project document, the region contains 23 designated and proposed protected areas (according to the World Database on Protected Areas), covering a total of around 1.96 million ha. Of these, 8 are in Lam Dong and Dak Nong, Province, including the well-known Cat Tien National Park, which covers more than 72 600 hectares across both Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces. In addition, there are 23 'Key Biodiversity Areas' (KBAs) identified in the Central Highlands, covering more than 800 000 ha. The country's Voluntary National Land Degradation Neutrality Targets for the period 2017-2020 in line with Vision 2030, emphasises sustainable land management with a focus on hotspots with high levels of poverty in three regions, one of which is the Central Highlands, with 9 of the 11 national voluntary land degradation targets. Unfortunately, the region has experienced significant deforestation, primarily driven by the expansion of coffee, rubber, and other

[2] The World Bank Group (2023) Harnessing the potential of the services sectors for growth, Taking Stock March 2023, World Bank Document

[3] General Statistics Office – GSO (2023) Gross domestic product at current prices, latest update 20.12.2023, PX Web – General Statistics Office of Vietnam (gso.gov.vn)

[4] General statistics office GSO (2023) Statistical Yearbook of Viet Nam 2022, D©n sè vµ Lao ®éng (gso.gov.vn)

[5] General statistics office GSO (2023) Statistical Yearbook of Viet Nam 2022, D©n sè vµ Lao ®éng (gso.gov.vn)

[6] Prodoc – source - https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=VN

cash crops. This has not only affected the natural forest cover but has also led to biodiversity loss in a region known for its high conservation value. According to the European Forest Institute's REDD Facility, forest cover decrease between 1976 and 2016 represented 22 percent of national emissions from forestry and land-use change[7]. Regarding project areas, data from Global Forest Watch shows tree cover loss continuous to increase in the target provinces and communes. This has further worsened since 2020 as shown in the figures below[8].

Table 1: Evolution of tree cover loss according to Global Forest Watch

Project target area	Tree cover loss 2001-2023 (kha)[9]	% loss 2000-2020[10]	% loss by 2023	Mt CO_2e emissions
Di Linh	9.55	4%	7.8%	5.35
Lạc Dương	6.21	1.1%	5.1%	3.83
Đăk Glong	47.8	36.1%	37%	27.3
Đắk R'Lấp	2.09	5.7%:	6.8%	1.65

The region also faces complex socio-economic and governance challenges, particularly affecting its indigenous populations. It is the second most disadvantaged region in the country, with rural poverty rates nearly double the national average and a striking disparity in poverty rates between ethnic minorities (52.7%) and the majority Kinh and Hoa groups (9.7%)[11]. The loss of forests, which are crucial to the livelihoods of ethnic minorities, compounds these issues. Significant population growth and resettlement have altered the demographic landscape significantly; ethnic minorities, once the majority, now constitute only 32% of the region's population, which has grown from 420,000 in 1926 to over 5.5 million in 2014. The reduction in forest cover—from 85% in 1960 to much less today—alongside increased migration, has led to the displacement of these communities. Cultural norms[12] further restrict the access of ethnic minority women to education, health care, financial services, and decision-making roles, exacerbating their marginalization[13].

Viet Nam has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) through the establishment of a comprehensive legal framework. This includes the Law on Gender Equality, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, the National Strategy on Gender Equality, and the National Programme on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention. These efforts are further supported by various policies and programmes aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Notable progress includes achieving gender parity in primary and lower secondary education enrolment rates, significantly reducing maternal mortality, and maintaining high female workforce participation.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. Patriarchal social norms and negative gender stereotypes are still widespread. Violence against women remains a critical issue, with nearly two in three women reporting having experienced one or more forms of violence by a husband in 2019.

[7] EUREDD Facility, EFI and IEM (2022) Executive Summary - Overview of planned public investments related to land-use in the Central Highlands region of Viet Nam, 2016-2020, CH_Vietnam_executive-summary-EN.pdf (efi.int)
[8] While government data might not be the exact figures as on GFW, the trend is the key aspect to consider
[9] Global Forest Watch (2024) Viet Nam Deforestation Rates & Statistics for Viet Nam. Accessed 30.05.2024, Vietnam Deforestation Rates & Statistics | GFW (globalforestwatch.org)
[10] Mongabay (2022) Deforestation statistics for Viet Nam. Accessed on 30.05.2024, Deforestation statistics for Vietnam (2022) (worldrainforests.com)
[11] Prodoc
[12] Hoai Giang Dang & Ky Nam Nguyen (2023) Challenges in conserving ethnic culture in urban spaces: Case of Ako Dhong village (Vietnam), Cogent Social Sciences, 9:1, 2233754, DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2023.2233754
[13] Minority Rights Group (2018) Highlanders in Viet Nam, Highlanders in Vietnam - Minority Rights Group

Women's overrepresentation in the informal sector weakens their economic position and resilience to economic shocks. Additionally, climate change and natural disasters disproportionately affect the livelihoods, education, and safety of rural, ethnic-minority, and poor women and girls. Despite facing these challenges, women are not sufficiently involved in climate change education and planning[14]. This project has made efforts towards addressing this gap, through trainings and support to farmers, men, women and ethnic minority groups enhancing their ability to adopt climate smart agricultural practices. It has adopted a highly participatory approach ensuring that duty bearers and duty holders are involved in various consultations and surveys, destines to identify and develop viable agricultural models which meet their needs.

Vietnam is one of the few countries where growing awareness of and policy attention to women's property rights has resulted in increasingly progressive laws that promote and protect these rights[15][16]. However, there often remains a gap between the law and women's ability to access and address serious challenges in exercising their rights[17]. This gap is particularly evident when laws conflict with traditional social norms or when broader social and economic factors make it difficult for women to utilize the law to assert their rights. As a result, the effective implementation of these laws can be hindered, limiting women's progress towards achieving full equality[18][19]. In terms of forestry, only a small fraction of ethnic minority households is involved in contracted forest protection or have forest land allocated to them, limiting their potential income from these resources. Agricultural practices in the region are shifting from subsistence to permanent crops, pushing marginalized farmers into more remote areas. This transition, coupled with the poor quality of agricultural inputs and limited processing options, keeps prices low and discourages investment in quality improvements. Climate change has made agricultural production of ethnic minority households facing further difficulties and challenges. Emerging evidence suggests that agricultural production of ethnic minority households is affected by natural conditions, infrastructure economy, socioculture, and customs and government policies, as well as internal resource factors[20]. The prodoc for instance cited restrictions on direct purchasing by foreign-owned companies which further complicated market dynamics. On the governmental front, although reforms signal a shift towards better land use practices, there is a lack of technical capacity and cross-sectoral dialogue, making it difficult to implement integrated land use plans effectively[21]. In view of these challenges, there is a pressing need for systemic changes that promote deforestation-free and sustainable agricultural practices within an integrated, climate smart and inclusive landscape management framework. This project seeks to respond to these needs through an inclusive, gender and human rights-based approach.

2.2 Location

The project will be implemented at three different and integrated levels. Field interventions will be carried out in the four districts of Lac Duong, Di Linh, Dak Glong and Dak R'Lap, with total area of 501,967ha, including 214.600ha of natural forests and about 100.000ha of plantation and bamboo

[14] UN Women (2023) Strategic Note Viet Nam 2022 -2026, untitled (unwomen.org)
[15] Land law 2013: 45/2013/QH13 in Vietnam, Land law No. 45/2013/QH13 dated November 29, 2013 in Vietnam (thuvienphapluat.vn)
[16] Land rights of both spouses are respected in Law on Marriage and Family 2014, item 1 Article 27, item 1, Article 33.
[17] Nguyen, My & Le, Kien. (2022). The impacts of women's land ownership: Evidence from Vietnam. Review of Development Economics. 27. 10.1111/rode.12941.
[18] International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) (2015) Women, Land and Law in Vietnam, https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenLandLaw.pdf
[19] UNDP (2013) THE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND IN CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/vn/Women-access-to-land_EN.pdf
[20] Duong, T.A.N., Truong, V. (2022). Developing Agricultural Production of Ethnic Minority Households in the Context of Climate Change (Lak District, Dak Lak Province, Central Highland of Vietnam). In: Nguyen, A.T., Hens, L. (eds) Global Changes and Sustainable Development in Asian Emerging Market Economies Vol. 2. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81443-4_26
[21] EUREDD Facility, EFI and IEM (2022) op cit.

forests. The area for crop production is about 122,429ha in total in which coffee surface accounts for about 70,318ha. These 4 districts are also home of around 350,000 people, of which 44% belong to various ethnic groups. Building on the REDD+ processes in these Provinces, most enabling activities will be scaled-up at provincial level in Lam Dong and Dak Nong, including dissemination of sustainable business models, real-time monitoring, and innovative financial instruments. At national level, actions will be carried out in relation to coordination with relevant programmes and institutions, monitoring and reporting including contribution to relevant processes like NDCs and REDD+, knowledge production and dissemination, and advocacy for replication of project's innovations and achievements[22].

The proposed project area consists of four districts in two provinces, Lam Dong and Dak Nong, with a total area of 501,967 ha.

Proposed districts and their areas are:
Lam Dong Province

- Di Linh district: about 162,800 ha
- Lac Duong district: about 130,900 ha

Dak Nong Province

- Dak Glong district: about 144,700 ha
- Dak R'Lap district: 63,567 ha

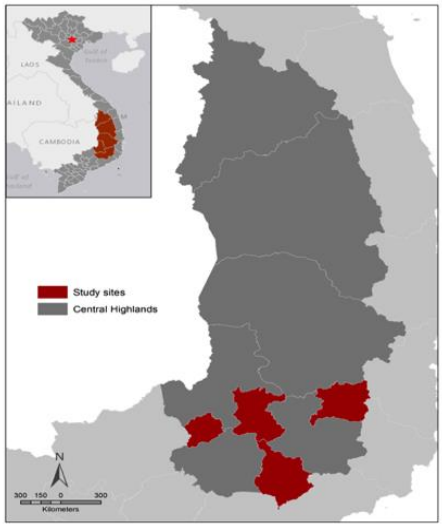

Figure 1: Map of project districts – source from Prodoc

2.3 Project stakeholders and roles

The project is led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the primary implementing partner, holding full responsibility for the project's execution as per the agreement with the European Union. UNDP role includes managing all communications and reporting to the European Union, adhering strictly to the stipulated reporting requirements. The project is implemented using UNDP's Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), which involves the direct transfer of funds to national and international responsible parties for specific work packages outlined in Letters of Agreement between UNDP and these parties. Fund transfers and their subsequent management and monitoring are conducted in accordance with the UNDG HACT Framework. It co-chairs the project steering committee with MARD and EU's representative. The UNDP country office in Viet Nam, supported by the UNDP Climate and Forest Team, provides technical guidance and quality assurance for the project, including components managed by both national and international responsible parties.

At the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) role includes establishing a Project Management Unit to oversee and coordinate the project across the provinces. MARD is required to engage various technical departments, including the Viet Nam Forestry Administration (VNFOREST) and the Department of Crop Production, to provide technical guidance. At the provincial level, the Dak Nong and Lam Dong Provincial People's Committees (PPC) ensures that the necessary legal framework, counterpart funding, capacity, and coordination for project management and implementation. Each province is expected to set up a Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU) under the PPC or hosted within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The

[22] Prodoc

PPMUs are responsible for overall project administration, coordination with implementing parties, planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting.

At the district level, each of the four districts within the provinces was to establish a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to coordinate the implementation of all project-funded activities. These units will operate under the direct supervision of district leaders to ensure alignment with project objectives and effective implementation.

International technical partners, including the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the European Forest Institute (EFI), the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), collaborate on specific work packages as defined in their agreements with UNDP. Each organization will lead various aspects of the project:

- CIAT: Develops crop-specific land use maps, issues deforestation and forest degradation warnings, and prioritizes interventions for sustainable agriculture.
- EFI: develop land use planning tools, implements a cross-sector monitoring and evaluation system, and maps land use finance.
- IDH: Establishes landscape coordination platforms, supports commodity platforms, formulates sustainability standards, trains farmers, and implements best practices.
- UNEP: Supports integrated land use planning, develops business and financial cases, facilitates cooperation agreements, and promotes long-term sustainability aligned with Viet Nam's national REDD+ safeguards.

Together, these stakeholders are expected to collaborate to achieve the project's goals of sustainable land use and climate mitigation, ensuring effective coordination and the delivery of quality project outcomes. Taking finance related interventions for instance, figures 1 and 2 highlight the different levels of interactions between the various international project partners across different components of the intervention.

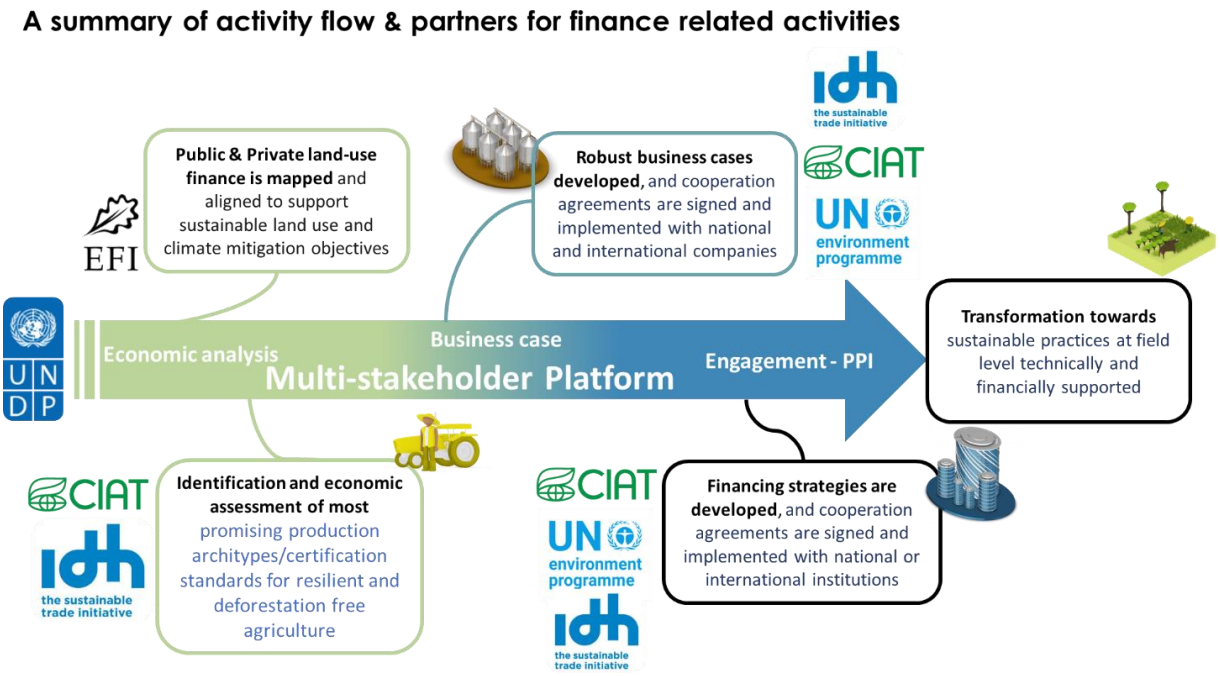

Figure 2: Activity flow and partners for finance related activities

Source: UNEP

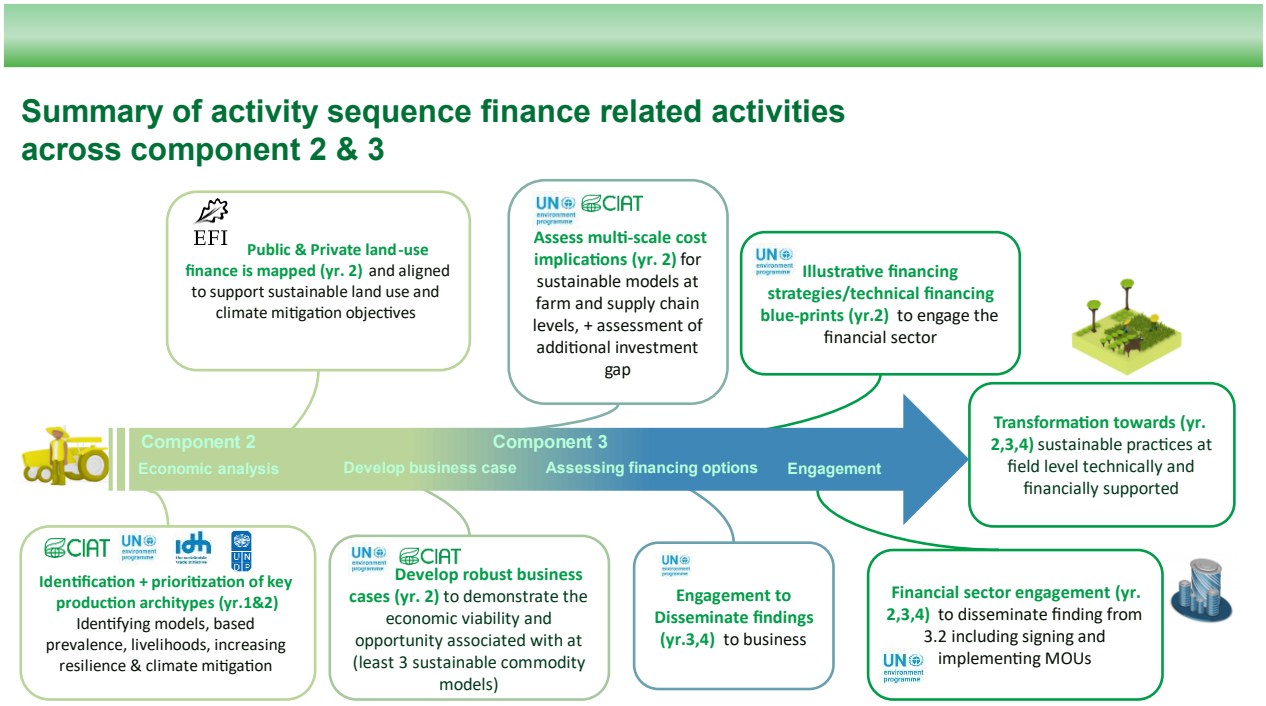

Figure 3: Example of activity sequence across components

Source: UNEP

An overall assessment of stakeholder engagement during implementation is presented in section 5.4 and 5.5.

2.4 Proposed strategy

The project is designed to employ a Deforestation-Free Jurisdictional Approach (DFJA) to achieve its expected results. DFJA refers to a holistic framework aimed at demonstrating sustainable development without deforestation within a specific jurisdiction, in this case, at the district level. This approach promotes the effective integration of (i) political realities and enforcement measures within a jurisdiction and (ii) actions towards sustainable supply chains by key commodity actors.

The project seeks to introduce sustainability criteria for jurisdictions and an M&E framework as a foundation to secure stakeholder commitments for transitioning towards sustainable landscapes. It aims to enhance supporting processes such as integrated land use planning, nearly real-time forest change monitoring systems, and traceability systems for key agricultural supply chains. These improvements aim to generate integrated and transparent information on jurisdictional sustainability and sustainable supply chains.

In terms of actions towards sustainable supply chains, the project promotes a revenue-oriented approach. It plans to develop, disseminate, support and scale sustainable business models at the field level through farmers and forest-dependent communities. These models are designed to generate revenues, complementing traditional forest conservation approaches like patrol support. The roles and actions of private sectors and households are to incentivised through project interventions that improve sustainable access to lower-cost financial services, secure premium commitments from upper supply chain actors, and enhance access to high-value markets for key commodities. Farmers have appreciated the intentions of the project and are supportive of it through being engaged in different consultations.

The project has four main outcomes:

1. **Improved Governance and Enabling Conditions**: Establishing platforms for dialogue and collaboration on priority commodities, promoting ecosystem valuation, sustainability, and resilience in land use decisions. Activities include creating integrated land use maps and plans, PPI compacts, sustainability standards, GI where relevant, spatialized M&E systems, and robust monitoring, transparency, and enforcement frameworks.
2. **Implementation of Sustainability Standards and PPI Compacts at Field Level**: Enhancing sustainability and yields of agricultural and forest production models, improving access to land for farmers, including vulnerable groups, and creating innovative opportunities for sustainable livelihoods such as agroecology and ecotourism. The goal is to increase overall farming revenues through higher quality and more resilient cash crop production.
3. **Addressing Financial Needs Along Supply Chains**: Facilitating agreements with the private and financial sectors to incentivize sustainable practices and aligning public resources for sustainable supply chains.
4. **Building Strong Governance and Management Structures**: Ensuring smooth project operations, documenting and disseminating results, findings, and lessons learned, and generating momentum and expertise to sustain and scale-up integrated sustainable landscape management.

The underlying theory of change of the intervention is as presented in figure 4 below:

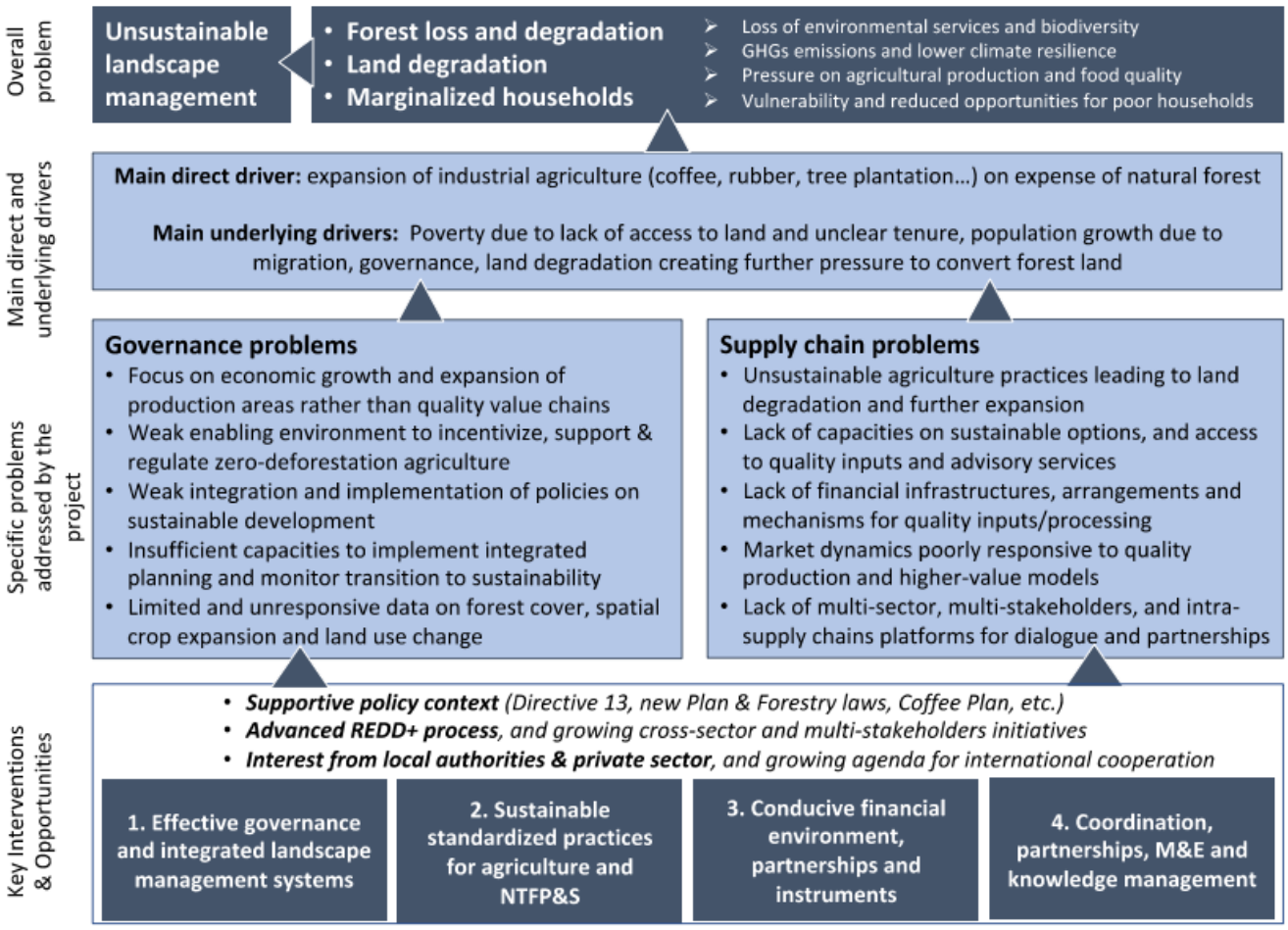

Figure 4: Theory of Change

Source: prodoc

The design of this project was very solid and demonstrated excellent understanding of the context. The vertical and horizontal logic of intervention and assumptions were overall robust. As demonstrated in section 5, the project is fully aligned and contributes directly to and promotes the implementation of It also examined the Project contribution to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)[23], national strategies and commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions[24], green growth[25], and forest protection, sustainable agricultural development of Vietnam in general and the Central Highlands region in particular.[26] Furthermore, the project addressed UNSDCF and UNDP country programme priorities.

With the long-time gap between the design and implementation of the project, several policy and socio-economic evolutions took place which impacted the delivery of the intervention. For instance, the new government guidelines on the management of overseas development aid, led to the project being split into three parts, rendering coordination and efficiency challenging. Additionally, progress made by the

[23] Decision No. 681/ 2019/QD-TTg dated June 4, 2019, deciding the roadmap for the implementation of Vietnam's sustainable development goals by 2030.
[24] Decision No. 419 /2017/QD-TTg dated April 5, 2017 on REDD+
[25] Decision 1393 /2012/QD-TTg dated September 25, 2012 on National Strategy on Green Growth with a Vision to 2050.
[26] Decision No. 297/ 2019/QD-TTg dated March 18, 2019, approving the Scheme on sustainable protection, restoration and development of sustainable forests in the Central Highlands in the period of 2016 - 2030.

national government in the area of land use planning, meant that actions intentioned to support development of these plans were obsolete at inception. The project developed relevant mitigation measures to continue provision of support to the national and provincial governments regarding implementation and monitoring of the master plans, which were approved by the project steering committee.

The introduction of the European Union's Deforestation Regulation and a perceived shift of the commodity market away from rubber and cassava towards durian, coffee and macadamia was affected the choice of models for further development. The team carried out comprehensive assessments to reprioritise the commodities identified as well as the models, which ensures that the original intentions of the project were maintained.

In addition, under the national movement of fighting corruption, Lam Dong province leadership was also seriously impacted[27] that also caused delays of decision making of the provincial activities including the project operation. However, as section 5 demonstrates, the project took adaptive measures to minimise the effects of these changes, but some have made delivery of the intervention even more complex. The emerging challenges and constraints from these changes are detailed under section 5.

The overall budget of the intervention funded by the European Union is € 5 Million and is expected to reach 30,000 farmers as well as place 30,000 hectares of land under sustainable and climate-smart practices, out of the total project area of 501,967 ha which constitutes the four districts in two provinces, Lam Dong and Dak Nong.

In view of these considerations, the evaluation team concludes that the theory of change of the project remains valid and robust and can continue to be utilised for the rest of the programme. There is no additional need to recreate a new theory of change diagram.

3. Evaluation scope and objectives

Purpose and objectives

The MTE seeks to assess progress towards targets and approaches designed and implemented, and to propose solutions, methods and recommendations to support delivery of the project goals.

MTE Scope:

In line with the terms of reference of this MTE, the team assessed emerging achievements and the challenges facing implementation with the aim of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. In this direction, the team was expected to assess the project outputs and outcomes as specified in the Project Document (ProDoc), using the revised OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Progress to Impact and Sustainability[28].

Furthermore, the team was expected to assess gender, human rights, and disability inclusion, LNOB, social and environmental standards as well as the risks to sustainability and to formulate practical and action-oriented recommendations to guide the remaining project implementation till 2026.

[27] https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/1638758/lam-dong-province-s-leader-detained-over-bribery-charges.html
[28] https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Consequently, the MTE team applied the following criteria while assessing the issues under consideration.

MTE Criteria:

Relevance/Coherence: Evaluate the logics and unity of the process in planning and designing the activities.

Efficiency: Evaluate the efficiency of the project implementation, the quality of the results achieved and the time/political/other constraints.

Effectiveness: Conduct an assessment management decision vis-à-vis the cost effectiveness; and to which extend the project outputs are on track to be effectively achieved.

Progress to Impact: Evaluate any indications of the impact of the project, as well as its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sustainability and national ownership: Assess the likelihood of results becoming sustainable with specific focus on national capacity and ownership over the process.

Cross-cutting themes: Assess how the project addresses cross-cutting themes, including human rights, gender equality and disability issues

The MTE matrix in annex 2 provides a detailed set of evaluation sub-questions, data sources and means of verification and analysis methodologies that was developed and validated by the UNDP team for this assignment

4. Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation is delivered using a mixed methods approach. The process generally constituted: 1) review of secondary literature: This will entail a context and content analysis of relevant documents. This served as a source of secondary data (qualitative and quantitative); 2) Data collection: This entailed primary data collection through interviews and consultations, focus group discussions and field visits and 3) Reporting which was an interactive process led by the team lead working with the national consultant.

Overall, the MTE has three phases including: (i) Inception phase, (ii) Data collection and analysis phase and (iii) Close out phase.

A. Inception phase

The objective of this phase is to gain common understanding between the project stakeholders and the evaluation team on the objectives and scope of the assignment. It started with an initial meeting on the 5th of February 2024, which brought together members of the UNDP team and two MTE consultants to exchange ideas, relevant documentation, and discuss initial timelines. Following an initial documentary review and exchanges with the project team, the MTE team proposed the project evaluative matrix, questionnaires, field visit plan, and timelines for the assessment.
The evaluation matrix was developed considering existing M&E data and reports and identified data and information gaps that were necessary to respond to the evaluation criteria and questions. To address

cross cutting themes, the evaluation matrix included a specific section addressing gender equality and empowerment, human rights and disability issues. These cross-cutting issues were equally considered in the data collection tools and the planning of field activities, to ensure that ethnic groups and women could be reached during the field work. The data collection instruments were further translated into the local languages to ensure accessibility to all stakeholders.

An additional meeting was organised on the 26th of February 2024 during which the draft inception report, data collection tools, site visit plan and stakeholders were further discussed. Following this meeting, a revised stakeholder list, site visit plan and evaluation matrix were finalised. The team ensured that a representative group of actors were selected from the categories identified in table 2 including ethnic minorities, women and men, young men and young women. Selection of individuals followed a purposive sampling approach, where participants were selected based on their roles, geographic location, involvement and knowledge of the project, expertise and availability to take part in the evaluation. The schedule for the field visits, interviews and focus group meetings were proposed to ensure optimisation and coverage of all project zones.

The list of the key partners is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2 List of key stakeholder groups for MTE

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder group
UNDP – Lead partner	CO leadership, Project management and technical staff
National government	MARD, other counterparts
Local government	Officials, and technical staff in 2 provinces and districts
Responsible Party	EFI, CIAT, IDH, UNEP
Project Oversight	Project steering committee members at national and local levels
Civil society	Identified NGOs, academia, research, cooperatives and farmers' unions
Private sector	ACOM, INTIMEX, OLAM, NESTLE, traders, middlemen, financial institutions
Ethnic minorities	Leaders, individual male and female beneficiaries, young men and young women
Men, women farmers	Leaders, individual male and female beneficiaries, young men and young women
Donor	EU

B. Data collection and analysis phase

This phase represents the core of the assignment. To carry out a full and as objective an evaluation as possible, the evaluation team adopted a mixed method/approach comprising secondary data analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Desk review, research and analysis:

Initial documentary review commenced at inception and continued as additional information became available. Documents reviewed[29] amongst others include:

[29] See Annex 7 for the full list of documents consulted

1. UNDP project document
2. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
3. Project Inception Report
4. Project implementation reports
5. Quarterly reports
6. Work plans
7. Minutes of project steering committee and other meetings
8. Project site maps
9. Related provincial legal documents and policies
10. Project monitoring and evaluation approach
11. Quality assurance documents
12. Government statistics
13. Academic literature

In addition to using this evidence to assess progress towards project goals, we reviewed the extent to which human rights and gender were considered in the project design, the level of consultations undertaken and formulation of responsive indicators. For instance, when review baseline surveys of farming systems, we explored the extent to which ethnic minorities, women and marginalised groups were involved. Similarly, we considered levels of participation of ethnic minorities throughout implementation of the project. This enabled the team to assess the project's gender results effectiveness once triangulated with primary data.

Primary data collection:

Primary data collection took place through a quantitative and qualitative approach. Regarding the quantitative approach, the consultants reviewed the secondary data provided to assess progress in line with the results framework. The approach entails comparing reported achievements against project baselines and working out the level of achievement of the project indicators, outputs, and outcomes at midterm.

Regarding qualitative approach, the MTE team collected data through virtual and in person interviews and focus group discussions with identified project partners and stakeholders based on the list of stakeholders agreed during the inception phase. The interviewees were people selected with in-depth knowledge of the project and/or field implementers. Although many interviewees were not involved in the Project at the beginning, their views are still valid regarding the current implementation of the Project.

Site mapping and sampling

The project has deployed many activities in all 4 Outcomes. However, some activities have not been deployed due to contextual changes from project design to implementation, leading to delays in some other activities. Consequently, field data collection took place mainly in Ha Noi, and provincial DARD and its district Sub-Departments, involving meetings with national and local government officials, project team, UNDP and responsible parties' staff (CIAT, EFI, IDH, UNEP, and other relevant identified stakeholders during inception). Field visits to project sites ensured direct observation of progress made on the ground and the constraints faced. Field visits also ensured that local authorities, beneficiary groups – men, women, youth perceptions of the project are captured in the evaluation. The data collection instruments for various stakeholder groups are presented in Annex 2.

Based on the project inception report, the Project is being implemented in the following districts[30]:

Lâm Đồng province:
Lac Duong district (6 communes: Lat, Da Sar, Da Nhim, Da Chais, Dung K'no, and Lac Duong town).
Di Linh district (19 communes: (1) Bao Thuan; (2) Dinh Lac; (3) Dinh Trang Hoa; (4) Dinh Trang Thuong, (5) Gia Bac; (6) Gia Hiep; (7) Gung Re; (8) Hoa Bac; (9) Hoa Nam; (10) Hoa Ninh; (11) Hoa Trung; (12) Lien Dam; (13) Son Dien; (14)Tam Bo; (15)Tan Chau; (16)Tan Lam; (17)Tan Nghia; and (18)Tan Thuong, and (19) Di Linh town).

Đắk Nông province
Đắk R'lap district (11 communes: Quang Tin, Dak Wer, Nhan Co, Kien Thanh, Nghia Thang, Dao Nghia, Dak Sin, Hung Binh, Dak Ru, Nhan Dao, and Kien Duc town).

Đắk G'long district (7 communes: Dak Ha, Dak Plao, Quang Khe, Quang Hoa, Quang Son, Đak Som, Dak R'Mmang)

Although the Project's target area and people are quite broad, its interventions involve certain people at different levels and not all activities have been implemented due to contextual changes from project design to implementation, leading to delays in some other activities. Therefore, information collection activities were carried out accordingly at levels depending on the actual operation of the Project. In particular, the content related to Outcome 1 was collected mainly at the district level, except output 1.3a related to the implementation of IDH's PPI Compacts model which was surveyed at the commune level and participating communities.

For Outcomes 2&3 (sustainable agriculture practices and financial mechanism), the interventions target several communes in each district (specifically, for Di Linh district: Bao Thuan and Gung Re communes, for Lac Duong: Lat and Da Sar communes, for Dak R'lap: Nhân Đạo, Đắk Sin, Hưng Bình communes, and for Dak G'long: Quảng Sơn, Đắk Som, and Đắk R'Măng communes). However, many of the project activities have not been deployed. Among these communes, only a few activities (regarding IDH PPI compact operation) have been implemented with individual households in Da Sar commune[31] of Lac Duong district. At the time of this MTE field work, the Project has not implemented on-the-ground agricultural models and interventions in Di Linh, DaK R'Lap, and Dak G'Long districts[32]. Hence, we worked with local resource persons to choose only involved communes and/or communities to work with.

The studied locations were selected to ensure representativeness in terms of activities, interventions and achievements across the project components, diversity of actors, responsible parties, and to achieve a balance between the project intervention zones. The process of selection of the sites was done in collaboration with the Project coordinators and PPMU staff to ensure that there was a common agreement and ownership of the choices taken. Specifically, we interviewed involved officials of all target provinces and districts. At commune level, we worked with people of Lat commune of Lac Duong

[30] That is all communes of the Districts because of the nature of the activity of land use planning and PPI (Outcome 1). Other project activities are in selected communes including Da Sar and Lat (Lac Duong), Bao Thuan and Gung Re communes (Di Linh), Nhân Đạo, Đắk Sin, Hưng Bình communes (Dak R'lap), Quảng Sơn, Đắk Som, and Đắk R'Măng (Dak G'long).

[31] However, under the collaboration between IDH and partners (eg. ACOM, INTIMEX, PAN Group), in Lam Dong province, PPI compacts have been implementing in many communes of Lac Duong and Di Linh (Da Nhim, Da Sar, Da Chais, Dung K'No, Tân Nghĩa, etc.).

[32] From June 2024, the project starts deploying the (1.1g) support to annual land use plan development in 4 target districts, (2.3 and 2.3c): implementing cash crop models and agroecological models.

district and Bao Thuan commune of Di Linh district. [33] For each interviewee or group, we also specified our questions to ensure their relevance their level of knowledge and project involvement. The MTE contributors, institutions, and locations are presented in Annex 3.

During the field visit, the team assessed the impact of the Project on people and its contribution to Project objectives. Obviously, the impact is reviewed in line with the indicators provided in the Project logframe in terms of expected long term changes but also probe unintended impacts if any.

The MTE maintains the anonymity of all information provided and, if necessary, seeks and requests the informed consent of evaluation participants (pictures, direct quotes etc). In the case of individual interviews, while informing the interlocutor of the anonymization of all information provided, request to record the interview was made for some interviews. In carrying out the interviews or group discussions, detailed notes were taken to ensure all pertinent information was collected. It is important to state that in concerned Project sites and target communities, focused group discussions were organised, bringing together targeted stakeholder groups. The MTE team ensured as much as possible that women and any recognised minority groups were represented. All interviews in the provinces were conducted in the local languages to enhance participation of the actors.

Discussions were also held with various government and non-government agencies, private sector, consultants, development partners who are directly or indirectly engaged in the project implementation. The MTE team also ensured participation of actors that cannot be met during field visits through online follow up meetings and discussions. By so doing, we ensured that all key stakeholders were involved in the delivery of the MTE exercise. This would contribute to enhance the adoption and ownership of the results emerging from the evaluation.

Ultimately, there has been a total of 49 participants (with 19 from ethnic minorities, 9 females), representing a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders - UNDP, PMU, PPMU, CIAT, EFI, IDEH, UNEP, businesses, local officials and farmers.

Data analysis

We have used content analysis in the review of secondary data. The evaluation team implemented a thorough and systematic approach to verify the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data provided by the project. Accuracy checks and consistency analyses were performed on the data, focusing on key performance indicators and output measures to ensure reliability and internal consistency. This was the case for instance regarding the number of beneficiaries, deforestation rates, crop map data amongst others.

Regarding primary data emerging from interviews and discussions, recorded interviews were transcribed and translated as necessary. These were reviewed by the team leader and then analysed through thematic analysis techniques. The themes were generated in line with the MTE criteria and sub-questions highlighted in the MTE matrix while being sufficiently flexible to develop new themes based on emerging issues in the data. The table 3 below highlights the framework for analysis, criteria and key information sources utilised to address the evaluation questions.

[33] We also interviewed a few Da Nhim farmers (Lac Duong district) regarding PPI compact activities (instead of Da Sar's due to availability matter) to get an overview of the model. According to IDH and ACOM, these two adjacent communes are similar regarding their PPI implementation.

Table 3: Analysis Framework

No	Criteria	Subject of assessment	Data sources			
			Documentary review	Interviews/face to face/online	Focus group discussions	Field observations
1	**Relevance/ Coherence**	Evaluate the logics and unity of the process in planning and designing the activities.	x	x	X	
	Efficiency	Evaluate the efficiency of the project implementation, the quality of the results achieved and the time/political/other constraints.	x	x	X	
	Effectiveness	Assessment management decision vis-à-vis the cost effectiveness; and to which extend the project outputs are on track to be effectively achieved.	x	x	x	X
	Progress to Impact	Evaluate any indications of the impact of the project, as well as its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	x	x	x	X
	Sustainability and national ownership:	Assess the likelihood of results becoming sustainable with specific focus on national capacity and ownership over the process.	x	x	x	X
	Cross-cutting themes	Assess how the project addresses cross-cutting themes, including human rights, gender equality and disability issues	x	x	x	x

We proceeded to triangulating data from multiple sources, including project reports, beneficiary records, field observations, and stakeholder interviews, ensuring that any discrepancies were identified, and information was validated. As mentioned above, key informants such as project staff, beneficiaries, and partners were interviewed to corroborate the data, providing contextual insights and confirming reported outcomes and outputs. Field visits were integral to the process, allowing the evaluation team to observe project activities firsthand and gather qualitative data. During these visits, the team verified the existence and condition of project deliverables and assessed the implementation of activities as reported.

It is important to stress that throughout, the evaluations maintained a gender, HR and inclusiveness perspective. As mentioned earlier, the team reviewed the project document to assess the extent to which gender, inclusiveness and social safeguards were considered during design and them compared plans with the emerging emergence during implementation. This included gender disaggregated reporting, opportunities created for inclusive participation and empowerment amongst others. Furthermore, we explored the respect of UNDP social and environmental safeguards/standards, through reviewing the SES screening assessment, risks identified, and mitigation measures introduced by the project and how they were monitored and used by UNDP and partners for decision-making.

Overall, by comparing planned versus actual achievements, the evaluation team could determine whether the project delivered its outputs and outcomes within the allocated resources and timeframe. Verified data underpinned the evaluation's conclusions, ensuring that findings were based on credible evidence. This enhanced the reliability of the evaluation's judgments regarding the project's success and areas needing improvement and informed the development of actionable recommendations.

Findings were presented in accessible forms including tables, figures, graphs etc. All figures were generated using data wrapper which enables high quality and potentially interactive graphics to be presented.

Quality assurance

This evaluation was designed and conducted in alignment with the quality assurance mechanisms outlined in the Norms and Standards for Evaluation by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in 2016. The evaluation matrix and checklists were developed based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this evaluation (Annex-1). During information collection, similar issues were incorporated into the questionnaires and checklists. To ensure the accuracy, validity, relevance, and usefulness of the information, extensive consultations with nearly all stakeholders were conducted. Data triangulation was achieved through mixed methods of data collection, focusing on quality over quantity and considering the broader perspectives of the Theory of Change, project objectives, and outputs.

Limitations and mitigation measures

The limitations of the methodology are those of assessments based on qualitative and quantitative tools. Secondary and primary sources whether qualitative or quantitative in nature have their respective challenges. The former, especially in the case of progress reports from which most of the statistical information is drawn, refer to authors who are not independent, in this case internal staff involved in the implementation of the programme, who may therefore develop biases unknowingly or intentionally. The primary sources, on the other hand, even if carefully chosen and inclusive, remain a non-random qualitative sample, and therefore always a questionable representation of the general population. In other words, the extent to which the views of one or more actors are objective and/or significant of what happened in the programme as a whole can always be questioned.

Consequently, we combined field visits, interviews, group discussions and therefore benefit from the advantages of mixed methods. An additional strategy for mitigating the challenges identified lies in the rigour of a systematic triangulation of sources and data. In this respect, at a first level of internal confrontation, the documents are first examined in terms of their intrinsic coherence in order to determine their own quality and the reliability likely to result from them. Then, on the same subject, the different documents available are compared with each other to identify a second level of consistency and possible discrepancies. The primary data are in turn called upon and their indications compared with what emerges from the secondary data, to determine a third level of confidence.

The geographical spread of the project intervention sites means that a selection of a representative number was required. As mentioned earlier, we prioritised quality over quantity of stakeholders involved in the evaluation. In this direction, the national consultant was able to meet and interview key beneficiary groups and stakeholders to ensure the highest possible coverage. We combined these field visits with online/virtual interviews with the key project actors.

Interaction between final beneficiaries and MTE could have been impacted by language barriers. Fortunately, most of the EM in targeted areas can speak Vietnamese quite fluently, so the national consultant was able to lead discussions thoroughly and ensured that beneficiaries and stakeholders expressed themselves fully.

The use of mixed methods and tools, along with the triangulation of data during analysis, allowed the team to mitigate the weaknesses inherent in single-method approaches. By building our findings and conclusions on multiple sources, we have enhanced the reliability and validity of the midterm evaluation.

5. Findings

5.1 Relevance

Evaluation question: The extent to which project objectives and design meet the needs of the country/recipient and continue to do so if circumstances change; the degree of alignment with country needs, UNDP, EU mandates, existing national strategies and policies, international conventions and SDGs

Finding: The ILandscape project's objectives and design are well-aligned with Vietnam's national strategies, UNDP, EU mandates, and international conventions, focusing on sustainable land use, climate action, and poverty reduction. It has shown a strong commitment to meeting the needs of beneficiaries, especially ethnic minorities and women, by incorporating their perspectives in the project design. While leveraging previous initiatives like the UNREDD Viet Nam Programme, and despite facing challenges due to evolving regulatory contexts and initial design assumptions, the project has demonstrated adaptability to maintain its relevance and positive impact on local communities.

5.1.1 Thematic relevance

The project's formulation was notably influenced by prior initiatives, particularly drawing from the insights and methodologies developed through the UNREDD Viet Nam Programme. This approach ensured that the project was not starting from scratch but was instead leveraging established frameworks and understanding in sustainable land management and conservation efforts. Drawing from this rich tapestry of previous initiatives and collaborations with IDH/SNV/CIAT/EFI, the project aimed to embed established best practices and lessons in sustainable land management, illustrating a deliberate effort to leverage historical insights for enhanced outcomes. It is relevant to highlight that most stakeholders particularly at district level involved in the implementation of this project were not involved during the design process. The majority of those who did, have since moved on. Provincial and district officials noted that they do provide opinions and feedback on project deliverables as directed by their hierarchy, but to not influence on the design of the activities.

Returning to the design, the project sought alignment with Viet Nam's national and local priorities, aiming to contribute to the country's goals of land degradation neutrality, sustainable land management and climate action.

In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, following the Prime Minister's Decision No. 681/QD-TTg on June 4, 2019, which outlines Viet Nam's roadmap for achieving its sustainable development objectives by 2030, this Initiative specifically aids in reducing poverty (targets 1.1, 1.2), promoting sustainable agricultural practices (2.3 and 2.4), and protecting ecosystems (15.2 and 15.5). Regarding the SDGs, the project's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing land management practices aligns closely with SDG 13, which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The project aims to "Enhance ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions" underscores its strategic efforts to mitigate climate change. Aligning with SDG 15, the project endeavours to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss. This alignment is demonstrated through its emphasis on sustainable land management and efforts to protect biodiversity, as highlighted by the project's alignment with "The country's Voluntary National Land Degradation Neutrality Targets...emphasises sustainable land management..."

The project contributes to SDG 12 by promoting sustainable agriculture and enhancing supply chain transparency and efficiency, aiming to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. This

contribution is reflected in the project's goal to "Sustain food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices...," aligning with efforts to promote responsible consumption and production. EFI notes the importance of market requirements with the EUDR in aiding "the preparedness and compliance with the EU," highlighting the project's role in fostering sustainable practices within key agricultural sectors.

Although initially not explicitly focused on gender, the project made strides in incorporating gender considerations into its strategies, supporting SDG 5's aim to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls. Efforts included conducting baselines to identify gender participation as a criterion for selecting farming systems and models, as noted by CIAT. UNEP's mention of "2 weeks missions...with aspects of local people and gender considered" further indicates the project's evolving focus on gender equality. Finally, the project exemplifies SDG 17 through its efforts to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development. Collaborations between international organizations, local government, and communities highlight the project's commitment to fostering effective partnerships.

Regarding Viet Nam's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Agreement, this Initiative contributes to the National Action Programme aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through strategies like REDD+ (Reduction of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forest Resources, and Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks) as outlined in the Prime Minister's Decision No. 419/QD-TTg on April 5, 2017. It emphasizes integrated approaches to curb deforestation and forest degradation, with an anticipated outcome of reducing emissions by approximately 3 million tons of CO2 in the targeted area by the project's conclusion.

Under the National Strategy on Green Growth (Decision 1393/QD-TTg by the Prime Minister on September 25, 2012), the project directly supports the implementation of sustainable organic agriculture and enhances the competitiveness of agricultural production, alongside encouraging green economy and products through financial, credit, and market mechanisms. The Initiative also aligns with the Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 (Decision 1250/QD-TTg by the Prime Minister on July 31, 2013), supporting the conservation of natural ecosystems with the aim of reducing natural forest loss by 70% in the specified districts. Furthermore, it integrates the requirements of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Viet Nam and the European Union on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade, facilitating sustainable landscape transition and allowing stakeholders to monitor progress within the timber industry. The project aids Viet Nam in realising its coffee development plan up to 2020 and vision for 2030 (Decision 1987/QD/ BNN-TT, August 21, 2012), targeting a significant increase in sustainable coffee production areas. Lastly, it contributes to the Prime Minister's Decision No. 297/QD-TTg on March 18, 2019, for sustainable forest protection, restoration, and development in the Central Highlands (2016-2030), aiming to prevent and reverse deforestation and enhance forest coverage to 49.2% by 2030. The MTE notes that the design of the project was built on the following relevant policies at the time. These strategic policies included:

1. Viet Nam’s National Climate Change Strategy (Decision No. 2139/QD-TTg): This strategy outlines the country's approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts, emphasizing the importance of transitioning to a low-carbon economy and enhancing resilience across various sectors, including agriculture and forestry.

1. Viet Nam’s Green Growth Strategy (Decision No. 1393/QD-TTg): Although already mentioned, it's worth reiterating the importance of this strategy, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting energy efficiency, and encouraging sustainable economic growth.

2. National Strategy for Environmental Protection to 2020, with Visions Towards 2030 (Decision No. 1216/QD-TTg): This strategy sets out objectives for environmental protection, conservation of natural resources, and sustainable development, including measures to manage waste and reduce pollution.
3. Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2020 (Decision No. 18/2007/QD-TTg): This strategy aims to ensure sustainable forest management, conservation, and development, contributing to poverty reduction, environmental protection, and climate change mitigation.
4. National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, Vision 2030 (Decision No. 1250/QD-TTg): This document provides a framework for conserving biodiversity, protecting ecosystems, and ensuring the sustainable use of biological resources.
5. The National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2016-2020 (Decision No. 1722/QD-TTg): While focusing on poverty reduction, this program also emphasizes the need for sustainable livelihoods, which includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices and environmental protection.
6. Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development 2011-2020 (Decision No. 124/QD-TTg): Focusing on modernizing agriculture, this strategy also incorporates elements of sustainable production practices, resource efficiency, and climate resilience.
7. Resolution 24-NQ/TW dated June 3, 2013 of the Central Executive Committee on proactively responding to climate change, strengthening resource management and environmental protection. This resolution is still applicable in the provinces. Project activities respond to this resolution.

Following approval and the start of implementation, other national policies and guidelines have been introduced to which the project remains relevant. These include:

• Decision No. 1658/QD-TTg October 1, 2021 of the Prime Minister: Approving the National Strategy on Green Growth for the period 2021 - 2030, vision 2050. This Decision is inclusive and comprehensive, targeting net-zero and sustainable development. The project activities relating to forest protection, reducing forest pressure, Terra-i support this Decision.

• Resolution No. 106/NQ-CP dated July 18, 2023 of the Government: On developing agricultural cooperatives in restructuring the agricultural sector and building new rural areas. PPI compact activities fit this resolution.

• Decision No.: 255/QD-TTg dated February 25, 2021 on approving the Plan to restructure the agricultural sector for the period 2021 - 2025. The project agricultural models, Terra-i, and PPI compact fit this (e.g. Promoting replanting and grafting old coffee gardens; high-yield and high-quality coffee varieties, intercropping, developing NTFPs, forest protection and development, etc.).

• Decision No. 524/QD-TTg dated April 1, 2021 approving the project "Planting one billion trees in the period 2021 - 2025". The provinces are expected the Project activities (agroforestry, forest protection) to support implementing this Decision .

• Decision No. 896/QD-TTg dated July 26, 2022 on approval of the National Strategy on Climate Change for the period up to 2050. This inclusive strategy aligns with many project activities in terms of maintaining and developing forests, protecting ecosystems, ensuring forest coverage, transforming the structure of crops and livestock, and developing modern smart agriculture.

• Decision No. 749/QD-TTg dated June 3, 2020 approving the "National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, orientation to 2030"; Decision No. 942/QD-TTg dated June 15, 2021 approving the e-Government development strategy towards digital government for the period 2021 - 2025, with a vision to 2030; and Decision No. 411/QD-TTg dated March 31, 2022 approving the National Strategy for developing the digital economy and digital society to 2025, with a vision to 2030. The LUP tool, Terra-i, crop maps of the Project support these Decisions.

Decision No. 1719/QD-TTg dated October 14, 2021 approving the National Target Program for socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas; and Decision No. 90/QD-TTg dated January 18, 2022 approving the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction for the period 2021 - 2025. Target authorities at all levels are expecting many of the project activities interactively support the implementation of these Decisions.

These policies and strategies collectively reinforce Viet Nam's efforts to address climate change, protect biodiversity, manage natural resources sustainably, and promote green growth. They provide a comprehensive framework for the country's development objectives, ensuring environmental sustainability is integrated into all aspects of Viet Nam's socio-economic planning and development.

Contribution to UNDP Country Programme Framework 2022-2026 and UN Cooperation Framework (2022-2026)

Furthermore, the project's objectives and design elements mirror the UNDP's broader agenda in Viet Nam, which emphasizes sustainable development, climate action, and inclusive economic growth outcomes. By integrating land use planning and engaging with ethnic minorities and women, the project seeks to link sustainable environmental practices with improved livelihood outcomes. This approach aligns with the UNDP's commitment to environmental stewardship alongside social inclusion and economic resilience as encapsulated in its three-country programme (UNDP CPF 2022-2026). Outcome 1 specifically focuses on achieving shared Prosperity through Economic Transformation, while outcome 2 seeks to address Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Environmental Sustainability. Specifically, that People in Viet Nam, especially those at risk of being left behind, will benefit from, and contribute to safer and cleaner environment resulting from Viet Nam’s effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and resilience building, promotion of circular economy, the provision of clean and renewable energy, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

In addition to the UNDP’s country programme goals, the project contributes towards achievement of the joint goals espoused by the government of Viet Nam and the United Nations in the country. The One Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development Cooperation between the United Nations and the Government of Viet Nam for the Period 2022-2026 (Cooperation Framework (CF)) serves as the United Nations' primary framework for planning and implementing development activities at the country level. It outlines the UN's collective support for Viet Nam in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development priorities. The goal is to foster a resilient Viet Nam where the wellbeing of all people, especially the most disadvantaged, is prioritized, alongside an inclusive green economy and people-centred governance systems that ensure equal rights and opportunities. Central to this framework is the commitment to leave no one behind and address the needs of the most vulnerable in Viet Nam. The project’s focus on fighting deforestation and degradation, promoting sustainable land use, climate resilient agriculture and addressing the needs of the poor and ethnic minorities consequently contributes to achieve these goals.

Responsive over time

Since the initial design of the ILandscape project, a variety of changes in policy, organizational structure, and environmental considerations have necessitated adaptations in project strategy and execution.

Regulatory and Policy Changes

1. **Land Use Planning Progress**: At the outset, the project was informed by the 2017 law on planning[34]. The project intended to support land use planning in the country. However with the delays experienced from design to implementation, the national land use master plans had already been done and approved at provincial and district levels, rendering some of the initial planning components redundant. Consequently, activities under outcome 1 and related activities under outcome 2 required adjustments from the project. As one respondent observed, "many of the outcomes and outputs don't make sense—for example some interventions were already completed...,". In response to this, the project steering committee approved the need to rather focus on strengthening local capacities to develop annual land use plans and to support operationalise the provincial and district master plans. The project team also suggests the need to support the midterm review of the master plans, to facilitate learning across government departments regarding this new approach to landscape governance in the country.
2. **Changes in MARD and Regulatory Frameworks**: The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) underwent structural changes that paffected the project management unit (PMU) but also the activities to be conducted project partners and PPMUs in the provinces. As a reminder, MARD's role is to provide effective coordination, support and overseeing functions to the two provinces. MARD also has the responsibility to mobilize all relevant technical departments, including Viet Nam Forestry Administration – VNFOREST, Department of Crop Production, Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture Development, and others to provide technical guidance to the project under the coordination of the PMU. Furthermore, MARD's amendments, such as the revision of Decree 156/2018/ND-CP and updates in circulars concerning the carbon market and greenhouse gas emissions, have implications for planned work on supporting payment for environmental services.
3. **ODA regulations**: The official development assistance (ODA) from international donors for Vietnam in the 2021-2025 period is estimated at VND527 trillion (US$23 billion)[35]. Part of this ODA is expected to finance projects addressing social issues during the urbanization process and strengthening provincial linkages in the North West, Central Highlands, and Mekong delta for greater economic development. Regulatory changes in Official Development Assistance (ODA), specifically the introduction of Decree 114[36], have necessitated the restructuring of the project into three independently managed but interconnected sub-projects. These sub-projects have varying approval dates, complicating their simultaneous management, as one may conclude before the others. Consequently, the project has had to make adjustments to comply with these changes.

[34] Law on Planning (2017): Law 21/2017/QH14 on planning in Vietnam (thuvienphapluat.vn)

[35] Hanoi Times (2021) Vietnam set to receive US$23 billion in ODA for 2021-2025 (hanoitimes.vn), https://hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-set-to-receive-us23-billion-in-oda-for-2021-2025-319575.html

[36] Decree No. 114/2021/ND-CP of the Government: On the management and use of official development assistance (ODA) and concessional loans from foreign donors.

The alteration in ODA regulations has also caused some reluctance among local authorities to fully engage with the project. For instance, Dak Nong has faced challenges in accessing funds. Although funding is expected from UNDP sources, it is now managed like the state budget, requiring the Project Management Units (PMUs) to adhere strictly to governmental financial processes. The project responded to address these challenges by conducting training sessions for provincial staff. However, as the staff must continue to operate within rigid government guidelines, there is very little room, if at all, for intervention or flexibility in project implementation.

Vietnam's anti-corruption campaign, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), starting 2016 is reported to be the most comprehensive in the country's history[37]. Researchers argued that it has reduced business costs and streamlined bureaucracy, fostering a fairer business environment. This process has led to a noticeable slowdown in administrative processes in many province provinces. To demonstrate the impact of this anxiety nationally, the disbursement rate of public investment in 2022 was only 68% of the planned target. In the first quarter of 2023, over 90% of central agencies and 30% of localities had a disbursement rate below 5%, with 44 central agencies yet to disburse funds. Fear of anti-corruption investigations has caused officials to hesitate in approving projects or licenses, resulting in significant business disruptions as observed in this project[38]. This has also affected project implementation in the two target provinces, leading to delayed approval of project workplans and budgets, stalling implementation.

4. **EUDR Regulations**: It is important to also highlight that the project was designed as a technical assistance intervention with the objective of generating and demonstrating evidence on how to support deforestation free agricultural commodities development agenda[39] of the national government and the European Union. By engaging with the leading international partners cited above, the aim was to develop and pilot the tools, standards and guidelines, and sustainable/viable agricultural models, that would help achieve this objective, but also provide the evidence for replicability to other jurisdictions and EU trading partner countries. Unfortunately, the approval by the government took too long and by the time the project effectively took off the EU's flagship regulation on deforestation free commodities had already gone through the legislative process[40], which undermined the initial logic of the intervention, necessitating adaptations to the project.

   The introduction of the European Union's regulations has placed additional pressures on local authorities and stakeholders to adapt their agricultural and forestry practices to meet deforestation-free and traceability requirements, particularly affecting the coffee supply chain. A cornerstone of this alignment is the project's focus on combating deforestation and promoting sustainable land management practices, particularly within the economically vital coffee and pepper industries of Viet Nam's Central Highlands. This region, as noted in project background information, stands at the "forefront of the national battle to fight climate change," underscoring

[37] Liu, H (2023) The Ongoing Anti-corruption Movement in Vietnam, International Relations Review, https://www.irreview.org/articles/the-ongoing-anti-corruption-movement-in-vietnam

[38] Giang, N.K (2023) Vietnam's Anti-corruption Campaign: Economic and Political Impacts, T ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE ANALYSE CURRENT EVENTS, 2023 (41), 1-11. https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ISEAS_Perspective_2023_41.pdf

[39] Kissinger, Gabrielle. (2020). Policy Responses to Direct and Underlying Drivers of Deforestation: Examining Rubber and Coffee in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Forests. 11. 733. 10.3390/f11070733.

[40] European Parliament (2022) Parliament adopts new law to fight global deforestation, Parliament adopts new law to fight global deforestation | News | European Parliament (europa.eu)

the project's strategic importance. The EUDR is designed to minimize the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with the production and consumption of commodities and products entering the EU market. The EUDR requires operators and traders to conduct due diligence to ensure that commodities such as soy, beef, palm oil, wood, cocoa, and coffee, along with derived products, have not contributed to deforestation or forest degradation globally since a cut-off date of 2021. The regulation is part of the EU's broader strategy to promote global environmental sustainability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect biodiversity. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and forest protection in Viet Nam, particularly in the Central Highlands region, the project directly contributes to preventing deforestation and forest degradation. This is in line with the EUDR's objective to ensure that agricultural commodities entering the EU market do not contribute to global deforestation. The adjustment of project interventions through implementation of various workshops and information sharing events on the EUDR has been widely appreciated and commended by project stakeholders, as addressing a real need of the country.

5. Organizational and Operational Adjustments

- **Data Review and Planning Challenges**: The ongoing adjustments and reviews of forest land area and boundaries have complicated the synthesis of data crucial for the project. Government stakeholders and project partners have access to different data sets and have struggled to reconcile their sources and methodologies, leading to stand-off in many cases as local officers stick to their official statistics. For example, in Dak G'long district there are about 30,000 ha of land which cannot be identified based on government statistics. This means that partners have to engage in a negotiation process with local officials in order to work out the differences which takes time. In the above-mentioned case, such engagement under activity 1.1e appears to be yielding fruit as a reconciliation of statistics is moving partners and government closer to a consensus. In any case, the completed district-level and provincial planning prior to the project's start has limited the scope for supporting integrated land use planning at the district level.
- **Decentralization of VNForest**: The split of VNForest into two entities, one becoming the Department of Forestry (DoF), has introduced a transitional phase that affected decision-making processes, further delaying project timelines.
- **Revenue and Capacity Building Under LEAF**: With the LEAF Project underway, there is a focus on building capacities in anticipation of revenue from carbon credits. Under the agreement signed between MARD and Emergent, Viet Nam will transfer to the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition 5.15 million tons of CO2 because of emission reduction from forests in the South-Central region and Central Highlands in the 2022-2026 period in order to receive nearly US$52 million for forest protection and development[41]. This aligns with the iLandscape project's goals but requires synchronization with broader governmental frameworks and guidance. This would enable the project to play a stronger role in delivering on the government's commitments under the agreement, and consequently enhance its strategic relevance and positioning.

[41] Vietnam transfers 5 million tons of CO2 to get US$52 million for forest protection (vietnamnet.vn)

6. **Agricultural and Environmental Shifts**

   - **Crop and Economic Priorities**: In regions like Lac Duong and Dak R'Lap, there's been a clear shift towards crops that better meet economic and environmental needs. Durian has emerged as a priority crop, overtaking previously favoured crops such as cashew and pepper. There is also a trend towards intercropping, which enhances yield and resilience against climate impacts.
   - **Community and Cooperative Movements**: There's a stronger movement towards forming businesses and cooperatives, ensuring better output and support from state incentives. This communal approach is pivotal in adapting to climate change and securing sustainable agricultural practices.

5.1.2 Gender, LNOB and inclusion considerations in project design

Ethnic minorities, particularly those residing in targeted project areas within the Central Highlands, were recognized as crucial stakeholders. In fact, Central Highlands is recognized as one of Vietnam's most socio-economically challenged regions, with indigenous communities deeply entrenched in poverty and facing significant disparities in welfare compared to other groups. The Central Highlands region has a multidimensional poverty rate of 12.46% (compared to national average of 5.71%), the second highest in the country with the total number of multidimensional poor and near-poor households estimated at 195,795 in 2023. The Central Highlands region also has the second highest poverty rate in the country, with 6.40% (compared to 2.93% nationally), with an estimated 100,563 poor households[42]. Prodoc emphasised the demographic impacts of these communities in the area citing the surge in the population of the Central Highlands from 420,000 in 1926 to over 5.5 million in 2014. The demographic expansion reportedly led to the region experiencing a dramatic reduction in forest cover, from 85% in 1960 to much lower levels during design, significantly affecting the indigenous groups traditionally inhabiting these lands. Furthermore, despite the potential of forest resources, only a small fraction of ethnic minority households is engaged in forest protection or have forest land allocated to them. This results in forest-related activities contributing a mere 8.5% to the total household income of these groups, as per the prodoc. For Lat Commune, which is 85% forested, such a project is well-aligned with the goals of forest protection and development in the commune. There is also a desire among the local population to enhance the quality of agricultural production, given the limited available land. By focusing on high-quality agriculture, the community aims to improve livelihoods without resorting to deforestation. Respondents from this commune for instance state that the project could support increasing the quality of coffee production, increasing the quality and ratio of intercropped trees in coffee gardens so that people do not increase the coffee area and reduce deforestation. These considerations underscore the broader issue of limited opportunities for ethnic minorities to connect with markets and benefit from sustainable and resilient agricultural practices. Addressing these multifaceted challenges would foster transformative changes that benefit the impoverished and landless, improving equity between genders and among different community groups in the region.

The project's efforts to incorporate the perspectives of ethnic minorities through participatory methods during project design were aimed at ensuring culturally sensitive and directly beneficial interventions.

[42] Government Portal (2024) Announcing multidimensional poverty rates nationally and by region in 2023, Multidimensional poverty rates nationally and by region in 2023 (chinhphu.vn)

The prodoc mentions that key stakeholders including local communities who are in need of training and incentives (both cash and in kinds) to move towards sustainable practices will directly benefit from field interventions to improve their sustainable income through enhancing agricultural practices, developing agroforestry and NTFP&S, carrying out monitoring and land delineation. Special emphasis will be put on inclusion of ethnic minorities, men and women, which will be monitored with disaggregated data.

Consequently, the project placed emphasis on engaging directly with local communities from its design and inception, aiming to integrate their needs and perspectives. One partner noted that "we carried out 2 weeks consultation missions during the design...with aspects of local people and gender considered". There was consensus amongst MTE respondents that if successful, the project would improve farming practices, make their farms more ecological, environmental sustainable and more profitable. Engagement in PPI Compacts would enhance their voice and participation in multistakeholder processes and ensure that their concerns are taken into account by other stakeholders. So far, PPI compact is implemented in Lac Duong of Lam Dong province. If successful, the project would contribute to increased food security, decent jobs and incomes, while reducing their vulnerability to climate shocks and strengthening their resilience. These are critical in ensuring the achievement of the LNOB agency, human rights promotion and inclusion of marginalised communities in decision makings that concern them.

During the MTE team observed that though the project focuses on ethnic minorities more broadly, the focus on gender specificities is rather mixed. One partner mentioned that efforts to analyse the role of women in agriculture and identify their specific needs ensured that project activities attempted to strengthen inclusiveness. Other partners highlight the consideration of gender and social inclusion as critical criteria in reviewing land use planning (LUP) experiences, ensuring these aspects are integral to project planning and implementation. On the other hand, another partner mentions that there "is specific focus on ethnic minorities...no specific focus on gender" in terms of activities implemented so far. The partner's emphasis on a household and community level approach that does not differentiate by gender highlights an apparent strategy for inclusion. Additionally, there were no specific budgets allocated to ensure gender mainstreaming. As one respondent mentioned, "I do not have knowledge (about a budget line), there is no budget line specializing on these matters singularly". These mixed observations on gender signal a need for a more integrated, harmonised and upfront consideration of gender not only on a partner-by-partner basis, but across project implementation globally. While the project was clearly designed to be gender responsive, the project can be rated as gender targeted at midterm point. Results are focused on outreach in terms of number of women, men, ethnic minorities targeted[43].

5.1.3 Internal and External Coherence

The project demonstrated a foundational effort to integrate knowledge and frameworks from prior environmental and sustainability programs, particularly drawing from the UNREDD Viet Nam Programme and initiatives by partners like IDH, SNV, CIAT, and EFI. This approach capitalised on the accumulated experiences and lessons learned to address complex environmental challenges more effectively. By adopting successful elements from initiatives such as Terra I and the broader REDD+ program, the project not only enhanced its chances of success but also ensured that its strategies were informed by proven practices. The scaling of Terra-i to other districts exemplifies this strategic integration, showcasing the project's commitment to expanding its impact through adaptable and scalable solutions. Drawing on IDH's experience and expertise of facilitating the multi-stakeholder

[43] ASSESSING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (undp.org)

forums – PPI's, further exemplifies the aims of the project to draw inspiration from well-established practices at national and provincial levels.

Regarding the **internal coherence** of the project, **the design of this project** was very strong, demonstrating excellent understanding of the context and underlying drivers of deforestation, governance and supply chain challenges. Consultations were undertaken with various stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and needs were taken into consideration. As already mentioned in terms of strategy, the project in its design emphasises a revenue-oriented approach, aiming to develop, support, and scale sustainable business models for farmers and forest-dependent communities that generate income. Land tenure is to be addressed through business-oriented strategies, ensuring sustainability by linking land rights to profitable land practices. The project aims to demonstrate the profitability and sustainability of these models, making them scalable. The project also sought to pilot and implement promising innovations, such as the Terra-I model, which had already garnered interest from other provinces. Innovations planned included integrated land use planning, sustainability standards, and methods to engage the private sector, all designed to be widely disseminated and replicated. The project also focused on producing and disseminating knowledge, building networks to advocate for project outcomes, and institutionalising changes. Outputs 4.1 and 4.2 were intended to elevate sub-national lessons to the national level, supporting legal and regulatory processes for further dissemination and scaling up. The project also planned to invest in multi-stakeholder dialogue and cross-sector engagement to promote the benefits and impacts of its innovations.

From the MTE's assessment, the vertical logic of intervention of the project is sound, and if the fourteen outputs are delivered, would contribute to achieve the four stated outcomes. The proposed activities during design were sufficient to deliver on the state outcomes, though the high levels of interdependencies built into the design meant that any delays in the delivery of any outputs would immediately impact achievement of other goals. For instance, to reach 30,000 farmers or place 30,000 ha of land under sustainable and climate resilient agriculture, required the project to leverage up to 25 million euros from external partners. At midterm for instance, there was no significant progress reported regarding resource mobilisation, putting at risk the achievement of stated targets. In any case, the current state of implementation of the project has challenged the underlying logic of intervention with some proposed activities no longer relevant. This not only applies to outcomes 1-3, but also to 4 where the ODA regulations have further complexified the project management requirements.

As mentioned earlier, the project team has demonstrated adaptive management through introduction of activities to respond to the changes. What has not happened so far, has been the review of the **horizontal logic of intervention** regarding the indicators and the targets. The MTE applied SMART criteria to assess these key aspects of the project's framework and have suggested areas of improvement for consideration by the project team. This assessment is presented in annex 4.

Regarding the **stated risks and assumptions,** the evolving policy on nature, climate and people, have remained overall positive and supportive of the project as highlighted in the novel regulations and policies reported under section 5.1. The design/prodoc included a significant risk analysis and identified mitigation measures towards political, organisational and operational risks. The project has maintained a regular risk log and demonstrated close monitoring and responsiveness as already presented above. In revising the logframe in response to the observations made under annex 4, the MTE enjoins the team to update the assumptions in the logframe to reflect the observed changes in the implementation context.

Regarding **external coherence**, there is limited evidence of the coordinated consortium effort to synergies with other on-going national and provincial initiatives. Individual partners appear to be making efforts to draw on their existing projects to do so, but this is not part of a coordinated strategy to derive and share value with other relevant interventions. As one partner mentioned, "we also have some other projects and other team working on climate change resilience working in the same divisions..." and we try to coordinates. Some examples can be seen below.

1. **Integration with IDH PPI Compacts**: The project has aligned with IDH's PPI compact programme/project in Central Highlands, including initiatives in Gia Lai and Dak Lak provinces. These compacts focus on sustainable agricultural practices and social security, which complement the environmental and social objectives of the iLandscape project. By aligning efforts, both initiatives enhance their effectiveness and reach within the community.

2. **Learning and Adoption from SNV Projects**: In Lac Duong, lessons from the SNV Cafe-Redd Project, particularly its traceability system, have been adopted to strengthen the iLandscape project's components. This has allowed for integration of advanced agricultural practices, and efforts to improve traceability in coffee production.

3. **Support for Regional Green Initiatives**: The project has supported the implementation of the State Green Growth Action Plan in Lam Dong province, which lacked adequate funding. By incorporating this into the iLandscape project's activities, project resources are supporting sustainable practices and green growth within the province.

4. **Tree Planting Initiatives**: The project has also supported Lam Dong province's ambitious plan to plant 50 million trees. This initiative has been integrated into the iLandscape project by incorporating tree planting in agricultural and forest areas, which not only enhances landscape but also supports biodiversity and carbon sequestration efforts.

5. **Coordinated Efforts in Lam Dong**: In Lam Dong, the iLandscape project has ensured that its interventions do not overlap but rather complement other ongoing projects in terms of financial and technical resources. This includes cooperation with initiatives such as the Agroforestry project funded by the International Climate Initiative and the IDH-sponsored PPI Compacts in Di Linh and Lac Duong districts.

Supporting One Commune One Product (OCOP) Programme: The project has been trying to support the implementation of the OCOP in the project sites by identifying sustainable agricultural models and agroecological models that include OCOP products of the targeted communes.

5.2 Effectiveness

Evaluation question: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to achieve its stated objectives?

Finding: The ILandscape project has made notable progress towards its stated objectives, particularly in capacity-building, integrated land use planning, and developing sustainable agricultural models. However, significant delays in financial disbursement and administrative approvals, along with challenges in on-the-ground implementation, have hindered the full achievement of its goals. Despite these setbacks, the project has established a strong foundation for future efforts, with ongoing activities expected to further advance its objectives.

5.2.1 Progress towards Outcome 1 - Effective governance systems including integrated land use planning and management tools and processes are established at district and provincial levels

The successful delivery of outcome 1 was to be assessed through two key indicators:

- 80% of the land-use changes observed and reported by the provincial M&E system are aligned with the targets and allocations of the land use plan;
- 02 value chains are piloting sustainability standards including a full traceability system and near real-time monitoring (coffee and NTFPs).

At midterm, there is no data to assess progress as interventions under this outcome have either become obsolete due to the delayed start of the project, institutional changes as well as operational challenges that have hampered progress. However, the project has made strides in aligning district-level plans with provincial master plans, as seen through activities aimed at creating integrated land use maps and plans for each pilot district. The development of crop-specific maps by CIAT and operational plans is expected to lay the foundation for sustainable land use planning. Efforts have been made to enhance the capacity of provincial and district officials in land use planning through training and the introduction of planning tools. The land use planner tool developed by EFI and the workshops conducted are notable steps towards strengthening local capabilities. Activity 1.1c's shift from developing a new methodology to reviewing existing practices reflects an adaptive approach in response to initial setbacks. This flexibility is crucial for tailoring the project's support to the actual needs and regulatory frameworks at the local level. The MTE assesses progress outcome 1 as moderately satisfactory at midterm.

Output 1.1. An integrated land use plan and map, aligned with the Provincial Master Plan, is produced for each pilot district, with clear targets and action plan towards sustainability and deforestation

The overall progress towards achieving Output 1.1 has been limited due to the progress achieved by national government in this area before the project’s kick-off which rendered this activity obsolete. Adaptive management measures introduced faced significant delays due to administrative and budgetary issues within the Project Management Units (PMUs) of Dak Nong and Lam Dong provinces. The intended implementation in Quarter 3 of 2022 was postponed because Dak Nong's project budget was not included in the provincial budget allocation by the National Assembly. This error occurred because the project was mistakenly registered under the list of mid-term investment projects instead of technical assistance projects, which resulted in a lack of approval by the Ministry of Finance. Similarly, in Lam Dong, the approval of the workplan was delayed due to internal administrative processes. These delays have had a cascading effect on other activities within the project.

Despite these setbacks, there has been some progress in reshaping the activities to better align with current needs and circumstances. Activity 1.1c, initially aimed at developing a methodology for provincial master land use planning, has shifted focus towards reviewing existing experiences in provincial and district land use planning. This review is intended to inform and possibly pivot the project support to more flexible planning processes like annual land use planning and includes developing a related capacity building plan.

Following the review under Activity 1.1c, Activity 1.1d aims to develop operational plans and support preparations for the district-level land use planning process, now waiting on the findings from 1.1c. This activity's progress is contingent on finalising the target planning process, with support activities scheduled to start in mid-2023. There has already been a successful assessment of integrated land use planning capacities among provincial and district officials, which has helped in preparing further detailed activities under this output.

Activity 1.1e has shown notable progress with the development of crop-specific maps for targeted districts by CIAT, followed by initial stakeholder consultations and a field trip. The preliminary maps have been shared, with final versions expected once additional local base maps become available. However, the crop map provided by the partner shows significant discrepancies compared to the local management agency's data, likely due to differences in definitions and calculation methods. For instance, in Di Linh, while the local authorities report the coffee-growing area as approximately 50,000 hectares, the partner's data indicates it is about 46,213hectares.

Activity 1.1f saw the development of a land use planner tool by EFI, with training for participants from various relevant institutions. The tool was presented to stakeholders, including the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE), the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), and the Forest Protection Department (FPD), and received numerous comments. It has become clear that the toolkit requires revisions to better meet the specific needs of local authorities. Provincial and district officials suggest the need to incorporate elements such as the land requirements of organizations and individuals, and project programs. Additionally, some officials at the district and commune levels are not yet aware of the land planning tools or financial maps, indicating a need for broader communication and engagement efforts. Some respondents mention that instructions for using this tool have not yet been communicated to local authorities. With the adjustments required on the project’s interventions around land use planning, officials suggested that the tool be oriented towards supporting annual land use planning or aiding adjustments to land planning mid-planning cycle, to increase its practical utility. Respondents mentioned that to be truly beneficial, these tools need to be of higher quality, user-friendly, and must align with the specific needs and regulatory requirements of the local authorities.

Output 1.2. Implementation of Master Plans in Lam Dong and Dak Nong is supported through the design and implementation of a robust cross-sector and spatialized institutional monitoring and evaluation system, serving as a control panel to track transition of landscape towards sustainability

EFI played a crucial role in initiating this output by conducting a series of interviews and desk reviews of existing landscape projects both in Vietnam and internationally. This research was aimed at identifying gaps in the current policy frameworks and helped in developing relevant indicators for land use, forest, and commodity production. This comprehensive analysis provided a foundation for drafting an initial set of sustainability indicators and a prototype web platform for M&E at the provincial level.

Subsequent face-to-face discussions with local PMUs and technical exchanges with partners, including UNDP, were instrumental in refining these methodologies. This collaborative approach allowed EFI to

adjust the strategy to better fit the local context, which is crucial for the success of any jurisdictional sustainability initiative. A significant milestone was achieved with the drafting of a working paper on the gaps in forest-risk commodities production and the feasibility of a subnational jurisdictional approach in Vietnam. This paper not only highlights the existing gaps but also assesses the feasibility of adopting regional approaches at the provincial level to ensure compliance with legal and sustainability standards.

In terms of the M&E framework, an initial list of 32 indicators covering environmental, social, economic, governance, and legality aspects was developed. This list was refined to 23 indicators after consultations with local stakeholders, ensuring that the framework was both comprehensive and attuned to local realities. This refined list forms part of a sophisticated protocol for the prototype web platform that EFI leads, designed to enable provincial governments to monitor and evaluate their progress towards sustainability.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

Despite these achievements, several challenges impacted the effectiveness and timing of the output's implementation:

1. **Formalisation of the M&E Framework**: The need to formalise the M&E framework has been identified as a significant challenge. Local stakeholders have raised concerns during consultations. UNDP and project partners have proposed adjustments to this target – the M&E framework will not need to be formalized but piloted within iLandscape project, and this proposal was approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
2. **Data Production and Exchange**: The establishment of a local advisory committee and the definition of sustainable indicators were hindered by difficulties in engaging local state actors and confirming the availability of datasets. EFI responded by revising their approach to indicator construction, focusing on national and regional regulations to draft an initial set of indicators. This pivot highlights the complexities of data management and stakeholder engagement in the region.
3. **Web Platform for M&E**: The development of a web platform prototype to host data and analysis of each indicator is a significant technical achievement. However, further collaboration with other partner agencies is required to tailor this platform for district or provincial use, which is essential for the broad application and utility of the system.

Output 1.3: Platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue (i) between public authorities and the private sector at District level, (ii) across each main commodity supply chain, and (iii) for NTFPs are established and supported

In Lam Dong, the establishment of Production – Protection – Inclusion Compacts (PPI Compacts) in Lac Duong exemplifies significant progress. These compacts, initiated by IDH, have successfully created operational mechanisms and steering committees, integrating resources from various projects and partners, including local coffee export companies and government departments.

In Dak R'Lap Dak G'Long, and Di Linh districts, efforts to replicate the PPI Compact model are underway, with preliminary engagement and commitment from major stakeholders like the Acom and Intimex Group, which plan to invest in the region's development. This involvement signifies a positive response from the private sector and an understanding of the benefits these partnerships can offer in terms of sustainability and economic opportunity.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

While the achievements are noteworthy, several challenges have impacted the broader implementation and effectiveness of Output 1.3:

1. **Expansion and Diversification of Commodity Platforms**: The process of selecting additional commodities beyond coffee and pepper for focus in the platforms has been slower than anticipated. This delay is partly due to the need for further consultations to align with changing provincial priorities and the recruitment of experts to identify suitable commodities and develop terms of reference for new platforms.
2. **Formalisation and Operationalisation**: The formalisation of agreements and operational plans for new PPI Compacts, particularly in Dak Nong, has encountered delays. The finalisation of MOUs and the establishment of new compacts were scheduled for early 2024, indicating a timeline pushback which could affect the momentum of stakeholder engagement and investment.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement**: Continuous and effective engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including local government entities, private sector partners, and middlemen, remains a critical component. Ensuring that all parties are not only involved but also actively contributing to the platforms' objectives is essential for their success and sustainability.

Output 1.4: Deforestation-free and sustainability commodity standards (incl. NTFPs) are endorsed by relevant multi-stakeholder platforms and supported by regulations

The primary focus under this output has been on developing and endorsing sustainability and deforestation-free standards for commodities like coffee and pepper, which are significant for the regional economy and are slated to be included in the EU Due Diligence (DD) regulations in 2024. IDH has taken a proactive role in this aspect by conducting a detailed study on the EU Due Diligence requirements for these commodities, focusing on deforestation, carbon emissions, and traceability. The findings from this study have been used to draft proposals for coffee and pepper sustainability standards, which are essential for meeting international trade regulations and environmental conservation goals.

These draft standards are an essential first step in formalising practices that can reduce the environmental impact of commodity production while maintaining economic viability for local farmers. The drafts are set to undergo a consultation process with relevant stakeholders, scheduled for completion and presentation in the first quarter of 2024.

Additionally, efforts to develop criteria for NTFPs have been initiated, reflecting a commitment to broadening the scope of sustainability practices beyond major cash crops. This initiative involved field missions and a workshop in Da Lat to gather local insights and perspectives, which are vital for ensuring that the standards are contextually relevant and widely acceptable.

Despite these positive developments, the main challenges has been the **slow progress in standard development**: The process of developing and endorsing the sustainability standards has been slower than planned. This delay can be attributed to the complexity of aligning multiple stakeholder interests, the technical challenges of defining and measuring sustainability and deforestation-free practices, and the slow dissemination of necessary regulatory information from central authorities.

Output 1.5 A real-time monitoring and transparency framework to support land-use governance is developed and tested in the 4 pilot districts (Terra-i)

CIAT has effectively expanded the Terra-i system from the initial pilot in Di Linh to include additional districts, demonstrating the scalability of the system. Key technical achievements include:

- **Data Collection and Processing**: Spatial data collection covered forest maps, maps of national parks, and protected areas. Sentinel 1 satellite data was collected and pre-processed for the four districts, forming the basis for model calibration and analysis.
- **Deforestation Alerts**: The system has begun to produce deforestation alerts, which are published on the Terra-i Viet Nam website. These alerts are updated bi-weekly, coinciding with the availability of new satellite images from the European Space Agency (ESA), ensuring that the data remains current and actionable.
    - This support activity is well-regarded by many local officials. The software provides functions that would aid in monitoring forest developments and complement existing government forest fire warning systems. Local officials consider that this solution aligns with the general management's local digital transformation capabilities.
- **Capacity Building**: Two workshops were conducted to enhance the technical capacity of local stakeholders, including technical staff from forest protection departments and forest management boards. These workshops aimed to equip them with the skills needed to operate and effectively utilise the Terra-i system.

Additionally, the project is supporting the Provincial Project Management Board of Lam Dong province in preparing for the implementation of the EUDR regulations, providing satellite images to aid compliance efforts. Testimonials received during the training of local officials showcase the potential benefits of the system. For instance, an official said "*the thin forestry workforce has to manage the forest area on complex terrain, so the project applies digital technology. With appropriate data analysis methods to help respond quickly to forest changes, monitoring of forest changes is updated more frequently and conveniently."* Another highlighted the efficiency benefits stating that *"The area of Lam Dong province is complicated, especially in Lac Duong district, where I work. Sometimes, it takes a day to reach the forest area to be checked. Thanks to the Terra-i system, forest changes are updated. Imported every two weeks and using satellite images should help forest rangers save time and effort in the forest,"*[44]

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

While the technical aspects of Terra-i have progressed well, there are ongoing activities to assess its strengths and weaknesses comprehensively:

- **System Assessment and Integration**:

As mentioned above, the Terra-I system utilises free Sentinel images from the European Space Agency, which local officials view as consisting of lower image quality. Consequently, the current Terra-i version can identify areas at risk of deforestation, but would lack the precision to accurately classify forest types, causes of deforestation, and current forest conditions. Officials state that it cannot distinguish between naturally deciduous forests and those that appear deforested due to seasonal changes, leading to potential misclassification. As mentioned earlier, partners have struggled to access

[44] UNDP (2023) Training for real-time insights to enhance forest monitoring AUGUST 20, 2023, Training for real-time insights to enhance forest monitoring | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

information from officials that would have allowed the project to further improve the system as precision of the warnings largely depends on the source of information. So far Lam Dong province has not provided updated forest map to the project although request has been made over a year. Terra-I is currently using 2017 forest map, that is far out-date.

Terra-i products have not been transferred to local authorities due to their officials referring to generated products as of quality concern, and the software's accuracy for monitoring natural forests needs enhancement to achieve a finer resolution but this would require the acquisition of paid images which were not budgeted for and as such unaffordable by the project. Officials further raise the fact that the toolkit experiences a 16-day delay, which is insufficient for addressing fast-moving situations like wildfires effectively. This observation by officials shows a lack of understanding of Project Document and the processes for acquisition of Sentinel images, and consequently the inability of the platform to generate real-time images. This may also be linked to the very formulation of output 1.5 which refers to development of *"real-time monitoring and transparency framework"*. It should also be noted that Project Document is not consistent about this activity, as it refers to "*nearly real-time warning of deforestation*" in some places but "*A real-time monitoring and transparency framework*" in some other places. Logically, the" nearly real-time" terms should be applied throughout.

On a practical note, officials also report that software places high demands on computing resources, proving too heavy for the computers currently in use at the units. Furthermore, it often requires a specialist to interpret forest fluctuations, which adds to the challenges of widespread adoption

An assessment of the Terra-i system, including a review of grassroots-level information-gathering activities, was initiated by partners. This assessment will help refine the system and develop a roadmap for its integration with local forest monitoring and surveillance systems. From the above section, there are mixed feelings amongst stakeholders regarding the sustainability of this initiative particularly regarding its ownership and acceptance by officials. On the one hand, forest owners including the state own enterprises (SOE) state that they would benefit from the platform. They said the platform is useful for them and will use it. The Forest protection development fund (FPDF) and FPD have their own monitoring system and have stated the value of complementing their work with Terra-i. On the down side, officials mention that the system remains driven by NGO partners and the approach to ensure ownership is yet to be agreed. From FPD's perspective and engagement, effectiveness of Terra-i should be increased in terms of better-quality images and faster updates suggesting that 2 weeks are too long for effective response. This suggests limited understanding of the underlying building blocks of the Terra -I systems which depends on European Space Agency data, that is available not as often as partners expect. Officials also appear to be oblivious of the cost implications related to the acquisition of higher resolution data and the inability of the project to cover such costs. Respondents have suggested a complementary support approach including the use of drones and Lidar which would complement the alert system, but more also appears needed to enhance understanding of the possibilities offered by Terra-I so as to manage the expectations from both sides and facilitate adoption and ownership.

The MTE appreciates the efforts of CIAT in this direction to introduce Terra-i usage to local stakeholders and the need to develop a scheme or a mechanism to collaborate with technical staff from two provinces to operate the Terra-i system during and after the iLandscape project. Engagement with technical staff from the forest protection department, forest companies, and the forest protection and development fund on roles and responsibilities and the operation the Terra-i will further help strengthen local ownership and sustainability of the platform.

5.2.2 Progress towards outcome 2 - Sustainable, climate-smart, productive standardized practices are implemented for agriculture and non-timber forest products and services

This outcome aims to support 30 000 farmers as well as delivering sustainable practices over a surface area of 30 000 hectares. At midterm, significant efforts were expended on diagnosis and studies to identify the best and most promising options, before tailoring support to the beneficiaries. Notably:

1. **Development of Sustainable Agricultural Models:** The project has successfully engaged agricultural commodity experts in Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces, facilitating the identification and development of promising sustainable agriculture interventions. Significant efforts have been made in conducting scoping reports, baseline surveys involving farmers, and detailed consultations to tailor sustainable practices to local needs.
2. **Economic Analysis and Model Prioritization:** A detailed classification survey and subsequent consultations have helped define priority intervention models. These models are currently undergoing economic analysis to assess their viability and potential impact, which is crucial for ensuring that the interventions are both economically feasible and environmentally beneficial.
3. **Development of Training Materials:** Training materials, particularly for sustainable coffee farming, are being developed. These materials are designed to cover various aspects of sustainable practices, including agroecological farming and carbon emission reduction. The project plans to train trainers who will then extend their knowledge to a broader audience, amplifying the impact of these sustainable models.

The project is set to continue with the economic analysis of proposed models and finalize the technical guidelines and viability reports by mid-2024. Additionally, the training sessions based on the developed guides are scheduled for the second quarter of 2024, targeting both trainers and direct farmer training in key districts. Despite the slow progress at midterm, the groundwork laid through detailed studies, stakeholder consultations provides a strong foundation to accelerate activities once the interdependencies are resolved particularly the dependency of Output 2.3 on the successful completion of Output 1.1.

Progress towards outcome 2 targets at midterm is therefore moderately satisfactory.

Output 2.1: Most promising interventions for sustainable agriculture and NTFP&S development are prioritized and developed including technical guidelines and economic assessment

The project has effectively recruited and deployed full-time agricultural commodity experts in Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces. These experts have been instrumental in supporting commodity-related activities, developing and monitoring the implementation of work plans, and serving as essential connectors between the project's technical partners and the Project Management Units (PMUs). This strategic deployment of expertise has facilitated smooth on-the-ground implementation of project activities. CIAT has conducted significant foundational work under this output:

- A scoping report was completed, identifying potential sustainable agricultural interventions in the Central Highlands region.
- A baseline survey involving 724 farmers across the four pilot districts was conducted to understand existing farming systems and practices.

- Subsequent consultations were held to gather stakeholder input on the survey results and draft technical reports, which detailed various farming systems including diverse cropping models like single-crop coffee, coffee intercropped with other crops (pepper, persimmon, avocado, durian, macadamia), and greenhouse vegetable-flower farming in Lac Duong district.

The project also undertook a detailed classification survey and consultation process to define priority intervention models, which resulted in a final draft report proposing four major models with eleven smaller intervention models across the districts. These models are now subject to economic analysis to evaluate their viability and potential impact.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

While substantial progress has been made in identifying and developing sustainable agricultural interventions, several challenges have affected the timeline and depth of these initiatives:

- **Recruitment Delays**: The delay in recruiting provincial coordinators posed initial challenges, though this was mitigated by the effective functioning of the commodity experts.
- **Complexity of Stakeholder Engagement**: The project required extensive stakeholder engagement to validate and refine intervention models, which is a time-intensive process that needs careful management to ensure all voices are heard and integrated into the planning process.
- **Data Collection and Analysis**: The comprehensive nature of the surveys and the need for detailed economic analysis of the proposed interventions require meticulous planning and execution to ensure accuracy and relevance of the findings.

Future Directions and Expectations

Looking forward, the project is set to continue its detailed analysis of the proposed intervention models:

- CIAT will present preliminary economic analysis results for four of the intervention models in early 2024, followed by further data consolidation and analysis for additional models.
- A final report on these interventions, detailing both economic viability and technical guidelines, is expected by the end of Q2 2024.
- Additionally, a UNDP consultant is working with CIAT to review agro-ecology concepts and practices, aiming to establish effective collaboration mechanisms for testing these models in the field starting from 2024.

Output 2.2: Local institutions and farmers are trained and made aware on prioritized sustainable production models

The development of training materials is underway, with a structured approach to cover different aspects of sustainable coffee farming. The training document, which is still in the draft stage, is segmented into three parts:

1. **A Guide to Sustainable Coffee Farming towards Agroecological Farming and Carbon Emission Reduction – Robusta;**
2. **A Guide to Robusta Coffee Intercropping**; and

3. **A Guide to Sustainable Coffee Farming towards Agroecological Farming and Carbon Emission Reduction - Arabica**:

Section 3 is still in the planning phase with a national consultant contracted to compile the guide.

The actual training sessions based on these guides were planned for the second quarter of 2024. These sessions are set to occur in Di Linh and Lac Duong districts in Lam Dong Province, as well as in Dak Nong Province. The training strategy includes:

- Training of trainers (TOT): 80 trainers will be trained who will then extend their knowledge to a broader audience, ensuring a multiplier effect in the dissemination of sustainable practices.
- Direct farmer training: Approximately 1,200 farmers are expected to be trained. This direct engagement is crucial for ensuring that the farmers, who are the end-users of these practices, fully understand and are capable of implementing the sustainable techniques in their farming operations.

Output 2.3: Transformation towards sustainable practices at field level are technically and financially supported

Output 2.3 of the ILandscape project aims to support the transformation towards sustainable practices at the field level, both technically and financially. This output is crucial for making tangible changes in agricultural and non-timber forest product (NTFP) practices by directly supporting farmers in adopting more sustainable methods. However, the progress towards achieving this output has encountered significant delays and challenges.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

The target for Output 2.3 was ambitious: to support 30,000 farmers in moving towards sustainable practices in cash crop production, with half of these farmers also adopting agroecology practices and the other half benefiting from sustainable NTFP models. Unfortunately, the implementation of activities designed to achieve these goals has been delayed. The delays are linked to dependencies on other outputs, particularly Output 1.1, in which many activities have become obsolete or delayed. This interdependency has cascaded, affecting the timeline and execution of activities under Output 2.3:

- **Activity 2.3a**, along with related activities **2.3b** and **2.3c**, is dependent on the successful completion and implementation of Output 1.1. Given the changes in required Output 1.1 activities, these activities could not proceed as planned.
- A proposal was submitted to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) to revise the project document in a way that Output 1.1 is not a prerequisite for proceeding with Output 2.3 activities. The approval of the suggested revisions by the PSC provides the opportunity for the project to bypass the stalled Output 1.1 interventions and proceed directly with supporting farmers.

Despite these overarching challenges, some progress has been made under this output:

- **Activity 2.3d**: The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) PMU took proactive steps by recruiting a consultant and organizing a consultation workshop on NTFP development in Lam Dong. This workshop, held in November 2023, was based on a report constructing NTFP models after a field survey conducted in October 2023. This indicates a move towards supporting sustainable NTFP practices, albeit at a slower pace than initially planned.

5.2.3 Progress towards outcome 3- The financial environment is enhanced with innovative mechanisms, increased funding and thriving partnerships to support transformation towards sustainable landscapes, with emphasis at provincial and district levels

Progress towards Outcome 3 of the iLandscape project, which focuses on enhancing the financial environment through innovative mechanisms, increased funding, and thriving partnerships at provincial and district levels for sustainable landscape transformation, reveals mixed results. The successful delivery of this outcome would have been evidenced through up to 25 million euros mobilised from public & private financial sources by the end of the project to support delivery of outcome 2 targets. At midterm, no financial resources have been mobilised. A few actions have been implemented:

- Financial Mapping Study: EFI's initiation of a land use financial mapping study using proven methodologies marks a critical foundational step. This study aims to provide a clear picture of how public investments are allocated towards land use and identify opportunities for optimizing these investments for better environmental and social outcomes.
- Economic and Market Analysis: UNEP's ongoing economic and market analysis to assess the viability of sustainable agricultural systems is crucial. The outcomes of this analysis, are expected to support the development of compelling business cases for sustainable practices, enhancing their attractiveness to corporate partners.
- PFES Initiatives: The efforts to promote and pilot innovative Payment for Ecosystem Services (PFES) modalities represent significant groundwork towards generating additional financial volumes and enhancing social and environmental benefits. On-site surveys and stakeholder engagements have been undertaken to refine PFES approaches and tailor them to local needs.

The MTE assesses that progress remains slow here and achievement of the targets is moderately satisfactory at midterm. At the current pace of implementation, it will be unlikely for the targets to be achieved by the end of the project.

Output 3.1 - Public & Private land-use finance is mapped and increasingly aligned to support sustainable land use and climate mitigation objectives

One of the key targets under this output was to sign 10 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with public programs and donors to enhance collaboration and ensure financial support for sustainable land-use practices. However, as of the end of 2023, none of these MoUs have been signed. This represents a significant delay and suggests challenges in fostering collaboration or aligning interests between the project and potential financial partners.

Despite these setbacks in forming new partnerships, progress has been made in other areas of financial mapping and planning:

- **Financial Mapping Study**: EFI has proposed an initial land use financial mapping study. This study is foundational, as it uses an established methodology from previous studies such as the Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review and the Biodiversity Expenditure Review. These methodologies provide a framework for understanding how public investments are being directed towards land use and how they can be optimized for better environmental and social outcomes.

- **Implementation Plan**: An updated draft of the implementation plan for 2023 has been formulated and shared with UNEP. This plan is crucial for detailing the steps needed to pursue the financial mapping and alignment goals, providing a structured approach to moving forward despite the current challenges.

Output 3.2 Robust business cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national and international companies to secure deforestation-free sourcing of main cash crops and NTFP&S

Output 3.2 of the ILandscape project is aimed at developing robust business cases to foster cooperation agreements with national and international companies. These agreements are crucial for securing deforestation-free sourcing of main cash crops and non-timber forest products and services (NTFP&S). This output directly addresses the economic viability of sustainable agricultural practices, making them appealing to both local farmers and potential corporate partners.

Progress and Initiatives

A key component of this output involves conducting an economic and market analysis to assess the viability of the sustainable agricultural systems identified in Outputs 2.1c and 2.1d:

- **Economic and Market Analysis**: UNEP has initiated this analysis to evaluate the economic feasibility and market potential of the sustainable practices proposed. This step is essential as it provides the foundational data necessary for developing business cases that are compelling to corporate partners. The analysis is slated for completion in Q1 2024.

Output 3.3 - Robust financial cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national or international institutions to provide additional financial resources or insurance solutions to main agriculture and NTFP&S supply chains

Output 3.3 of the iLandscape project aims to develop robust financial cases and establish cooperation agreements with national or international institutions. These agreements are intended to secure additional financial resources or insurance solutions for the main agricultural and non-timber forest products and services (NTFP&S) supply chains. This output is critical for ensuring the financial sustainability and risk mitigation of the promoted sustainable agricultural practices.

Progress and Initiatives

As part of this output, significant groundwork is being laid through collaborative efforts:

- **Initial Surveys and Baseline Assessment**: UNEP, in collaboration with EFI and IDH, has undertaken initial surveys and a baseline assessment to identify financing options for sustainable agricultural systems and nature-based solutions (NBS) in commodity value chains within and outside of Vietnam. This comprehensive assessment is crucial for understanding the current landscape of available financial mechanisms and potential new opportunities that can be tapped into to support sustainable practices.
- **Expected Report**: The findings from these surveys and assessments are being compiled into a report, which is scheduled for release in Q2 2024. This report will provide crucial data and insights that will inform the development of financial cases aimed at attracting investment and support from various financial institutions.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

While the groundwork is being established, there are challenges that impact the progress towards achieving the desired outcomes of this output:

- **MoU Signing Delays**: The target to sign two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) by the end of the project has not yet been met. The lack of signed MoUs at this stage indicates potential difficulties in aligning the interests of potential financial partners with the project's objectives, or in the complexity of negotiating terms that meet the needs of all parties involved.
- **Engagement with Financial Institutions**: Engaging effectively with national and international financial institutions requires not only robust financial cases but also a clear demonstration of the potential returns and impact of their investment. This can often be a complex and time-consuming process, requiring detailed negotiations and trust-building.

Output 3.4 - Innovative and effective PFES modalities are promoted, piloted and deployed in the four pilot districts to generate additional financial volume and increase social and environmental benefits

Output 3.4 of the iLandscape project focuses on promoting, piloting, and deploying innovative and effective Payment for Ecosystem Services (PFES) modalities in the four pilot districts. This initiative aims to generate additional financial volumes and increase social and environmental benefits by harnessing financial mechanisms that compensate landholders for maintaining ecosystem services that provide broader benefits.

Significant groundwork has been laid to achieve the goals of this output:

- **On-Site Surveys and Stakeholder Engagement**: In October 2023, on-site surveys were conducted in two provinces to gather direct insights from the ground, which are crucial for understanding the current status and potential of PFES schemes. Following these surveys, a consultation workshop was organized in Hanoi in November 2023. This workshop brought together relevant stakeholders to review challenges and opportunities related to expanding and improving the revenues generated from PFES. Such engagement is essential for gathering diverse perspectives and building consensus on the way forward.

The insights gained from these activities are intended to inform the development and refinement of PFES modalities, ensuring they are tailored to the specific contexts and needs of the pilot districts.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

Despite these initial steps, the implementation of subsequent activities under this output has experienced delays:

- **Leadership challenges and path dependences**: Delays in 3.4a and 3.4b are mainly because there has been change in Leadership of DOF in 2022-2023, that led to the situation that PMU MARD lacked of leadership, and thus the procurement process has been stalled until late 2023, while the activities should have been completed in 2022. Similarly, some activities under output 1 (1.4), output 2 (2.1, 2.2, 2.3) and output 3 (3.2, 3.3) have been also stalled because the project could not identify the two commodities (other than coffee and pepper). The report on this is implemented by PMU MARD in activity 1.3b (supposed to be completed well before the end of 2022) but change in leadership at DOF led to stalled procurement. As of May 15, 2024, the final report has not been submitted. . Such delays do impact the project's timeline and reduce the momentum needed to drive changes in PFES practices.

5.2.4 Progress towards outcome 4 - Sustainability and scaling up are ensured through robust coordination, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge production and dissemination, and active advocacy at regional and national levels

Progress towards outcome 4 targets is moderately satisfactory considering the targets set for this outcome. Notably various efforts to input into the sustainability and legal frameworks and working towards integration of safeguards have been implemented.

Output 4.1: The project is effectively implemented, safeguarded and delivers on expected targets thanks to adequate capacities to coordinate, backstop, monitor and evaluate activities and impacts (with gender aggregated) at central and provincial levels, including with appropriate institutional anchorage

Output 4.1 of the ILandscape project focuses on ensuring that the project is effectively implemented, safeguarded, and achieves its targets through robust coordination, backstopping, monitoring, and evaluation capacities at both central and provincial levels. This output is crucial for the overall success of the project, as it involves managing the complex logistics and diverse activities spread across various outputs and regions, ensuring that all interventions are aligned and contributing towards the project's goals.

Progress and Initiatives

Several key activities have been undertaken to support the objectives of this output:

- **Coordination and Review Activities**: A series of coordination meetings, annual review workshops, and related travel were organized to facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration among project stakeholders. These gatherings are essential for discussing progress, addressing challenges, and aligning activities across different components of the project.
- **Inputs on Sustainability and Legal Frameworks**: Inputs were provided on the review of coffee sustainability and the legal framework. These inputs are crucial for ensuring that the project's sustainability initiatives are well-grounded in current legal and regulatory contexts and that they effectively address the specific needs and challenges of the Central Highlands.
- **Development of Sustainability Framework Indicators**: Contributions to the draft sustainability framework indicators have included considerations of safeguard linkages. This development is vital for ensuring that the sustainability measures not only contribute to environmental and economic objectives but also adequately address social safeguards and gender considerations.
- **Review of REDD+ Initiatives**: A focused review of REDD+ initiatives relevant to the Central Highlands was initiated, with a first draft brief made available in 2023. This review was important for integrating and leveraging existing REDD+ efforts in the region.

The challenges facing implementation are further developed under section 5.3 and 5.5 below.

Output 4.2: A technical network of leading institutions at multiple levels is strengthened and an integrated sustainable management and deforestation-free approach is defined, documented and endorsed at national level, and progressively introduced through policies, laws and regulations.

Output 4.2 of the iLandscape project aims to strengthen a technical network of leading institutions at multiple levels and to define, document, and endorse an integrated sustainable management and deforestation-free approach at the national level. This output is crucial for ensuring that the project's methods and achievements are recognized and integrated into broader national policies, laws, and regulations, thereby amplifying the project's impact and sustainability.

Progress and Initiatives

The project has made significant strides in enhancing visibility, engagement, and policy influence. In terms of visibility the project delivered the following achievements:

- **Workshops and Events**: The project successfully organized inception workshops, technical workshops on deforestation-free production and commercialization, and workshops focusing on the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). These events played a critical role in disseminating knowledge and engaging with a wide array of stakeholders from multiple sectors.
- **Media Coverage and Branding**: Extensive media coverage was achieved with articles in both English and Vietnamese, significantly enhancing the project's visibility. The development of a project branding package has helped in creating a cohesive and recognizable identity for the project. The project's reach through traditional media and social media have broadened engagement and awareness of the project's goals and activities.
- **International Presence**: Participation in international events like the Global Conference on Sustainable Food Systems and a side event at COP 28 on Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Food Systems has helped to position the project within global discussions on sustainable agriculture and deforestation. These platforms provided opportunities to share insights and learn from international practices, strengthening the project's global relevance.
- **Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) Study**: The project conducted a baseline study to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of stakeholders, including farmers, businesses, and government entities regarding deforestation-free jurisdiction. This study is essential for understanding the current perception and readiness of stakeholders to adopt the practices promoted by the project.

  Regarding stakeholder engagement, the project has adopted a highly participatory approach ensuring the inclusion of different stakeholders. The MTE team highly commends the project team for its commitment towards inclusiveness despite the initial challenges faced by the project.
- **Local Communities and Producers:** The iLandscape project effectively engaged local communities, including ethnic minorities, men, and women, across four districts in the Central Highlands. CIAT played a pivotal role by developing crop-specific land use maps and providing early warning systems for deforestation and forest degradation using the Terra-i system. Training sessions were conducted to improve sustainable agricultural practices and agroforestry. For instance, CIAT's baseline farming systems survey included 724 farmers and identified promising interventions for sustainable agriculture.

- **National and local level authorities:** Public administration at national, provincial, and local levels was systematically engaged through capacity-building activities and technical assistance. Key agencies involved included MARD (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), MONRE (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment), and their respective provincial and district-level departments. EFI (European Forest Institute) provided training on land use planning using the Land Use Planner tool. EFI organized a Land-use Planner Training course in Da Lat City, attended by 32 participants from various local administrative bodies. Additionally, Project Management Units (PMUs) and Project Steering Committees (PSCs) were established to facilitate regular coordination and decision-making. The PSC, chaired by representatives from the EU, UNDP, and provincial authorities, convened annually to review and endorse workplans and project progress.
- **Key Stakeholders and Local Organizations:** Local NGOs, social organizations, and cooperatives were actively involved in capacity-building and training activities. IDH established PPI compacts bringing together stakeholders. These platforms facilitated dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders, promoting sustainable practices and deforestation-free standards. IDH's support included training materials and sessions for farmers engaging companies like Acom, Intimex, and local cooperatives.
- **Business Sector:** The business sector, particularly companies involved in agricultural supply chains, played a significant role in the project. UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) developed robust business cases and is expected to facilitate cooperation agreements with national and international companies to ensure deforestation-free sourcing of main cash crops and NTFPs. The PPI compacts, coordinated by IDH, included companies like Acom and Intimex, which collaborated on sustainable coffee and pepper production standards.

Challenges and Impact on Implementation

While the project has achieved visibility to a certain extent and stakeholder engagement, the challenges primarily revolve around ensuring that these efforts translate into concrete policy changes and institutional endorsements:

- **Policy Integration**: Despite dissemination activities, continuous efforts are needed to ensure that the sustainable management practices and deforestation-free approaches defined by the project are adopted and integrated into national policies, laws, and regulations.
- **Documenting lessons:** There is limited evidence of the project documenting and disseminating any best practices or lessons emerging from the project at local, national and regional levels, clearly understandable in light of the bumpy start of the project.
- The very aim of **establishing a technical network of leading institutions** at multiple levels is yet to be delivered on.

5.3 Performance Factors

5.3.1 Value added of the intervention

The ILandscape project brings several unique contributions to ongoing government actions, enhancing the sustainability and management of agricultural and forestry practices within the targeted provinces. Its integration with existing structures and introduction of novel elements position it as a potentially transformative initiative within the local environmental and agricultural sectors.

One of the primary value additions of the ILandscape project lies in its technical support and resources aimed at fostering sustainable agricultural industries. This support is crucial for aligning local agricultural practices with global environmental standards, such as the European Union's Deforestation Free Regulations (EUDR), which focus on traceability and the sustainability of agricultural products. The project's ability to assist local entities in preparing for these regulations by establishing systems for traceable and verified sourcing adds significant value beyond typical local government actions.

The project's landscape approach is particularly notable. It aligns well with the province's own policies, such as those aimed at promoting Green Growth, and offers a comprehensive strategy that encompasses various aspects of land use management, from production to protection. This approach is in contrast to more traditional, single-focus interventions seen in other projects, which might concentrate solely on aspects like enhancing drone capabilities for forest monitoring. Instead, the iLandscape project integrates multiple dimensions, such as sustainable production techniques, land use planning, and the use of advanced technologies like Terra-i for forest change monitoring.

Additionally, UNDP's involvement brings a centralized organizational structure that benefits from strong backing by central government authorities, ensuring that legal and strategic directives are aligned with the project's goals. This central support is crucial for ensuring the legitimacy and effectiveness of the project's initiatives across the two provinces it covers.

In terms of field operations, the project capitalizes on existing relationships and networks, such as those with IDH in Di Linh and Lac Duong, which helps in leveraging local knowledge and expertise. While the project has been methodical in its planning and preparation phases, it faces challenges in translating these plans into tangible outputs. This is a point of divergence from other projects like SNV's Cafe-REDD or IDH's PPI program, which have already demonstrated visible outcomes.

Furthermore, the project has played a role in building capacity among staff members involved in various management boards, enhancing their skills and knowledge in ways that align with both local needs and broader regulatory requirements. This capacity building is an essential component of ensuring the project's sustainability and effectiveness long-term.

However, despite these strengths, the project's impact in terms of concrete, visible outcomes remains limited. This gap between planning and execution highlights the need for increased focus on implementing the strategies that have been developed, ensuring that the project not only supports local and national regulations like the EUDR but also delivers clear, measurable benefits to the local communities, businesses, and the environment.

In conclusion, while the iLandscape project has added significant value in terms of capacity building, strategic alignment with national policies, and preparation for international compliance, its effectiveness will ultimately be judged by its ability to implement these plans effectively and produce results that meet the needs of both the environment and local populations.

5.3.2 Project monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation plan for the project is designed to ensure oversight and effective management through a combination of continuous and periodic evaluations. Monitoring is undertaken to ensure the interventions comply with the established policies, regulations, and rules of UNDP, which helps in maintaining consistent quality and adherence to guidelines. Quarterly monitoring activities are integral to the plan. These include efforts to track progress towards project targets. Simultaneously, risks are identified and monitored through a detailed risk log, which is updated regularly to manage potential threats to the project's success. This includes financial risks, with audits conducted in

accordance with UNDP's audit policy. UNDP applies an internal quality assurance procedure which assesses the extent to which the project response to various OECD evaluation criteria and cross cutting issues such as gender, leave no one behind, risk and social and environmental safeguards. This quality assurance process is not applied to the different products and studies implemented by external partners.

Annually, the project produces progress reports that encompass both narrative and financial components. These reports are prepared in collaboration with partners and submitted to the EU Delegation, adhering to the specific conditions outlined in the agreement. The Midterm Evaluation (MTE) found no evidence of concerns from the EU regarding the quality of the deliverables. Studies conducted by the project partners undergo multiple peer review processes, including reviews by government officials and UNDP, to ensure their quality. The MTE assessed the quality of a sample of deliverables such as the baselines and farming system surveys and concludes that these were of high quality. The project was expected to focus on capturing and documenting lessons learned and good practices, which are essential for the continuous improvement of current and future projects. Another annual task is the quality assurance of the project, where UNDP assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention and provides for management decisions. All financial transactions and statements are scrutinized through internal and external audits as specified by UNDP rules, maintaining financial transparency and accountability.

While the project has a monitoring plan, the M&E system itself is not documented. There is limited clarity on the definition of the indicators presented in the results framework and the specific measures for documenting and tracking progress, the methods of analysis and how the information generated through the system will be analysed remain to be defined. The project should ensure that consistent disaggregated data on gender, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and geographies of intervention are consistently documented and reported.

In any case the analysis of the results framework using the SMART criteria, reveals the need to SMARTEN the horizontal logic of the framework. This includes review of the indicators and refinement of the project targets. The SMART assessment of the results framework is presented in annex 4a.

5.3.3 Governance and Oversight Mechanism

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is the apex body providing oversight and strategic guidance for the iLandscape project. Co-chaired by UNDP's senior management, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and the European Union, the PSC includes key members from the People's Committees of Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces. This committee convenes annually to review and endorse work plans, progress reports, and the project's results, ensuring alignment with broader environmental and sustainable landscape goals.

Two PSC meetings have been organised. This includes the project kick-off (June 2022), and another PSC meeting in January 2024 that covered 2022-2023 implementation. While for 2023, the project annual report was shared with stakeholders, the PSC meeting could not be organized due to changes in personnel at DOF.

5.3.4 Implementation and Management

UNDP, as the project Implementing Partner, bears full responsibility for the project's execution, adhering to an agreement with the European Union. The project operates under UNDP's Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), which involves transferring funds to National and International Responsible Parties

(RPs) for specific work packages defined by a Letter of Agreement (LOA). The effectiveness of this modality, however, has been tempered by coordination challenges among these parties. A project official noted, *"The interaction between projects, coordination between PMU/PPMU and with private sectors is very good, but aligning with international partners has been difficult due to the intermediary role of UNDP."*

Although current UNDP staff are assessed highly in quality and enthusiasm, UNDP has encountered criticism regarding its staffing levels, which stakeholders perceive as insufficient to manage the project effectively.

For instance, workshops scheduled months in advance have experienced delays. This has been mostly due to complex procedure by government's regulation and security procedure, for example the Decision 06/2020 of the Prime Minister on Procedure of Organization and Management of International Workshop in Vietnam45. This reveals a challenge that UNDP should address to more proactively support partners in project execution. Additionally, coordination between national and international partners could be enhanced, as stakeholders have noted that "collaboration between national and international partners can be improved". It is also acknowledged that the situation is further complicated by the fact that PMUs do not accept direct report from responsible partners with the notion that everything is "based on UNDP reporting to us".

There is also a perception among some local officials and community members that they were not fully aware of UNDP's programs prior to recent meetings. This highlights the need for better communication, though should be noted that frequent changes in governmental agencies' personnel attending project events have been observed.

Stakeholders are encouraging UNDP to take a more strategic and efficient role to enhance communication, coordination, and support, thereby ensuring the project's success. They highlight the importance of UNDP leveraging its convening power effectively, bridging gaps between partners, and ensuring that all project components are well-coordinated and aligned with the overall strategic goals.

There is a positive opportunity for improvement by addressing the need for a complete team, which will enhance fluid and dynamic communication essential for managing a project of this scale. Enhancing staffing levels will help mitigate delays and inefficiencies, particularly in field operations. Meanwhile, it is acknowledged that the UNDP team has mobilized in-house expertise to compensate CTA position that has been vacant since October 2022.

Moreover, the implementation of on-the-ground activities (eg. NTFP and agricultural models) has been notably slow in view of the many challenges already highlighted, that can hinder the project's success. Effective execution of these activities is crucial and requires a robust association with Provincial Project Management Units (PPMUs). This linkage ensures that the activities align with the political tasks of the PPMUs, which is essential for obtaining the necessary support and compliance. The slow pace in this regard suggests a need for a more strategic approach to deploying field activities, one that ensures they are integrated with and supported by relevant local governance structures. Unfortunately, many field activities (2.3c, 3.4d, for example) that are expected to be delivered by PPMUs have not been implemented. At MTE, PPMU of Dak Nong has not received budget to implement such activities, while for PPMU Lam Dong, their annual workplan 2023 was only approved by PPC in June 2023 - for 2024. Regrettably again, the annual workplan of Lam Dong PPMU has not been approved by the PPC due to a

[45] https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Tai-chinh-nha-nuoc/Quyet-dinh-06-2020-QD-TTg-to-chuc-va-quan-ly-hoi-nghi-hoi-thao-quoc-te-tai-Viet-Nam-435209.aspx

leadership gap. UNDP's experience of funding activities directly in the field could be expanded to help overcome the delays being experienced in planning and budget approvals in the provinces.

Finally, managing the expectations of various stakeholders presents another significant challenge for UNDP. The organization has attempted to address this through quarterly workshops where partners are asked to make presentations on their tasks. In addition, an overall project activity progress file with all relevant reports and products is also shared with partners and PMUs (in Vietnamese only), to help stakeholders more easily comprehend project progress and results. : Although progress has been made, there's an opportunity for further enhancement in managing and communicating expectations effectively. Stakeholders have provided valuable feedback indicating a desire for even clearer comprehension of project specifics among all involved parties. This presents a chance for UNDP and partners to strengthen its collaboration and communication with both international and local partners, fostering even greater support and understanding.t The evaluation team notes the commitment of UNDP to ask partners to enhance stakeholders engagement activities, especially with provincial stakeholders, starting with CIAT and IDH in June and July 2024. IDH has already started the trip to Dak Nong and Lam Dong in June 2024, which is a step in the right direction.

5.3.5 Challenges with Coordination

From the outset, the iLandscape project has struggled with foundational delays primarily due to the late commencement of activities. This delay was compounded by the need for comprehensive baseline studies tailored to each province's specific requirements, which inherently slowed progress. As noted by project personnel, "We have done a good job, but it's been delayed—a lot because of the late start. There was a need for baselines and there are transaction costs because things have to be approved and validated at each point."

Moreover, the project has encountered significant barriers in aligning the interests and operational frameworks of various stakeholders, leading to prolonged approval processes for essential project documents. The diverse and often conflicting demands from provincial partners underscore the complexities of managing district-specific interventions and recommendations. The process of integrating feedback and achieving consensus on final document approvals has proven arduous, highlighting a critical need for clear guidelines on feedback processes. A starting point is to map where all key deliverables are, who is working on them, who is expected to feedback and timelines, and any support that might be required from the reviewers side to accomplish their role. In addition to developing a flow chart, the team could develop a tracker which is regularly circulated and communicated to highlight where key deliverables are stuck and why. This would ensure everyone is aware of where blockages are and peer pressure can be brought to bear to move things forward. The team could also explore what escalation/recourse mechanisms can be applied if a particular actor/group consistently blocks of fails to deliver required or expected contributions.

The project's management has the opportunity to enhance the setting and management of expectations among its various stakeholders, fostering clearer communication and stronger alignment.

The project's management needs to enhance the setting and management of expectations among its various stakeholders, fostering clearer communication and stronger alignment. There is a perception that each international partner is focused on its specific activities, highlighting a piecemeal approach which does not facilitate understanding of the vision of the whole intervention. Collective working should create a sense of achieving more than the sum of individual parts. Regular quarterly workshops, intended as a platform for aligning understanding and gathering feedback, have not been as effective as anticipated, as focus has tended to emphasise activity reporting. A further related challenge within

the project is the lack of synchronous communication and coordination between consulting units and project management. The feedback and updates from research and analysis by consultants often lag behind the project's timelines, causing delays in implementing the findings and adjusting project strategies accordingly. The feedback mechanism, as it stands, often results in negative feedback cycles that do not constructively contribute to project improvements. The need for a dedicated focal point within UNDP to address these coordination and communication issues has been repeatedly highlighted as a critical need.

5.3.6 Challenges in Understanding and Communication

The iLandscape project has encountered significant challenges in ensuring a comprehensive understanding and effective communication among the PPMUs, regional authorities, and the UNDP. The feedback from PPMUs indicates a pervasive lack of clarity regarding the project's broader goals and strategic objectives, which has resulted in misalignments between the project's intentions and local expectations, especially those at and below district level. While local authorities are involved in supporting the project, the assignment of responsibilities and funding at this level has not been consistently clear or adequate. This has resulted in some inefficiency and slow progress in project implementation at the local level. The enthusiasm of local officials, although high, is often not matched with sufficient authority or resources to effect change. As one district official expressed, *"We support the project with great interest and organize many meetings, but the real power to execute and allocate funds is constrained."*

Local authorities have high expectations of the project's impact, yet there is a clear disconnect in how these expectations align with the project's operational realities. Communication gaps are exacerbated by inconsistent attendance at key meetings, where crucial information is shared and discussed. This inconsistency in participation has led to incomplete understandings of the project scope and subsequent delays in implementation.

5.3.7 Technical Challenges and Inconsistencies

The project's technical aspects appear to be understood mostly by a select group of individuals who are directly involved at the macro level. Many local officials, crucial for the project's on-the-ground implementation, have expressed that they do not fully grasp the technical directives or the intended outcomes of the project. It appears that local officials place a strong emphasis on "tangible, materialized benefits to farmers", while less focus on the overall enhanced capacity to manage the landscape sustainably. This has led to a situation where implemented activities do not consistently reflect the needs or expectations of the local populations, particularly disadvantaged groups, which the project aims to support.

The delay in accessing necessary capital, especially in regions like Dak Nong, further complicates these issues. Officials' unfamiliarity with the procedures for managing and utilizing foreign capital has led to further misidentification and misallocation of resources, significantly stalling project progress.

5.3.8 International and Local Partner Dynamics

The project's structure, which includes a complex consortium of international and national partners, has its inherent challenges. Coordination among these partners is crucial but remains a challenge due to the segmented nature of activities and limited face-to-face interactions.

Accessibility issues for international partners in the sensitive regions of the Central Highlands pose additional hurdles. The stringent requirements for foreign personnel to access project sites and the long lead times required for arranging such visits complicate the direct engagement necessary for nuanced understanding and support of local project implementation.

The requirement to submit reports well in advance of meetings and the bureaucratic layers involved in decision-making processes add to the operational complexities. Such procedural demands can delay the dissemination of findings and impede the agile response needed in dynamic project environments.

5.3.9 Challenges with Language and Translation

The quality of translations and the equipment used for these services are central issues. Translations, especially during meetings where technical terms are frequently used, often fail to meet the necessary standards for accuracy and clarity. This problem is compounded by the poor quality of equipment used for simultaneous translation, leading to misunderstandings and reduced effectiveness of communication.

Meetings that involve participants requiring translation need careful scheduling to accommodate the logistics of arranging high-quality translation services. However, the project's attempt to combine and reduce the number of project meetings (i.e. workshops March 2023, Workshops July 2023, Workshop Jan 2024) because PPMUs wanted to save their time and efforts to organize meeting, raises the challenge of finding high quality interpreters who can handle all different topics (e.g. land use plan, financial mapping, sustainable agriculture practices). With many project interactions occurring online due to geographical and logistical constraints, the challenges of non-native language participation are magnified.

5.3.10 Misalignment between project deliverables and government expectations

In the iLandscape project, a recurring theme emerged surrounding the difficulty in aligning remote sensing and other mapping data with the official governmental data, which has led to significant challenges in the acceptance of project results by authorities. The project relies on sophisticated satellite data to create crop maps and detect deforestation. However, discrepancies between this data and the government's official figures have created a barrier to the effective utilization of these tools. This misalignment has raised concerns among local authorities about the validity of the maps produced, thus impacting their utility for official assessments.

The administration's reluctance to fully integrate new systems such as the Terra-i monitoring system highlights a broader issue of trust and acceptance of externally developed technologies. While there is recognition in Lam Dong province, Dak Nong requires more intensive engagement and trust-building efforts to realize the system's benefits fully. Authorities have shown a willingness to adopt the innovative methods proposed by the project, although they seek consistency when numerical data differs from their records. This highlights a valuable opportunity to develop a mechanism that harmonizes data collected by project partners with government records, ensuring both accuracy and acceptance. Without such alignment, the project risks having its deliverables underutilized, despite the potential benefits they offer. Moreover, the project faces challenges not just in data acceptance but also in stakeholder engagement and the implementation of interventions. The complexity of managing multi-stakeholder platforms is compounded by limited interaction and participation constraints, particularly concerning foreign stakeholders due to regulatory and logistical barriers. Enhancing external consultants' understanding of the local context will ensure their outputs better meet local needs and align more closely with project goals.

5.4 Progress to impact

Evaluation question: To what extent are project outputs contributing to outcomes and longer-term impacts?

Finding: The project has made significant progress towards its goals of improving environmental sustainability and social inclusion in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. There has been a reported 96% reduction in the rate of forest loss in the target areas, which equates to approximately 750,552 tons of CO2 emissions avoided, though this cannot be solely attributed to the project. Trainings and technical assistance have been widely implemented, enhancing local capacity and engagement. However, the timely provision of financial support and further piloting of agricultural models are essential to sustain these positive impacts and ensure continued community engagement and trust.

This project aims at improving environmental sustainability and social inclusion and resilience of food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

Firstly, regarding the project's aim to contribute towards **the enhancement of ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions,** the 2023 reporting citing the national forest status data for the project area, suggests a reduction in the rate of forest loss and emissions reductions achieved.

The report states that the annual natural forest loss in 4 districts during 2021- 2022 , based on annual forest status reports of Lam Dong and Dak Nong was as follows:

- Di Linh: 167 ha
- Lac Duong: -245 ha (natural forest area increased)
- Dak R'lap: 0.04 ha
- Dak G'long: 48.52 ha

Under the Business-as-usual scenario, the total forest loss in 2 provinces is 14,000ha/year, equivalent to a loss of 5,382 ha/year in the 4 districts (as total natural forest areas in the 4 districts account for 38.44% of total natural forest area of the two provinces. Compared to the baseline scenario, forest loss in 2021-2022 has been reduced by 96%. This reduction is equivalent to 750,552 tons CO2eq emission avoided[46]. Assessing data from Global Forest Watch, though focusing on forest loss from primary humid forests, paints a similar trend regarding a halt or decline in the rates of loss from the project target areas. It is expected that as sustainable land use planning approaches and climate resilient agricultural practices are adopted by farmers as part of this intervention, that these gains can be sustained in the future. The adoption and use of the Terra-i system would also contribute to enhance forest monitoring and law enforcement, creating the disincentives required to reduce forest illegality.

The second project expected impact was to improve the Improve livelihoods, through inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities and women in agriculture, forest-farming and ecotourism value chains. This consisted of 20% of the total population and 35% of the total marginalized population of the project area. The third was to sustain food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains, with expected 25% increase in the total commodities value as well as 15% of the agricultural land in the project area placed under sustainable practices in the project area.

In both of these areas, there has been some progress towards impact as assessed through emergence of some intermediary outcomes. The project has delivered a significant number of trainings targeting

[46] 2023 project report

officials and beneficiaries as already reported on a wide range of topics on Terra -I, land use planner, development of sustainability indicators and M&E framework, and on the EUDR. The project completed the framework of an action plan for EUDR with the consensus of Lam Dong DPC, Di Linh DPC, and stakeholders piloting in Di Linh District. It is expected that if delivered, this will contribute towards project aims.

In terms of sustaining livelihoods, In Lam Dong, 2 PPI compacts in Di Linh and Lac Duong were signed and have been implemented since quarter 4 of 2022 with 5 meetings of PPI compact Steering Committee organized. 13,938 people have been trained, with up to 2,533 farmers receiving non financial support. Further technical assistance was, and 7,099 farmers received production certificates. Through this intervention, the 38,269 tonnes of coffee beans have been purchased from the farmers demonstrating the certification standards. With the support of PPI compacts in Di Linh district, the area of coffee intercropped with fruit trees and other trees have increased from 20% in 2020 to 35% in 2023. There is no gender disaggregated data as of the midterm to assess the differentiated impacts of this reported progress on men, women and ethnic minorities. There are all indications to indicate that the project will make considerable progress towards all its impact, but this is highly contingent on the project moving towards piloting models developed on the field and supporting local ownership. This would not be possible within the remaining period of the project, thus necessitating additional time not only to trial the results of the technical assistance work, but also providing sufficient time to monitor adoption by target groups and drawing lessons that could inform wider policy and practice.

No negative impacts of the intervention have been observed by the MTE team. However, there are growing concerns from target communities, regarding the delayed provision of planned financial support and dissemination of agricultural models. This might lead to demotivation from engagement in this project and future interventions. Local partners might lose trust from communities and officials, which might affect their ability to deliver projects in the target's areas in the future.

5.5 Efficiency

Evaluation question: To what extent was the project delivered in an efficient manner in terms of outcomes, outputs and goals

Finding: The ILandscape project faced substantial delays in approval processes and financial disbursements, compressing the timeline for activities and leading to a low expenditure rate of 22% at midterm, which hindered efficient delivery of outcomes, outputs, and goals. Additionally, inconsistencies in legal and procedural frameworks between provinces and challenges in translating planning activities into tangible local actions further affected the project's efficiency. Human resource issues, including gaps due to staff turnover and unfilled positions, and the demanding level of technical expertise required, also contributed to the project's inefficiencies.

5.5.1 Budget, Project Delays and Financial Disbursement Challenges

The iLandscape project encountered substantial setbacks starting with the delayed approval of essential project documents and annual plans, which subsequently shifted the entire project timeline. This misalignment began from the project's outset, with necessary approvals only secured by March 2022, despite an initial start planned for 2021. This delay in document approval led to a compression of activities into much shorter periods than initially planned, thus accumulating work and extending deadlines beyond feasible limits.

Financial disbursement has emerged as a critical challenge, with disbursement milestones being continually pushed forward—from 2022 to 2023, and then again to 2024. As shown in figure 5 of the USD 5,957,500 approved donor funds, USD 1,300,045 was spent at midterm representing 22% overall expenditure rate. This is significantly low compared to the expected level of expenditure at this point in the project life cycle.

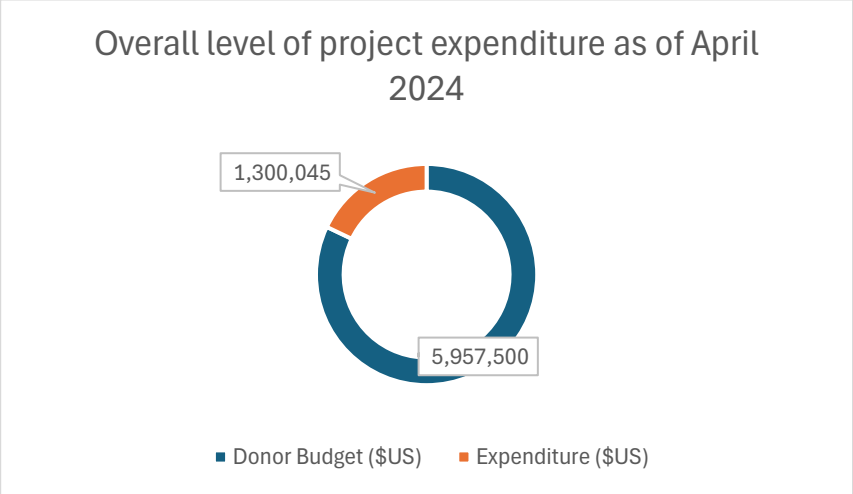

Figure 5: Overall project spend at Midterm – April 2024

Source: UNDP Project Management Team

Table 4 further disaggregates the level of expenditure per output, highlighting where the project has faced challenges to implement activities. This is the case for output 2.2 and 2.3 for instance where trainings and dissemination of agricultural and non-timber forest product (NTFP) practices has experienced delays.

Table 4: Level of expenditure (USD) per output

Project Output	Budget	Total Expenditure up to 22 April 24	% Spend
Output 1.1	703,785	175,835	25
Output 1.2	271,537	223,584	82
Output 1.3	221,036	50,325	23
Output 1.4	120,099	20,116	17
Output 1.5	489,057	74,006	15
Output 2.1	825,725	216,754	26
Output 2.2	206,066	8,977	4
Output 2.3	508,890	19,324	4
Output 3.1	188,488	62,440	33
Output 3.2	321,677	23,625	7
Output 3.3	246,278	46,976	19
Output 3.4	311,940	20,936	7
Output 4.1	363,114	79,863	22
Output 4.2	1,179,807	277,285	24
Total	5,957,500	1,300,045	22

Table: ACE D&H Consultants Ltd UK • Source: UNDP PMU 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

In Lam Dong, for instance, only a fraction (5%) of the designated funds has been disbursed, severely hampering project execution and delivery. Figure 6 further shows that Dak Nong has not received direct funding from the project so far.

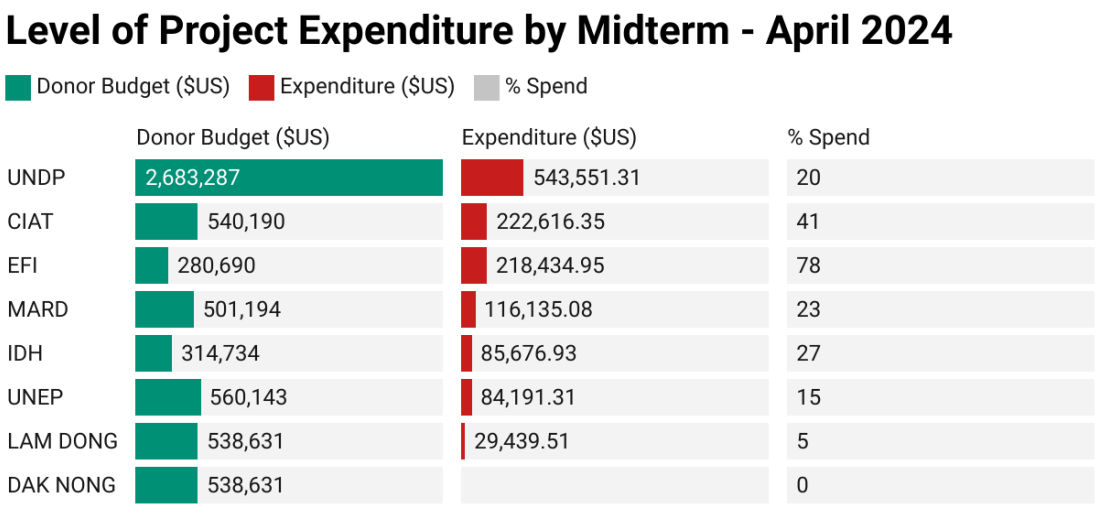

Chart: ACE D&H Consultants Ltd • Source: UNDP April 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 6: Level of project budget distribution and expenditure across partners and agencies by Midterm April 2024

On the contrary, the international partners have higher levels of expenditure due to more research, studies and diagnostic activities implemented since inception. However, part of the issue with the disbursement stems partly from the incomplete work by responsible parties, which have experienced delays to produce results necessary for reporting and subsequent approval by government bodies for further disbursement. Figure 7 shows the level of expenditure per outcome. 30% of funding was spent on outcome 1, followed by 24% for outcome 4, outcome 2 (16%) and outcome 3 (14%).

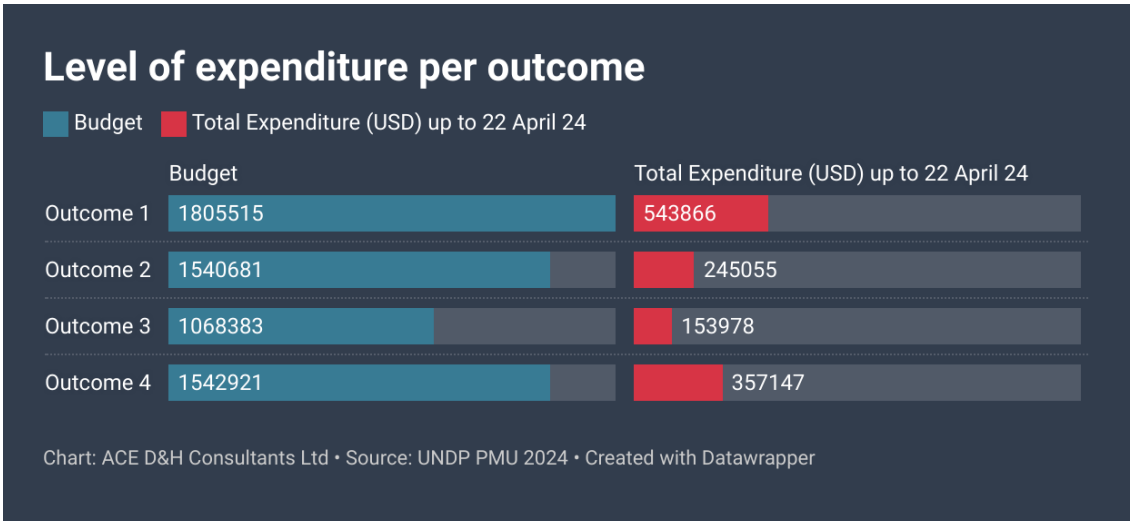

Figure 7: Level of expenditure per outcome

There is evidence that the project is gaining momentum following the delays experienced in year 1. Figure 8 below shows an increase from 6% of resources consumed in year 1 (2022) to 15% in year 2 (2023). There has been a notable decline in the level of expenditure in 2024 as shown in figure 5. It appears that the commissioning of the midterm evaluation has rather led to a slow down as the project teams await the results and recommendations to inform the future of the project.

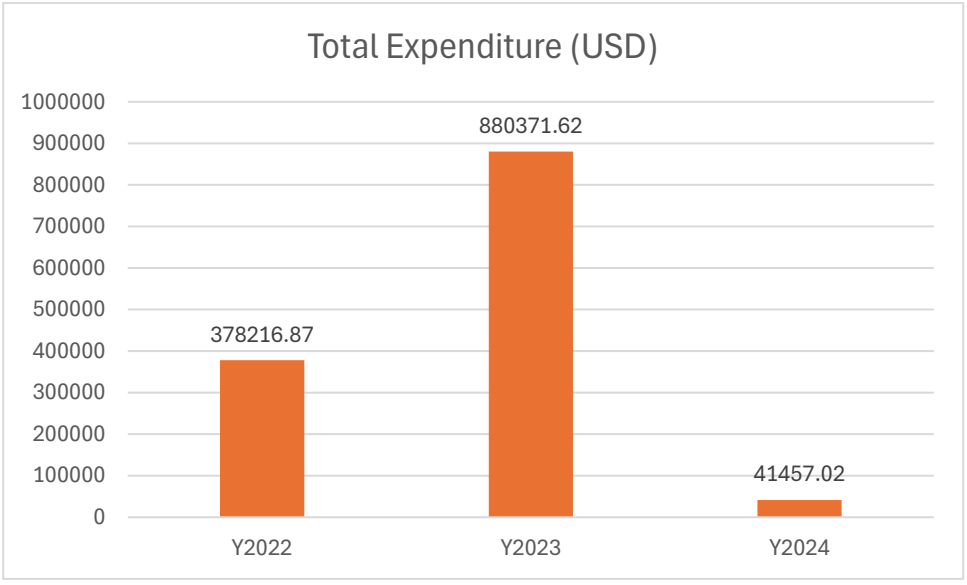

Figure 8: Evolution of project expenditure over time

Source: UNDP Project Management Unit 2024

Based on this level of spend and resources still available to the project, it is unlikely that all the funding can be spent by the initial closing date of March 2026. There is need for an extension beyond this initial period (recommendation 1).

5.5.2 Budgetary and Operational Inconsistencies Across Provinces

The project faces additional challenges stemming from variations in legal and procedural frameworks between provinces such as Lam Dong and Dak Nong. These differences have led to inconsistencies in how project funding and activities are planned and executed, affecting the project's uniformity and coherence across regions. For example, while Lam Dong operates under a specific legal framework that facilitates smoother project operation with direct funding support from UNDP, Dak Nong lacks such a foundation, resulting in delays and inefficiencies in handling operational costs. At the time of the MTE, Dak Nong has not received any project funding due to failures in internal government mechanisms. The ministry of finance allocation to Dak Nong province did not include the specific amounts requested by the province and officials in view of the ongoing anti-corruption campaign, did not dare to allocate resources to the iLandscape project stating that there was no specific amount per project set out in MOF's allocation. Evidence was provided in late May 2024, shows that *Dak Nong's Department of Finance has submitted a letter to Dak Nong PPC for allocating budget to Dak Nong PPMU, which may lay the groundwork for the PPMU to start spending from the middle of 2024.*

Figure 9 shows that 20% of the overall resources are allocated for local level interventions by the provinces, including direct support to ethnic minorities, while 80% is for technical assistance. The allocation to the provinces is largely unspent due to the challenges identified above. According to the prodoc, 70% of project's activities/results and accompanied technical services should be delivered to and implemented at the four districts of Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces.

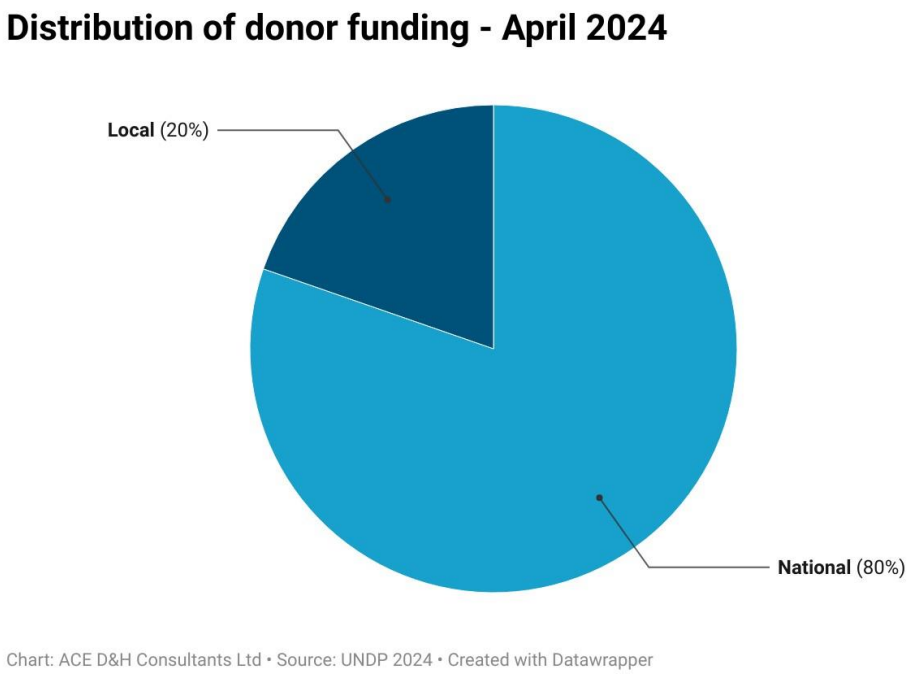

Figure 9: Distribution of donor funding

A recurrent theme in stakeholder feedback is the project's failure to translate conference and training activities into tangible local actions, particularly in the villages, where the need for social security and livelihood enhancements is acute. Despite proposals during district meetings to integrate project outputs with existing programs like rural construction or development programs for ethnic minorities, actual on-the-ground implementation remains virtually non-existent. This gap between planning and execution undermines the project's relevance and effectiveness at the community level.

The project's focus has predominantly been on workshops, information gathering, and the development of tools such as crop maps and forest management software in its first years of implementation. However, these activities have not yet been complemented by practical models that engage local stakeholders or effectively address the needs of disadvantaged groups, despite the project documents explicitly mentioning these groups, due to the delays identified. Despite these delays, the expectations from farmers and their understanding of the intervention are not aligned as they expect the project to provide the in-kind and promised. This calls for the need for stronger communication with beneficiary communities, to further understand the logic of the project and when expected support might eventually be provided to allay concerns and risks of demotivation.

5.5.3 Human resources

In addition to the financial resources, the government and project partners have staffed the intervention in line with their respective internal processes. At national, provincial and district levels, staff were effectively appointed to the project governance and implementation structures. However, as already highlighted, national and local level staff raised concerns regarding the demanding level of time and technical effort/expertise required for them to play their roles effectively. For instance, staff mention that the various methodologies and tools developed by partners are often not understood or mastered by the government staff which hampers their ability to feedback and contribute. Partners observe that this is in part due to lack of consistency in those taking part in project interventions. In other cases, those more fully involved highlight the inequitable levels of remuneration for their efforts compared to other responsible parties' staff.

Beyond the UNDP, other agencies thought that the current resource allocation was sufficient as they were able to draw on their organizational networks to draw expertise when required. For UNDP, the funding proposal laid out the level of human resources required for effective and efficient delivery of the intervention. However, there have been some gaps in human resource allocation due to staff turnover and unfilled positions. At the time of the evaluation, there was an unfilled post in the project. The splintering of the project into three sub-projects means that the workloads are likely to increase beyond what was initially foreseen. For this reason, government and partners perceive that there are gaps which need to be addressed to enhance implementation.

5.6 Cross cutting themes

Evaluation question: To what extent was gender equality and empowerment, human rights, leave no one behind and people with disabilities considered during design and implementation of the project?

Finding: The ILandscape project has made progress in addressing gender equality, empowerment, and inclusion by involving disadvantaged groups in consultations and planning. However, there are still challenges in translating these efforts into tangible benefits for women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

5.6.1 Gender, inclusiveness and people with disabilities

The iLandscape project, despite its strategic objectives and preliminary design aimed at integrating gender and local community interests into sustainable development, appears to have faced significant challenges in effectively addressing the needs and inclusion of these groups. The project documentation explicitly recognizes the importance of involving disadvantaged and gender-specific groups in its activities. It specifically mentioned that these groups will benefit training and incentives (both cash and in kinds) to move towards sustainable practices. It emphasized that efforts will be put on inclusion of ethnic minorities, men[47] and women, which will be monitored with disaggregated data. However, the practical implementation of these intentions has not yet materialized in meaningful ways.

From the reports and feedback gathered, it becomes evident that while the project envisages various activities that could potentially benefit women and ethnic minorities—such as the development of non-timber forest products, gong culture, and eco-tourism—these plans remain largely in the consultation and model development phases without actual ground implementation.

The consultation processes, though designed to be inclusive, have not effectively translated into tangible benefits for the targeted groups. The feedback suggests that there is a gap between the project's ambitions and its operational outcomes, especially in terms of tangible activities and benefits reaching the disadvantaged groups. This gap is partly attributed to the project's early stage (initial focus on studies, mapping, diagnosis and research and operational issues), where many activities are still being planned or piloted without robust operational measures in place to far to ensure these plans, tools and models address the unique needs of women and ethnic minorities. The 2023 report mentioned that as of 31 December 2023, a total of 13,513 beneficiaries are benefiting from the project (of which 13,000 beneficiaries benefited from the operation of PPI compacts in Lam Dong province), with 5,975 women beneficiaries (44.1%) mainly through consultations, awareness raising and non financial support. The project would benefit from further disaggregating this data and to explore the potential differential effects of the intervention on men, women as well as ethnic minorities.

Regarding **people with disabilities**, the MTE did not find any evidence of the project integrating people with disabilities in the various interventions. The M&E data does not report on the number of people with beneficiaries reached or benefiting from the intervention. The same applies for the various baseline surveys that have been implemented through the project. The results framework commits to reporting project progress disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and vulnerability status. The project would consequently benefit from more transparency through consistent targeting and fully disaggregated reporting.

5.6.2 Human rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, disability, language, religion, or any other status. These include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, the right to work, and the right to health and education, amongst others. This is in line with Chapter 2 of Viet Nam's constitution[48]. The project seeks to empower and strengthen the capacities of rights-holders towards adoption of climate resilient, environmentally friendly agricultural practices, which reduce their impacts on forests. This project is therefore, helping project stakeholders to achieve their rights to enjoy the right to *"live in a clean environment" and deliver on their " duty to protect*

[47] Be noted that some original ethnic groups living in Lam Dong and Dak Nong such as K'Ho, Ede, M'Nong do follow *matrilineality culture*, thus both men and women are facing with inequality issues and challenges.
[48] tranlation_of_vietnams_new_constitution_enuk_2.pdf (constitutionnet.org)

the environment" (article 43). It is expected that these increased capacities, knowledge and experiences will enable the target communities to fulfil their rights. Through this project, rights holders are being empowered through consultations, awareness raising and training events on a wide range of topics. Not only does the project address the needs of the rights -holders, it also seeks to enhance the capacities of duty-bearers/government officials at national and provincial levels to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of farmers and ethnic monitories. For instance, work done by IDH creates opportunities and spaces for multistakeholder engagement in PPIs, enabling the views of farmers to be heard.

The project took steps during implementation to ensure that the intervention was responsive to the needs of the different target groups. For instance, the project implemented a stakeholder mapping considering the place of ethnicity in jurisdictional sustainability governance within project provinces with focus on the coffee value chain[49]. In another study[50] enabled the project to understand the specificities of each target group with the view to developing targeted interventions. Through the different surveys of farming systems, the project has established that project districts have a large proportion of ethnic minorities (51.1%). Households (HH) in these locations have large family size (4.6 persons/HH). In which, HHs in the two districts of Lam Dong province have larger size than those in Dak Nong province. Ethnic minority (EM) HHs have larger family size, higher ratios of marginally poor and poor households, and a lower literacy level than the Kinh majority HHs. Farmers that adopt coffee monocropping systems have higher rates of marginally poor and poor HHs, and a lower literacy level than farmers of the other MPS[51][52]. These findings further justify the relevance of this projects in reaching the poorer marginalised communities, though there is limited evidence of a disaggregated approach to implementation. The engagement strategy developed by the project, to promote the jurisdictional sustainability governance, does not develop bespoke activities to address the specific needs of these groups, though it recommends encouraging bottom-up decision making[53]. As implementation progresses following years of delay, the MTE calls for the project team to adopt a differentiated strategy to better respond to the specificities of each farming group. This will enhance the potential impact of the project's intervention, to enable farmers achieve their potential through increased capacities (right to learning – article 39), and incomes (article 32 of constitution), decent jobs (article 35 of constitution), and the right to an adequate standard of living. Long term, these improvements could also increase their ability to save, reduce dependency on credit from private lenders and consequently protect them against servitude. In fact, the project farming systems baseline study identified that a significant share of farmers had loans of over 10,000 USD dollars, with the poorest communities most likely to default on these loans[54].

[49] Mekong development Research Institute (August 2023) REPORT FOR POLICY-MAKERS An analysis of gaps in advancing jurisdictional sustainability and stakeholder engagement for jurisdictional sustainability governance in Lam Dong province and Dak Nong province, Vietnam

[50] Dr. Khoa Dang LE (2022) - Prioritization of the most promising interventions for sustainable agriculture in Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces of the Central Highlands region – Vietnam National Consultant Supported by: CIAT funding – International Center for Tropical Agriculture

[51] Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT (2023) REPORT, BASELINE FARMING SYSTEMS SURVEY

[52] Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT (2023) **REPORT STAKEHOLDER SURVEY FOR PRIORITIZATION OF TECHNICAL INTERVENTIONS IN LAM DONG AND DAK NONG PROVINCE**

[53] Mekong development Research Institute (August 2023) REPORT FOR POLICY-MAKERS An analysis of gaps in advancing jurisdictional sustainability and stakeholder engagement for jurisdictional sustainability governance in Lam Dong province and Dak Nong province, Vietnam

[54] Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT (2023) **REPORT STAKEHOLDER SURVEY FOR PRIORITIZATION OF TECHNICAL INTERVENTIONS IN LAM DONG AND DAK NONG PROVINCE**

5.6.3 Leave No One Behind

According to the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, leaving no one behind is one of three directions of change UNDP aspires to, defined as "a rights-based approach centred on empowerment, inclusion, equity, human agency and human development capabilities which recognizes that poverty and inequality are multidimensional"[55]. The midterm review finds that UNDP Viet Nam took the relevant steps to ensure LNOB. Acknowledging that the project seeks to empower poor farmers and ethnic minorities, it consequently seeks to strengthen equality, providing much need support for farmers to claim their rights as mentioned in 5.8 above. The various analyses conducted by the project on prioritisation of farming systems and agricultural models, enabled the project to further target its interventions to respond in the best way to specific needs, although the specific targeting approaches are yet to be developed and demonstrated. The team does not find any evidence of discrimination, which is a second key aspect of LNOB assessment, rather it seeks to empower target communtiies. As mentioned earlier, the MTE team has commended the spirit of inclusiveness demonstrated by the project team, whilst operating in a very complex context. Regarding equity, the team has highlighted that project resources so far have been spent on studies and significant technical assistance at national level. Implementation delays mean that the activities geared towards dissemination of agricultural models, or access to financial support from leveraged funding are yet to be implemented. The project did not foresee any direct financial support to farmers, and consequently, there is much reliance on the project's ability to leverage external funding to respond to the needs and rights of 30,000 target farmers. However, the allocated funding to the provinces will help local authorities to support awareness raising, training and piloting of successful business models in the next phase of the project. No specific equity focused policies have been developed as part of this project.

5.7 Social and environmental safeguards

Evaluation question: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?

Finding: The project effectively integrated environmental and social concerns by conducting a thorough social and environmental safeguards assessment, identifying key risk areas, and implementing robust mitigation measures. Regular risk monitoring and inclusive engagement with target communities, including ethnic minorities, ensured alignment with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and the project's commitment to gender equality and empowerment.

Social and Environmental Standards (SES) are a means to (at a minimum) mitigate the risk that development initiatives may inadvertently harm the natural environment or influence social conditions in ways that negatively affect certain groups. UNDP's guidelines require assessing potential risks in eight standards: biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainable natural resource management; climate and disaster risks; community health, safety and security; cultural heritage; displacement and involuntary resettlement; indigenous peoples; labour and working conditions; and pollution prevention and resource efficiency[56].

[55] ASSESSING LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND (undp.org)
[56] ASSESSING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS (SES) (undp.org)

In line with UNDP's SES, a social and environmental safeguards assessment was conducted for the project. The screening focused on the overall principles of human rights and Leave No One Behind, Gender Equality and Women's empowerment, Sustainability and Resilience. Through this assignment, five key risks areas were identified. The identified risks and levels of significance are presented in table 5. As can be seen from the table, UNDP concluded that the risk level of the project is overall low.

Table 5: Social and environmental safeguards assessment

No	Risk	Significance
1	Duty-bearers (e.g. government agencies) do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the project	Moderate
2	Rights-holders (e.g. project affected persons) do not have the capacity to claim their rights	Low
3	Objections from potentially affected stakeholders	Moderate
4	The project involves activities within or adjacent to critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas	Low
5	The project involves areas where ethnic minorities are present	Low
	Overall risk categorisation	**Low**

The midterm evaluators agree with this categorisation. Where risks were identified as moderate, the team is satisfied with the mitigation measures proposed by the project team. There is limited likelihood of the project leading to adverse impacts on the development and priorities of target communities of this project.

Implementation of the project has also ensured that principles to strengthen social and environmental sustainability are integrated. This included seeking consent from target groups and ethnic groups and forest dependent communities and engaging them through various consultative and feedback mechanisms. UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism has been informed to project-affected people through the project workshops and meetings.

The overall results framework demonstrates the commitment of the team to ensure gender equality and empowerment is achieved through formulation of outcome 4 which seeks to ensure that gender and safeguards are adhered to during implementation. The project indicators demonstrate this commitment through formulation of indicators which consider gender, ethnicity, vulnerability and geographic footprint, though current project reporting, has been limited to gender disaggregated information and geographic footprint of the interventions.

In terms of actual roll out of the project, the project team also continues to monitor the strategic, political, organisational, and operational risks that might affect the project and develop relevant mitigation measures[57]. During the project design phase, several strategic risks were identified and analyzed. One major risk was the aversion to change due to the high level of innovation in instruments and processes, which could challenge traditional practices and slow implementation. To mitigate this, the project proposed empowering local authorities with robust technical and political support, actively

[57] Prodoc

communicating the benefits of change, and leveraging past successful relationships, particularly in Lam Dong province. In Dak Nong, additional efforts were planned to focus on building trust through expert missions and continuous engagement. Another significant risk identified was the insufficient incentives for adopting sustainable practices in agriculture and forest management, with a probability of 4 and an impact of 4, resulting in a risk score of 16. The mitigation measures proposed included demonstrating clear socioeconomic benefits, implementing extensive dissemination and training campaigns, deploying experts to provide direct support, and leveraging market-driven incentives. The analysis also highlighted weak local governance and corruption as potential risks. To address this, the project planned to build on UNDP's extensive experience in managing corruption risks, use REDD+ safeguards, and promote participatory governance. Regular assessments by UNDP and independent organizations, along with robust auditing, were proposed to ensure funds were properly utilized and to maintain close dialogue with public authorities to address data quality issues and land use conflicts. The MTE assesses that this risk analysis was sufficient and of a high standard (annex 4 of the prodoc).

The project has actively monitored these risks on a quarterly basis through project meetings and work-planning sessions. Mitigating measures are applied to any identified risks in the subsequent quarter's work plan. For example, when the Covid-19 pandemic emerged, planned meetings were organised online. Similarly, changes in the political landscape impacting outcome 1 were addressed by introducing land use planning capacity-building interventions and new activities to respond to the EUDR. The risk log serves as a management and supervision tool for UNDP and the project steering committee, updated annually as planned, with assessments shared with partners. Annual reports consistently include an updated risk assessment to ensure donors, partners, and stakeholders are well-informed about the project's risks. The Midterm Evaluation (MTE) reviewed and validated the identified risks and their ratings, concluding no further revisions are needed at this stage. However, the team must continue monitoring risks and respond to any emerging issues accordingly.

5.8 Sustainability

Evaluation question: To what extent are project achievements likely to continue beyond the project and what risks could constrain extension, replicability and up scaling of this project

Finding: The ILandscape project's achievements are likely to continue beyond the project period if financial, institutional, and environmental sustainability measures are maintained, though risks such as financial delays, economic misalignment, weak local governance, and political shifts could constrain its extension, replicability, and upscaling.

5.8.1 Likelihood of sustainability

Financial and Economic Sustainability: The project's financial viability post-initial funding is contingent upon its ability to demonstrate clear economic benefits and secure ongoing funding or revenue streams. The PPI compact and initiatives like Terra-i, which are pivotal to the project, depend on sustained funding and the ability to show measurable impacts on sustainable agricultural practices and deforestation reduction. Integration with government programs, such as those aimed at supporting the EUDR regulations, can provide a pathway for continued financial support, assuming the project outcomes align closely with government and private sector priorities. The financial models being developed through this project, need to prove not only viability but also economic benefits to the local communities and stakeholders to encourage further investment.

Institutional Sustainability: The project's future is also closely tied to its institutionalization within local government structures. While there is a clear intent to embed project outputs within local planning and regulatory frameworks, this process is described as challenging. Success in this area requires strong buy-in, ownership and advocacy at multiple governmental levels to ensure that project methodologies and tools, such as land use planning tools and commodity crop mapping, become integrated into routine administrative procedures. The MTE team finds that officials remain committed to the objectives of the project and will continue to support its implementation. The formation of farmer groups and cooperatives as part of the project's strategy to expand activities would represent a move towards creating lasting institutional structures. The collaboration with IDH on the PPI represents leveraging a model of intervention that has proven its utility over time. The institutional commitment from IDH regarding these platforms, provides a solid foundation for sustainability.

Environmental Sustainability: Environmentally, the project aims to foster practices that contribute to sustainable land use and deforestation prevention. The use of tools like Terra-i for monitoring changes in forest cover and the implementation of practices compliant with EUDR can help mitigate environmental impacts over the long term. However, the project's ability to continue influencing environmental practices hinges on the effectiveness and accuracy of these tools and the local acceptance of the practices promoted.

Social Sustainability: Socially, the project aims to improve the livelihoods of local communities, including disadvantaged groups, by linking them to sustainable agricultural and non-timber forest product value chains. However, current reports suggest limited direct impact on these groups to date, with activities largely focused on capacity building, evidence generation and consultations rather than on-the-ground economic benefits. For the project to be sustainable from a social perspective, it must not only involve these groups in consultations but also ensure they benefit directly from the project's activities, thereby improving their economic status and investment in sustainable practices.

5.8.2 Risks to sustainability

Financial Risks:

The ILandscape project has been plagued by financial delays, primarily stemming from the slow disbursement of funds, which are crucial for timely project execution. These delays are often linked to the late completion of project activities and the subsequent non-acceptance of outputs by the government. Such financial hurdles can severely restrict the project's ability to access necessary resources promptly, thereby jeopardizing ongoing and future activities. Additionally, the project's heavy reliance on external funding sources heightens its vulnerability to fluctuations in donor support. If these financial streams are reduced or withdrawn, the project could face significant sustainability issues, as its capacity to continue without external funds has not been established.

Economic Risks

Economically, the project faces the risk of its outputs failing to provide direct benefits to local communities. If the agricultural models and land use tools developed do not align with local economic realities or fail to enhance agricultural productivity and income, community engagement and support could wane, leading to the abandonment of these models. The absence of visible, direct economic benefits can diminish local interest and participation, a critical factor for the project's sustained impact.

Environmental Risks

Environmentally, the project must ensure that its tools and strategies for environmental management, such as deforestation monitoring and land use planning, are compatible with local ecological conditions. Any misalignment here could lead to underutilization or outright rejection of these tools by local authorities, undermining the project's environmental goals. Moreover, if the project's strategies do not effectively contribute to reducing deforestation in a way that resonates with local policies and practices, its environmental sustainability objectives may not be achieved. The emerging evidence however, points to increased pressures on forest lands as shown by the recent Mongobay[58] analysis regarding Lam Dong province (see figure 7).

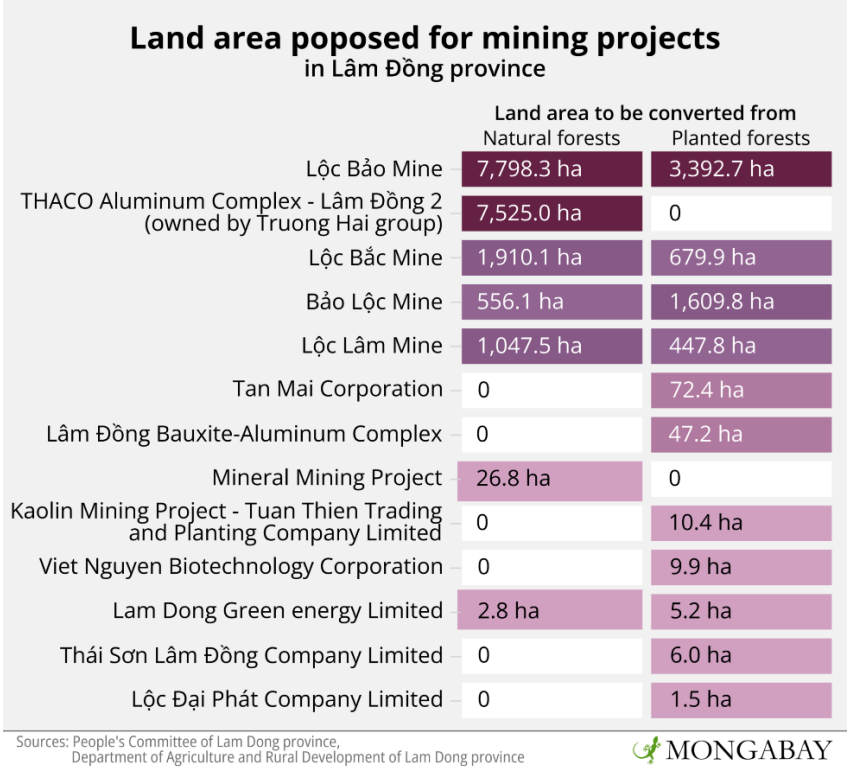

Figure 10: Land area proposed for mining projects in Lam Dong province

Source: Mongobay 2024

Institutional Risks

Institutionally, the project has struggled to foster robust ownership among local institutional actors, which is crucial for the sustainability of its initiatives. The lack of strong institutional engagement and ownership, especially at lower levels of government, poses a significant risk to the project's ability to maintain its interventions over the long term. Additionally, the project's success depends heavily on its ability to institutionalize its outputs within local government operations, which remains a substantial challenge. Without proper integration of the project's methodologies and tools into local governance frameworks, there is a risk that these outputs will not be sustained beyond the project's lifespan.

[58] Mongobay (2024) Forests in Vietnam's Central Highlands at risk as development projects take priority, Published April 10th 2024, Forests in Vietnam's Central Highlands at risk as development projects take priority (mongabay.com)

Furthermore, the project must navigate the complex landscape of policy coherence to ensure that its outputs align with existing government policies[59].

Political Risks

Politically, the project is susceptible to shifts in political priorities, which can alter the level of support or available resources for its objectives. Changes in local or national governance could redirect focus away from the project's goals, impacting its sustainability.

6. Conclusion

Relevance

The ILandscape project's relevance to Viet Nam's thematic and strategic development needs is robustly substantiated through its integrated approach that harnesses the lessons from previous initiatives, specifically the UNREDD Viet Nam Programme. This strategic incorporation of past insights and methodologies ensures the project does not reinvent the wheel but rather builds on a solid foundation of sustainable land management and conservation practices.

Aligning with Vietnam's national and local priorities, the project notably supports a broad spectrum of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those aimed at reducing poverty, promoting sustainable agriculture, protecting ecosystems, and enhancing gender equality. Such alignment is strategic and reflects a deep integration with the country's development trajectory as outlined in various national policies and the Prime Minister's decisions, underscoring the project's commitment to national and global sustainability targets.

However, the relevance of the project could be somewhat undermined by the initial lack of involvement from district-level stakeholders during the design phase, a gap that has been partially addressed through ongoing feedback mechanisms during implementation. The evolving project context and regulatory changes have necessitated adaptive management. Adapting to significant shifts such as changes in land law, EUDR, forestry policies, and Official Development Assistance regulations, the project has demonstrated flexibility, but there is room to enhance responsiveness to ensure that the project remains aligned with the changing environmental and policy landscape.

Furthermore, the project's focus on gender and ethnic minority perspectives is crucial for the sustainability and equity of the project's outcomes, to ensure that the benefits of sustainable land management reach all segments of the community, including the most vulnerable. Although not initially prioritised, integrating gender and social inclusivity more deeply will further solidify the project's role as key contributor to Viet Nam's sustainable development agenda.

[59] Kissinger, Gabrielle. (2020). Policy Responses to Direct and Underlying Drivers of Deforestation: Examining Rubber and Coffee in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Forests. 11. 733. 10.3390/f11070733.

Coherence

The iLandscape project's approach to coherence is well-facilitated by its integration of knowledge and frameworks from previously established environmental and sustainability programs. This strategic choice has enabled the project to build upon a solid foundation of proven practices, enhancing its potential effectiveness and ensuring continuity with past successful initiatives such as Terra I and the broader REDD+ programs. The project's theory of change overall remains valid, while the vertical logic of interventions was strong at design. The context and policy level changes that occurred post design have challenged that logic leading to adjustments as stated under the relevance section. However, nothing has been done so far by the M&E team to adjust the horizontal logic of the intervention particularly in terms of its indicators, milestones and targets so far. The current logic presents some weaknesses and do not meet all respect SMART criteria.

Regarding the external coherence of the intervention, the project exhibits a gap in its strategic coherence regarding the integration with other ongoing national and provincial initiatives. While individual partners have made efforts to connect their activities with existing projects, these efforts appear disjointed and lack a unified strategy. The project's aims to engage with local organizations including NGOs, social organizations and cooperatives as well as national and provincial research centres has been scant. This suggests an opportunity to strengthen the project's overall coherence by adopting a more coordinated approach to integrate across all relevant interventions.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the iLandscape project in achieving its objectives presents a mixed picture, with areas of both significant progress and notable challenges. On one hand, the project has successfully leveraged technical expertise to develop tools and methodologies aimed at integrated land use planning and management. This includes creating crop-specific maps and initiating the development of a land use planner tool, which, despite needing further refinements to meet local specifications, marks a forward step in enhancing land management capabilities at the district and provincial levels.

However, the project's effectiveness has been uneven across its various components. While there has been substantial progress in building technical capacities and developing necessary tools, the implementation of these tools and the broader strategic objectives has faced delays and administrative hurdles. Key activities such as the operationalization of land use plans and the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms have been delayed due to bureaucratic processes and budgetary issues within the Project Management Units.

Moreover, the project's ambitions to support the implementation of master plans and to foster sustainable, climate-smart agricultural practices have been hampered by delays in formalizing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and by slow progress in engaging and formalizing agreements with local stakeholders and international partners. The project is still on course to contribute to its stated impacts of (i) enhancing ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions; (ii) improving livelihoods, through inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities and women in agriculture, forest-farming and ecotourism value chains; and (iii) sustaining food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains if the project picks up in the coming years and due to the intermediary work that has been

done so far. Existing evidence on forest loss for instance from Global Forest Watch and official figures do show a halt/decline in target areas which is a positive sign.

In terms of multi-stakeholder engagement and the development of deforestation-free and sustainability standards, the project has initiated valuable discussions and laid down foundational work. However, the actual endorsement and implementation of these standards and the operationalization of a robust institutional monitoring system remain in progress, with further efforts needed to align these initiatives with local needs and regulatory frameworks.

Based on the findings and achievements of the project, it is unlikely that the project will deliver its objectives by the end of initial project period.

Efficiency

The iLandscape project, aimed at fostering sustainable land management efforts, has encountered significant efficiency challenges throughout its implementation, which have affected its capacity to deliver expected outcomes and outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner. The project has faced considerable delays from its inception, beginning with the late approval of essential documents and project plans. These delays set back the project timeline right from the start, creating a cascading effect on subsequent activities. Such foundational delays were compounded by financial disbursement challenges, where funds were not released on schedule, severely impacting the project's operational capabilities, particularly evident in Lam Dong where only a small fraction of the designated funds was disbursed, while in Dak Nong, no resources have been disbursed. This financial bottleneck has significantly constrained the project's ability to execute planned activities effectively. In other cases, differences in understanding of financial management obligations and guidelines between UNDP and CIAT created initial collaboration difficulties.

Operational inconsistencies across different provincial frameworks further complicated the project's implementation. Variations in legal and procedural norms between provinces like Lam Dong and Dak Nong resulted in uneven execution of project activities, leading to inefficiencies and a lack of uniformity in project delivery across regions. In terms of design in terms of the nature and requirement of the project, about 70% of project's activities/results and accompanied technical services should be delivered to and implemented at the four districts of Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces. Of the overall budget, 20% of the financial resources are allocated to the two provinces and IDH for delivery of agricultural models and interventions developed by the project and support to PPIs, while 80% of resources are destined for studies, surveys, consultations, model development, project management, M&E and others. Given the nature of the project where studies and modelling precede demonstration at field level, the overall spend of 21% at midterm is reflective of this sequencing.

Governance and oversight mechanisms, though strategically set up, faced their own set of challenges, including changes in leadership. From an operational standpoint, the project management was marked by coordination challenges among various stakeholders, which hampered effective communication and dynamic interaction necessary for efficient project management. The direct implementation activities, especially at the field level, were slow, reflecting a disconnect between planning and execution.

The project's technical components, although robust in design, often did not align well with the local authorities' needs or regulatory frameworks, which hindered their practical application and acceptance. This was exemplified by the difficulties in integrating sophisticated satellite data with local government data, leading to discrepancies that reduced the usability of the project outputs for official purposes.

The MTE considers that the project delivery is moderately efficient.

Gender Human rights, LNOB, people with disabilities, and SES

The iLandscape project aims to support gender equality and include ethnic minorities in its efforts to promote sustainable environmental practices. The evidence suggests that project partners carried out consultations with beneficiaries and duty bearers in the form of officials during the design. Concerns of these stakeholder groups were taken into consideration. The project has also been highly consultative in its approach to the development of the various tools, guidelines and sustainability criteria, and selection of agricultural interventions. This has ensured that the prioritised interventions respond to the aspirations of the various groups. Through the PPI compacts, which support ethnic minorities and involves local businesses in sustainable agricultural practices, over 13,000 (44% women) farmers have benefited from improved participation in various consultations and meetings. However, there is still more to be done to address community rights to decent jobs and economic empowerment. Most of the project's initiatives that aim to help women and ethnic minorities are still in the planning or pilot stages and haven't been effectively rolled out across the project area. It is expected that financial resources to be mobilised by the project will support communities adopt new climate resilient practices which will strengthen income generation and wellbeing. As project ownership is crucial for sustainability of this initiative, a strategic pivot to the intended in-kind support to final beneficiaries would go a long way to allay the concerns highlighted during this MTE. There appears to be a need for heightened communication and accountability towards beneficiary communities on the state of implementation of the technical assistance initiatives and when they might reasonably be expected to receive the promised in-kind and financial support. This is required to address the risk of disengagement and demotivation and consequent ownership.

The project has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity, human rights, and social and environmental safeguards through empowering local communities, enhancing the capacities of duty-bearers, and adhering to UNDP’s standards. Significant strides were made in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including ethnic minorities and marginalized groups. The project has effectively implemented social and environmental safeguards, mitigating potential risks. However, the integration of people with disabilities is unclear due to lack of data. While the project has been successful in many areas, continuous efforts to improve transparency, adopt fully disaggregated reporting (gender, ethnic groups, vulnerability, disability), and develop tailored support strategies for all vulnerable populations are crucial. These improvements will enhance the project's ability to achieve its goals and ensure that no one is left behind, fostering equitable and sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainability

The ILandscape project's sustainability is faced with substantial challenges across several fronts, which could potentially hinder its continuation and effectiveness beyond the initial funding period. Financial sustainability appears precarious due to the project's heavy reliance on external funding sources and the delays in financial disbursement, which could disrupt ongoing and future activities if not resolved. This financial instability threatens the project's ability to maintain momentum and deliver consistent results over time.

Economically, the project's outputs need to align more closely with the economic realities of the local communities it aims to support. The risk lies in the project's interventions not being sufficiently integrated or beneficial to these communities, which could lead to reduced engagement and support, undermining the long-term adoption and scalability of the project's initiatives.

From an institutional perspective, the project shows potential for integration into local governmental frameworks, but this integration is complex and currently insufficient. Empowering local ownership and integrating project methodologies into routine administrative processes are key areas where further focus can greatly enhance the project's potential for sustained impact. By addressing these challenges head-on, the project can pave the way for success and lasting positive outcomes..

Environmentally, while the project aims to foster sustainable land use and deforestation prevention practices, the effectiveness and acceptance of its environmental management tools depend on their relevance and adaptability to local conditions. Any discrepancies in these areas could diminish the local authorities' commitment to the project's environmental strategies.

Social sustainability is also at risk due to the limited direct impact seen thus far on the disadvantaged groups the project aims to support. Without tangible benefits to these communities, there is a risk of diminishing local support, which is crucial for the project's long-term success.

Progress to impact

The iLandscape Project, aimed at enhancing environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and resilience in food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, has demonstrated promising progress towards its objectives. The 2023 reporting indicates a notable reduction in the rate of forest loss and greenhouse gas emissions, with a 96% decrease in forest loss compared to the baseline scenario. Though not attributed to the project, represents a significant change regarding forest loss in the target area. The adoption of the Terra-i system and further land use planning tools, sustainability standards in the future would further progress in enhancing ecosystem performance.

Progress towards improving livelihoods and sustaining food production is less evident at this stage of the project, due to efforts largely expended on developing evidence, models and decision making tools. Intermediary outcomes emerging from the delivery of numerous training sessions and awareness raising including through implementation of PPI compacts in Lam Dong, would be required to facilitate adoption of evidence, tools and models developed. While no negative impacts have been observed, there are concerns regarding the delayed provision of tangible support and dissemination of agricultural models, which could affect community engagement and trust. Therefore, extending the project timeline is essential to trial the results of initiatives to be promoted, monitor adoption by target groups, and draw lessons to inform broader policy and practice.

7. Recommendations

No	Recommendation	Leadership Responsibility	Timeline	Link to findings/conclusions
1	The MTE recommends a no cost extension of the project till March 2027 to make up time for the initial start-up delays and operational challenges that have plagued the start of the project. The no cost extension is not only to complete delivery of activities, but also to provide an opportunity to pilot the tools and methodologies developed by the project and to document lessons emerging from implementation. This will also provide an opportunity for the project to develop a robust exit strategy for the intervention. UNDP needs to prepare a no cost extension request for approval by the steering committee and subsequent submission to the EU for approval.	UNDP and approval of the steering committee	Within 1 year	Overall assessment and delays – sections 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.11, 5.12
2	To improve the effectiveness of the iLandscape project, the implementing partner (UNDP) and responsible parties should focus on enhancing the practical application and local acceptance of developed tools and research outputs. The implementing partner and responsible parties should work closely with local authorities to address the gaps and feedback provided on the various project deliverables that have so far hindered progress. This involves clarifying roles, responsibilities, and benefits to all parties involved, and ensuring that all agreements are aligned with local needs and regulatory frameworks to facilitate faster and more effective implementation. UNDP has a pivotal role to play as convener and facilitator to broker the discussions to achieve a middle ground and hence facilitate the continuation of the intervention. This is a crucial point to ensure project stakeholders and local	UNDP to convene all project partners – CIAT, EFI, IDH, UNEP and relevant government counterparts at national and local levels	Within 6 months	Section 5.5.5: Challenges with coordination Section 5.5.10 misalignment between project deliverables and government expectations Section 5.12 – sustainability Section 5.12.2 Institutional risks

	authorities agree on project expected deliverables and results. In this direction, the MTE recommends an urgent dialogue bringing together all stakeholders to assess progress with the deliverables, map the gaps and jointly develop the action plans to finalise the various outputs. Ideally, this urgent reassessment event should happen face to face rather than online. Partners can also use this get together to reprioritise interventions, redefine/reclarify roles and responsibilities and timelines. This includes clear guidelines and procedures for review, feedback and validation of future project deliverables. It is crucial for international partners to coalesce efforts and demonstrate joint working. Without joint up working, the project's perceived piece meal approach would be exacerbated. The result of these suggested processes would feed into the request for extension application to be submitted subject to project's response to recommendations 1.			
3	Sustain focus on awareness raising, development of tailor-made toolkit for selected locations at local level, followed by capacity building activities on changing regulations, such as those related to the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the new land laws. This could involve targeted training programs and the development of compliance toolkits tailored to the needs of local authorities and stakeholders. Additionally, revise the LUP tools to support the midterm review of the LUP master plans for provinces and to assist the formulation of provincial and district annual plans.	EFI	Ongoing	5.1: Relevance 5.4.1 Progress towards outcome 1
4	UNDP and responsible parties should review and revise the horizontal logic of the iLandscape project to ensure that all	UNDP and all partners	Within 6 months	Section 5.3 – internal and external coherence

	indicators, milestones, and targets adhere to the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria. For instance, UNEP needs to reassess the objectives regarding the volume of financial resources and MoUs it can reasonably mobilised the end of the intervention. The overall revision should aim to address any existing weaknesses in the project's framework to ensure a more coherent and effective monitoring and evaluation process. Linked to this is developing an operational M&E system for the project to better track progress and adapt strategies as necessary. This involves a clear definition of the project indicators, their measures and units of measurement, roles and responsibilities for data collection, compilation and reporting (ensuring that results are fully disaggregated by gender, ethnic group, geographic location and level of vulnerability/people with disabilities) and guidelines on the use of the data to inform adaptive management of the project. M&E role is also about supporting decision making with evidence to ensure that sustainable management practices and deforestation-free approaches defined by the project are adopted and integrated into national policies, laws, and regulations. There is limited evidence of the project documenting and disseminating any best practices or lessons emerging from the project at local, national and regional levels and this has to be pursued as the project activities continue following the delayed start of the project and implementation challenges faced. UNDP should progress with establishing the technical network of leading institutions to support learning and delivery as planned in the prodoc. This			Section 5.5.2 Project monitoring and evaluation Section 5.7: Cross-cutting themes

	will further strengthen national ownership and sustainability.			
5	It is recommended that a more coordinated approach be developed to enhance the project's external coherence. This should involve establishing a unified strategy that facilitates stronger and more systematic connections between the ILandscape project and other ongoing national and provincial sustainability and environmental initiatives. Such a strategy should include mechanisms for regular communication and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including local organizations, NGOs, social organizations, cooperatives, as well as national and provincial research centres.	UNDP	Within 6 months	5.3 Coherence
6	UNDP needs to monitor the outcome of the letter of the 29th of May 2024 by Dak Nong's Department of Finance to Dak Nong PPC for allocating budget to Dak Nong PPMU. If government delays continue, UNDP should consider reassessing the implementation modality and pivot towards direct implementation. The experience already established with Lam Dong province could then be applied throughout the intervention and consequently reintroducing the umbrella project. This would recentralise the project with financial delivery of field activities assigned to UNDP. This process would be aligned with recommendations 1.	UNDP	Within 3 months	Section 5.6.2 – Efficiency - Budgetary and operational
7	Given the operational inconsistencies and coordination challenges across different provincial frameworks, UNDP needs to beef up its human resource allocation to the project. This includes filling current vacant positions. The project manager needs to step up his responsibilities regarding stakeholder engagement and to focus on harmonizing activities across regions. Enhancing and facilitating	UNDP and all international partners	Within 6 months	5.5.4 Implementation and management 5.6.3 human resources

	communication between stakeholders, aligning project activities with local regulatory norms, and addressing any discrepancies in project execution across provinces is a key role required during this phase of the intervention. The evaluation acknowledges emerging efforts to provide regular updates in Viet namese, and outreach efforts commenced in June 2024 by partners. These have to be pursued and harnessed with support of project manager. International project partners have an opportunity to enhance their engagement with officials. UNDP can facilitate more direct yet coordinated access for international partners to national officials, ensuring alignment with their MoUs, which state they are accountable to UNDP. This approach aims to streamline interactions and minimize any potential delays, enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership. By strategically organising coordination meetings, clear communication channels, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies, this would support improve the overall efficiency and uniformity of the project's impact.			
8	Focus on expediting the implementation and scaling of initiatives that promote gender equality and inclusivity. This involves moving beyond studies, research and modelling and demonstrating how it will reach and address the specificities of the poorest and marginalised farmer groups, vis a vis other farming groups involved in the project. Allocate budget for tangible interventions for women and vulnerable groups specifically. The MTE considers that the current financial allocation from	UNDP and responsible parties	Ongoing	Section 5.2 gender in design 5.7 Cross cutting issues - gender, LNOB, people with disabilities 5.6.2 Budgetary and operational inconsistencies

	the EU is limited and should be increased. Providing specific support directly to these target groups could significantly enhance their participation and benefit from the project, thereby addressing the concerns about ownership and sustainability.			
9	Officials also appear to be oblivious of the cost implications related to the acquisition of higher resolution data and the inability of the project to cover such costs. Respondents have suggested a complementary support approach including the use of drones and Lidar which would complement the alert system, but more also appears needed to enhance understanding of the possibilities offered by Terra-I so as to manage the expectations from both sides and facilitate adoption and ownership. To improve the adoption of innovative systems like Terra-i and other project initiatives intended to benefit disadvantaged groups, it is essential to strengthen engagement and trust-building activities with local communities and officials. Fostering local ownership by embedding project methodologies into routine local government administrative processes and training local staff can help sustain project initiatives beyond the initial funding period.	All partners in line their LOAs with UNDP	Ongoing	Section 5.4.1, output 1.4
10	Strengthen visibility and learning. Improve communication to improve the visibility of the iLandscape project and its contribution in the IDH PPI compacts. Make the image of UNDP project more recognized. Many people at the locality do not know about UNDP project. In the PPI Compacts farmers recognized Acom and IDH rather than UNDP. There is need for the project to enhance transparency to beneficiaries by providing clarity on when they might be expected to access the promised in-kind	All partners with strong UNDP leadership	Ongoing	Section 5.4.4 progress towards outcome 4 Section 5.11 and 5.12 sustainability and risks

	support from the project to address demotivation, trust and ownership risks. Similarly, the project should also focus on documenting emerging lessons from implementation in the next phase, creating opportunities for sharing within the project landscapes but also externally. This includes engaging with research institutions, academic and think tanks as initially planned in the prodoc. The pioneering experience of supporting compliance with the EUDR is likely to generate lessons that can inform global enforcement of the EUDR regulations.			
11	The government needs to demonstrate stronger engagement and ownership in this project than has been demonstrated so far. Failures to share information, data, base maps, inconsistencies in participation in project activities, delays feeding back into project deliverables, disbursement of funding are several issues that have constrained efficiency. In line with recommendation 2 above, government at national and provincial levels also need to take responsibility and refocus resources (human and financial) to the project for its successful completion.	MARD and relevant departments in the provinces	Ongoing	5.5.4 implementation and management 5.5.5 Coordination 5.5.6 Communication

8. Lessons Learned

1. Adaptive management is crucial for effective project delivery when faced with a fast-changing implementation context. The project's efforts to adapt activities in response to the evolved land use planning context and support provided on the EUDR demonstrates this necessity which ensured that the project remained relevant.

2. Institutionalising the results is crucial for ensuring sustainability. The project's efforts to generate evidence, develop tools, models and platforms are highly valuable, but would only be sustained through their adoption and application by target groups. Achieving this goal requires ensuring that the actions of technical partners are aligned with the needs of target audiences,. Enhancing linkages between international experts and government officials could further improve the sense of collaboration, empowerment and mutual respect. However, referring to PSC meeting minutes, it is acknowledged that some project results may not be able to formalized due to contextual changes during project implementation.

3. Providing multiple support systems to the most marginalized households is essential for helping them escape poverty and marginalization. They have been involved in the various consultations and studies implemented by the project. However, transitioning from evidence generation to demonstration models and direct support to target households requires clear communication to align their expectations with the timing and nature of the proposed interventions. The mapping of households commenced in May 2024 is a crucial step but should involve clear communication on when support will be expected.

4. Bringing in international experts in projects brings significant capacity building and technology transfer benefits amongst many others. However, local presence is crucial to facilitate understanding of local realities. In view of access challenges experienced in the project, online support is necessary but has its limitations. Coordination of interventions has proven to be challenging in this project, with international partners seemingly focusing each on their commitments under their LoAs with UNDP. Achieving more than the sum of individual contributions, requires more commitment and joint working from partners. A piecemeal, inward-looking approach is less likely to deliver the overall aims pursued by the project, as it also means that local officials and beneficiaries do not see or understanding the interconnections between the various interventions and the pathways to expected change.

5. Creating economic incentives for enhancing ecosystems management, reducing deforestation and forest loss and strengthening communities' resilience to climate change is beneficial. The project's approach to promote an income generation approach to supporting farmers adopt deforestation free, sustainable climate smart agricultural practices while facilitating market access is a very positive step. If successful, this project could demonstrate best practices that can be replicated in other countries where the EUDR is being implemented. As field demonstrations commence, the project team needs to invest in documenting the lessons and best practices emerging from the overall intervention and create the spaces for sharing and dissemination to facilitate their uptake, scaling up and replication in other jurisdictions, nationally and internationally.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference of the MTE

INSERT WORD VERSION

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
1. Relevance/Coherence: The extent to which project objectives and design meet the needs of the country/recipient and continue to do so if circumstances change; the degree of alignment with country needs, UNDP, EU mandates, existing national strategies and policies, international conventions and SDGs			
Question 1.1: Has the programme responded to the country's main development priorities as defined in the country's development plans, UNDP Strategic plan, Country programme outputs and outcomes, EU mandates, SDGs, sectoral policies and international conventions?	1a. Was the project design appropriate to achieve the intended results?– how was design informed by lessons learned and best practices?	• Project documents, Inception report, • National policy documents, • EU strategic goals and objectives, • UNDP Country Programme Framework	Content and thematic analyses
	1b. Was the project design consistent with the EU priorities, and the UNDP portfolio of actions in Viet Nam?		
	1c. Was the project design consistent with the SDGs?		
Question 1.2: To what extent does the project respond to needs of beneficiaries and evolving context?	1d. Was the project design relevant to the final beneficiaries – were their perspectives taken into account?	• Interviews and FGDs with beneficiaries and stakeholders	Thematic analysis of primary data from interviews and FGDs Content analysis of documentation
	1e. Have there been any changes in the relevance of the project since the design that affect the relevance of the project objectives and goals?	• Progress reports • Project steering committee meeting reports • Grey and academic literature on national context	

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
Question 1.3: Is the programme sensitive to gender equality, women's empowerment, HRBA and inclusive?	1f. What evidence exists that the project is responsive/has been responding to relevant changes in the country and internationally (e.g passage of the EUDR)	• Annual action plans • Project steering meeting results • Annual progress reports • Key informants	Documentary Review: Interviews and FGDs with beneficiary groups and stakeholders
	1f. To what extent does the design address immediate and long-term gender equality and women empowerment concerns?	• Gender action plan • Results framework • Key informants • Beneficiaries	
	1g. To what extent does the design integrate an HRBA and a "leave no one behind" perspective?	• Project implementation strategy • Action plans • Key informants • Beneficiaries	
2. Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to achieve its stated objectives?			
Question 2.1: How has or will the project objective be achieved?	2a. To what extent and how effectively have the project objectives/outputs been achieved or are likely to be achieved? 2b. Did the project produce any positive or negative unintended/unexpected results?	• Project progress reports • Project MEL framework • Key informants • Beneficiaries	Documentary review: comparison of project targets (indicators) and level of realization Interviews and FGDs and field observations Apply content and theatic analysis Apply quantitative analysis – comparison between set targets and level of achievement of
Question 2.2: To what extent is the project contributing to gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusiveness including leave no one behind	2c. What specific actions were undertaken to achieve gender, empowerment and inclusiveness objectives? 2d. What evidence exists that the project responded to identified needs and is contributing to gender equality, women's empowerment, inclusiveness and leave no one behind?		
Question 2.3: What internal and external factors have affected	2e. Were there synergies between the project and other initiatives in the country		

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
the achievement (or not) of stated objectives and goals	and provinces? If so, to what extent and how did the project take advantage of them?		project targets and indicators at midterm
	2f. To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy performed as expected? – what is the effect on delivery?		
	2g. What is the level of participation of stakeholders and effect on achievement and ownership of project goals?		
	2h. To what extent have the management structures (project team, steering committee, …) operated as planned?		
	2i. To what extent has the project management demonstrated adaptive management?		
	2j. What contextual factors and actors contributed/constrained the results achieved and how?		
Question 2.4: To what extent have the lessons learned been documented and available to inform the next phase of implementation?	2k. What good practices and supporting factors can be identified from the first two years of implementation and how can these be scaled up in the next phase? 2l. What alternative strategies (if at all) could further enhance delivery and overcome any identified constraints?		

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
3. Efficiency: To what extent was the project delivered in an efficient manner in terms of outcomes, outputs and goals			
Question 3.1: To what extent has UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient?	3a. To what extent is project management effective, inclusive, and transparent 3b. What is UNDP's comparative advantage, added value and distinctive role in this project? 3b. What has been the contribution of project implementation partners and synergies between them	• Project document • Annual work plans • Progress reports • Steering committee meeting minutes • Project financial reports and annual expenditure verification reports • Project implementation partners • External KIs	<u>Documentary review</u> – <u>Key informant Interviews:</u> <u>Quantitative analysis -</u> Efficiency use analysis comparing burn rate and output achievement rate Thematic analysis of primary data
Question 3.2: Have project activities and outputs been delivered in a timely manner	3c. To what extent is work planning timely, inclusive and results based? 3d. Has the Project produced timely and quality reports?		
Question 3.3: To what extent was the project budget realistic and how did this impact project delivery?	3e. To what extent have project funds been available and utilized in an efficient manner 3f. What share of resources were specifically allocated to address gender, women empowerment and inclusiveness and what has been achieved? 3g. Have there been any budget adjustments and why?		
Question 3.4: Were the human and material resources	3g. Did the project team have sufficient technical, financial and human resources?		

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
sufficient in quality and quantity and allocated efficiently?	3h. What is the resource rate of the project		
4. Sustainability: To what extent are project achievements likely to continue beyond the project and what risks could constrain extension, replicability and up scaling of this project			
Question 4.1: Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period?	4a. What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or remain even after the project has ended? 4b. What specific actions have been undertaken by the project to ensure the sustenance of project gains beyond the initial period – including exit strategies?	• KII • Project reports, documents, publications, guidelines, standards etc • Lessons learned documented • Experience sharing/training workshop reports • Beneficiaries	Documentary review – Interviews: FGDs
	4c. To what extent are lessons learned documented and shared with relevant stakeholders?		
Question 4.2: What evidence exists that the national government, provincial authorities remain committed to project goals?	4d. What level of ownership has been demonstrated by the stakeholders and is this likely to continue beyond the project?		
Question 4.3: To what extent do national and local authorities and beneficiaries demonstrate ownership of gains?	4e. What are the contributions of stakeholders to project implementation? 4f. What independent actions have been undertaken by stakeholders as a result of their participation in the intervention?		
Question 4.4: What factors are likely to impact the sustenance of project achievements?	4g. What are the main risks that may affect the sustainability of the project benefits (considering financial, socio-economic,		

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
	institutional and environmental and political/governance aspects)?		
5- Gender equality and empowerment, Human rights, and disability issues: To what extent was gender equality and empowerment, human rights, leave no one behind and people with disabilities considered during design and implementation of the project?			
Question 5.1: Was gender equality and empowerment considered during design and throughout implementation?	To what extent have gender equality and women's empowerment considerations been taken into account in the design and implementation of the project, and has the project been implemented in a way that ensures equitable participation and benefits for both sexes?	Project inception report Project reports Project results framework Project stakeholder strategy Various project surveys and studies Prodoc Interviews Focus group discussions	Documentary review, qualitative thematic analysis
Question 5.2: Were human rights and Leave No One Behind considered in design and implementation	To what extent did the project apply human rights approach and ensure LNOB	Project inception report Project reports Project results framework Project stakeholder strategy Various project surveys and studies Prodoc Interviews Focus group discussions SES Screening and risk logs	Documentary review, qualitative thematic analysis
Question 5.3: Was the project inclusive, responsive to the needs of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups and took steps to ensure their participation through out implementation	To what extent were indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups involved in the project and how did the project impact them	Project inception report Project reports Project results framework Project stakeholder strategy Various project surveys and studies Prodoc Interviews Focus group discussions SES Screening and risk logs	Documentary review, qualitative thematic analysis

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Analysis methods
Question 5.4: How did the project target and reach people with disabilities	To what extent did the project target people with disability, how were they involved and what results	Project inception report Project reports Project results framework Project stakeholder strategy Various project surveys and studies Prodoc Interviews Focus group discussions SES Screening and risk logs	
6- Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards): To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?			
Question 6.1 : How did the project ensure respect of UNDP SES requirements	To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?	Prodoc Risk log SES Screening tool Annual reports	Documentary review

Annex 3. The data collection instruments (a sample for UNDP team)

The below questions are expected to serve as a discussion guide and to provide structure to the interview with the respondent. The interviewer reserves the right to ask follow-up questions as necessary.

Respondents should allocate a minimum of 1h30 minutes for these interviews, to enable consultants explore all areas of inquiry laid out in the MTE terms of reference.

Relevance/Coherence

1. Were you involved in the design of this project?
2. To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the design?
3. To what extent were perspectives of men and women and vulnerable groups involved during design?
4. What specific needs of these groups did the project seek to address?
5. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome (below as reminder)?

    - **UNDP CPD Outcome 1:** By 2026, people in Viet Nam, especially those at risk of being left behind, will contribute to, and benefit equitably from more sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive economic transformation based on innovation, entrepreneurship, enhanced productivity, competitiveness, and decent work.
    - **CPD Outcome 2: Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Environmental Sustainability**

      UNDP CPD Outcome 2: People in Viet Nam, especially those at risk of being left behind, will benefit from, and contribute to safer and cleaner environment resulting from Viet Nam's effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and resilience building, promotion of circular economy, the provision of clean and renewable energy, and the sustainable management of natural resources.
    - **UNDP CPD Outcome 3:** By 2026, people in Viet Nam, especially those at risk of being left behind, will have benefited from and have contributed to a more just, safe, and inclusive society based on improved governance, more responsive institutions, strengthened rule of law and the protection of and respect for human rights, gender equality and freedom from all forms of violence and discrimination in line with Viet Nam's international commitments.

6. Since the design of the project, until approval of the project by the EU in 2020, and to date, has anything changed in the political, economic, environment, social, technological, and legal environment that has altered the relevance of this project? if so in what ways?
7. What has the project done to respond to this?
8. To what extent has the project worked with or created synergies with other similar interventions nationally and in the provinces?

9. What in your opinion has been the value added of UNDP

Effectiveness

1. What is your overall assessment of progress?
2. In which area has the project achieved the strongest progress/achievements since inception?
3. How have these results been felt by men, women, ethnic minorities and any other vulnerable groups?
4. What would you say have been the supporting factors?
5. In which areas have there been the least progress and why?
6. What have been the constraints?
7. How has the project addressed the challenges faced?
8. What, in your opinion, still needs to be done to enhance the achievement of results while addressing constraints?
9. Please explain how the alerts generated by Terra-I are being used (or not) by stakeholders and why.
10. How is the land use planner being used?
11. How do you assess the performance of the consortium and its way of working?
12. What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
13. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
14. Please assess the participation of men, women, ethnic minorities and any other vulnerable groups?
15. What specific actions are taken to provide financial support to indigenous groups, including cooperatives and women cooperatives?
16. What is the level of participation of private sector in project activities? Financial institutions, traders, middlemen/women, insurance companies, etc
17. How likely is the project to sign collaborative agreements/MoUs with private sector/donors by end of the project? what actions have been undertaken so far?
18. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights? How satisfied are you with progress so far?
19. What specific actions/approaches is the project implementing to ensure this happens?

Efficiency

1. To what extent are project management structures operating as planned?
    1. At national level – project steering committee, project management unit within UNDP and government
    2. At provincial level – PMUs, technical units?
    3. What could be done to further strengthen performance?
2. What specific resources have been allocated to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?
3. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?

4. How do you assess resource efficiency use in this project? Are human, financial, and material resources sufficient and deployed optimally?
5. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
6. Please assess the monitoring and evaluation system of the project. how is it being used to inform project decision-making?

Sustainability

1. How likely, in your opinion, are the project achievements likely to continue beyond the project's initial period? Please explain considering financial, economic, institutional, environmental, social sustainability
2. To what extent are the national and local authorities/staff taking/showing ownership of the project? what are the challenges and what is the project doing to enhance ownership?
3. To what extent are the men, women, ethnic minorities, and other project participants showing ownership of the project? what are the challenges and what is the project doing to enhance ownership?
4. What actions is the project taking to ensure sustainability? Are any exit strategies being debated/contemplated?
5. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
6. In your opinion what are the key risks to the sustainability of this intervention? What mitigation measures could be proposed?

Annex 4a: SMART ASSESSMENT of RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*S*	*M*	*A*	*R*	*T*
This project with EU support aims at improving environmental sustainability and social inclusion and resilience of food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. In particular, it is expected to:								
1. Enhance ecosystems, including reducing loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, reducing GHG emissions	A1. Reduction of natural forest loss in the project area by the end of the project (% reduction, hectares of naturel forest preserved). --- A2. Net contribution to GHG emission reduction in the project area by the end of the project (tCO2)	Natural forest loss rate in the period 2010-2020 in the project area (total of 2 provinces) was about 20%. Business-as-usual natural forest loss is estimated at 14,000 hectares/ year. --- Emission from natural forest loss are estimated at 850 000 tCO2 per year	By the end of project, About 25000 hectares of natural forest will be preserved from the current trend of deforestation and degradation. (Natural forest loss in the 4 districts will be reduced by 70%)[60] --- Around 3 million tCO2 of Emission Reduction will be generated	√ √	√ √	? ?	? ?	√ √

[60] There is no evidence of how these figures have been reached at

2. Improve livelihoods, through inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities and women in agriculture, forest-farming and ecotourism value chains	A3. % Of total population of the 4 districts with improved livelihood - (*disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status)* --- A4. % Of marginalized population of the 4 districts area with improved livelihood (*disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status*)	19% of the population of the project area (Districts or commune?) is considered as poor; --- 28% of the marginalized population of the project area is considered as poor;	By the end of the project, 20% of the total population of the project area with improved livelihood[61] --- 35% of the total marginalized population of the project area with improved livelihood	√ √	X X	X X	X X	√ √
3. Sustain food production and improve quality, through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains.	A5. Increase of the total value generated by commodities in the project area (in % of the current value) A6. % Of total agricultural land under new sustainable management practices by the end of project	To be further assessed --- 122,500 hectares of agricultural land in the 4 pilot districts -à	By the end of the project, 25 % increase of the total commodities value in the project area[62] --- 15% of the agricultural land in the project area are supported towards sustainable practices	√ √	X X	X X	X X	√ √
OUTCOME 1: Effective governance systems including integrated land use planning and management tools and processes are established at district and provincial levels	B1. Compliance of the land use changes observed in the M&E reports with the district-level land use plans and targets --- B2. Number of value chains for which sustainability standards have been endorsed supported by full traceability systems including near real-time monitoring	Not available. To be further assessed Land cover maps to compare with LUP	80% of the land-use changes observed and reported by the provincial M&E system are aligned with the targets and allocations of the land use plan[63] --- 02 value chains[64] are piloting sustainability standards including a full traceability system and near real-time monitoring (coffee and NTFPs)	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X
OUTCOME 2: Sustainable, climate-smart, productive standardized practices are implemented for agriculture and non-timber forest products and services	B3. Number of farmers that have been supported to develop Sustainable and Climate-Smart standardized practices (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status) --- B4. Area of land where	Zero	More than 30 000 farmers are supported by the project leveraged effect --- More than 30 000 hectares are supported by the project leveraged effect[65]	√ √	√ √	√ √	X X	√ √

[61] What does livelihoods entail – income, assets acquired, jobs etc?
[62] This baseline value had not been established, the notion of value of commodities is unclear
[63] Complex
[64] How can a value chain pilot something? – actors pilot, however, complex indicators and targets
[65] Better to avoid indicators dependent on achievement of other targets – in this case mobilisation of external funding from outcome 3

	Sustainable and Climate-Smart practices have been deployed (hectares)							
OUTCOME 3 : The financial environment is enhanced with innovative mechanisms, increased funding and thriving partnerships to support transformation towards sustainable landscapes, with emphasis at provincial and district levels.	B5. Total financial volume committed/targeted towards sustainable business-models identified in Outcome 2 leveraged through the project	Zero	Total public & private financial volume leveraged through the project to support Outcome 2 reach from 15 to 25 million EURO by the end of the project [66]	√	√	X	X	√
OUTCOME 4: Sustainability and scaling up are ensured through robust coordination, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge production and dissemination, and active advocacy at regional and national levels	B6. Level of awareness and policy commitments of key stakeholders at national and provincial levels about Deforestation-free and Sustainable Landscape development approach	Zero	Deforestation-free and Sustainable Landscape development approach is well-defined, understood by related stakeholders at national and provincial levels and towards integration into relevant provincial and national planning and policy framework[67]	X	X	√	√	√
Output 1.1: An integrated land use plan, aligned with the Provincial Master Plan, is produced for each pilot district, with clear maps, targets and action plans towards sustainability and deforestation-free	C1. Number of district with a formulated and endorsed integrated land use plan including clear maps, targets and action plan towards sustainability and deforestation-free	No spatially-explicit district-level integrated plans are available	04 Districts with a spatially-explicit land-use plan formulated and 2 Districts with a land-use plan endorsed[68]	X	X	X	X	x
Output 1.2: Implementation of Master Plans in Lam Dong and Dak Nong is supported through the design and implementation of a robust cross-sector and spatialized institutional monitoring and evaluation system, serving as a control panel to track transition of landscape towards sustainability	C2. Number of M&E reports for Provincial Master Plans produced and validated by relevant authorities --- C3. % of observed land-use change events are reported in the provincial M&E reports	No M&E framework nor integrated indicators to support Master Plans are available --- n/a	04 annual M&E reports (Y3 & Y4 for the 2 provinces) --- 70% of observed land-use change events by Terra-i are reported in provincial M&E[69]	√	√	√	√	√

[66] At this phase of the project, there is little demonstrating this target will be achieved
[67] Better to state the level simply
[68] No longer relevant
[69] What's the relevance of this?

Output 1.3: Platforms for multi-stakeholders dialogue (i) between public authorities and the private sector at District level, (ii) across each main commodity supply chain, and (iii) for NTFPs are established and supported	C4. Number of effective multi-stakeholders platforms with regular meetings at least every 2 months, formulating engagement (PPI) and producing recommendations to the general public on implementation of sustainability and deforestation-free strategy	Multi stakeholders dialogue is already active and partially organized on various commodities, notably on coffee, but not specifically engaging all relevant stakeholders at the scale of the pilot districts and provinces; Effectiveness of each platform is also uneven and progress is needed in strengthening the agenda and functioning of these platforms	At least 05 multi-stakeholders platform are very effective, formulate engagement and produce recommendations	√	√	√	√	√
Output 1.4: Deforestation-free and sustainability commodity standards (incl. NTFPs) are endorsed by relevant multi-stakeholder platforms and supported by regulations	C5. Number of deforestation-free/sustainability commodity standard endorsed by relevant multi-stakeholder platforms	Past efforts to improve technical curriculum and practices for coffee and other sectors like rubber have delivered improved models, sometimes captured in national sector curriculum. However, these are not yet considered as comprehensive standards, and there is no commitment from public authorities to enforce them in collaboration with the private sector.	02 Deforestation-free /Sustainability Standard endorsed by relevant platforms (Coffee and NTFP&S) [70]	√	√	√	√	√
Output 1.5: An early-warning, transparent and inclusive framework supporting enforcement of environmental regulation and traceability of commodity value chains is developed and tested in the 4 pilot districts	C6. Efficiency and transparency of an enforcement and traceability system to track commodity value chains in the 4 pilot districts	Terra-I system is implemented in Di Linh with lower image resolution, groups of stakeholders have been trained, and information is disseminated through an online platform not yet allowing for end-users feedbacks In pilot provinces and districts, various solutions are piloted in the frame of initiatives like REDD+, coffee buyer'' supply security effort etc. But technical and financial models are scattered and	01 effective data production and sharing system linking bottom-up and top-down tools has been designed, piloted and a roadmap for full implementation endorsed by local authorities [71]	X	X	X	X	X

[70] Need to revise because of the number of commodities selected?
[71] Reformulate

		require further analysis to accelerate replication and dissemination CIAT also started to work in Lac Duong (Lam Dong province) in a project with SNV (cafe REDD+) (ended in 2020)						
Output 2.1: Most promising interventions for sustainable agriculture and NTFP&S development are prioritized and developed including technical guidelines and economic assessment	C7. Number of intervention models fully developed for sustainable agriculture and NTFP&S including technical guidelines and economical analysis	Localized information, but no comprehensive mapping of farmers types, and AEZ in the pilot districts. Economical analysis and technical guidelines of most promising models are not existing or incomplete;	Minimum 6 intervention models are fully developed by direct support of the project	√	√	√	√	√
Output 2.2: Local institutions and farmers are trained and made aware on prioritized sustainable production models	C8. Number of farmers/organizations sensitized / trained on most promising sustainable models (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status)	Training material is broadly available but tailored to specific issues, seldom providing comprehensive knowledge and building understanding on options to move farmer'' practices towards sustainability. No regular dialogue nor collaborative mechanism to engage multiple stakeholders in developing solutions to promote agroecology;	*At least 8000 Farmers trained including 30% of marginalized households *At least 300 peoples and 30 organizations regularly participate in discussion on Agroecology	√	√	√	√	√
Output 2.3: Transformation towards sustainable practices at field level are technically and financially supported	C9. Number of farmers supported to implement sustainable cash-crop production (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status) --- C10. Number of marginalized households supported to implement agroecology farming models (disaggregated by gender and ethnic origin) ---	n/a	With funding leveraged by Outcome [72]3, 12,500 (farmers) will be supported to move forwards sustainable practices in cash crop production --- 6,250 (farmers) will be supported to move forwards agroecology practices --- 6,250 (farmers) will be benefited from sustainable NTFPs	√	√	X	X	√

[72] Need to disaggregate the levels to be reached with donor funding and number to be reached with leveraged funding

	C11. Number of marginalized households supported to implement sustainable NTFPs (disaggregated by ethnic origin)							
Output 3.1: Public & Private land-use finance is mapped and increasingly aligned to support sustainable land use and climate mitigation objectives	C12. Number of collaboration agreement with public programmes/donors to align funding and support sustainable land use activities	No existing system to track public and private land-use investments and analysis of resources available for sustainable landscape. No existing collaboration with public programmes and donors (which represent 28% of planned land-use investment in central highlands)	10 MoU signed with public programmes/donors[73]	√	√	X	X	√
Output 3.2: Robust business cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national and international companies to secure deforestation-free sourcing of main cash crops and NTFP&S	C13. Number of viable business models for sustainable commodity supply chain developed and piloted C14. Number of deforestation-free sourcing cooperation agreements with national/international companies	Limited data and understanding, and no consolidated analysis of the economic viability of sustainable and standardized commodity models There has been a growing momentum in the coffee sector, however pilot MoU are very generic and there is presently limited engagement from other agricultural commodities	At least 3 Business models are robustly assessed and demonstrated 10 MoU signed with sourcing companies	√	√	√	√	√
Output 3.3: Robust financial cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national or international institutions to provide additional financial resources or insurance solutions to main agriculture and NTFP&S supply chains	C15. Number of cooperation agreements with financial institutions to provide additional financial resources to sustainable business models	Limited understanding of the financing interests and capabilities of domestic banks to finance (= financial investment) the transition towards sustainability.	2 MoU signed with financial institutions	√	√	√	√	√
Output 3.4: Innovative and effective PFES modalities are promoted, piloted and deployed in the four pilot	C16. Direct contribution of the pilot PFES mechanism to the transition towards	Existing PFES mechanism is“"rent-drive”" and is likely not to encourage	The pilot PFES mechanism is fully operational and generates significant impacts and lessons learnt [74]	X	X	X	X	X

[73] With current progress, best to revise down

[74] Indicator linked to achievement of outcome 2 goals, better to dissociate and simplify to render measurable

districts to generate additional financial volume and increase social and environmental benefits	sustainable land use practices and business models developed under outcome 2.	investments into productive practices that build sustainable and resilient livelihoods						
Output 4.1: The project is effectively implemented, safeguarded and delivers on expected targets thanks to adequate capacities to coordinate, backstop, monitor and evaluate activities and impacts (gender aggregated) at central and provincial levels, including with appropriate institutional anchorage.	C17. Effective coordination of the relevant bodies, instrument and operations; C18. The transition towards landscape sustainability aligns with and contributes to Viet Nam's national REDD+ safeguards approach	n/a Through its national REDD+ process, Vietnam has developed relevant safeguards and M&E instruments that are ready to be translated at project/ landscape level and linked.	Methodology and M&E framework for project interventions & landscape sustainability incorporate safeguards consideration	X	X	X	X	X
Output 4.2: A technical network of leading institutions at multiple levels is strenghtened and an integrated sustainable management and deforestation-free approach is defined, documented and endorsed at national level, and progressively introduced through policies, laws and regulations	C19. Level of direct contributions produced by the project to inform policies, laws and regulations in Vietnam to promote integrated land use management	The concept of integrated and sustainable land use management has emerged recently and it advocates for integrated approaches that are not actively facilitated by policies, laws and regulations in Vietnam	Contributions are provided to at least 3 relevant legal, regulatory and normative text	√	√	√	√	√

Annex 4b: Updated Results Framework

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
The broader, long-term change to which the project contributes at country, regional or sector level, in the political, social, economic and environmental global context which will stem from interventions of all relevant actors and stakeholders.	*Quantitative and/or qualitative variable that provides a simple and reliable mean to measure the achievement of the corresponding result*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s).*	*Ideally to be drawn from the partner's strategy.*			
	To be presented, when relevant, disaggregated by sex, age, urban/rural, disability, etc.	*(Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*	*(Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy)*				
This project, with EU support, aims at improving environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and the resilience of food production models and supply chains in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam. In particular, it is expected to:							
1. Enhance ecosystems, including reducing the loss and degradation of natural forests, protecting biodiversity, restoring priority ecosystems, and reducing GHG emissions.	A1. Reduction of natural forest loss in the project area by the end of the project (% reduction, hectares of natural forest preserved). --- A2. Net contribution to GHG emission reduction in the project area by the end of the project (tCO2)	The natural forest loss rate in the project area (total of 2 provinces) during the period 2010-2020 was about 20%. Business-as-usual natural forest loss is estimated at 14,000 hectares/year. --- Emissions from natural forest loss are estimated at 850,000 tCO2 per year.	By the end of the project: About 25,000 hectares of natural forest will be preserved from the current trend of deforestation and degradation. (Natural forest loss in the 4 districts will be reduced by 70%) --- Around 3 million tCO2 in reduced emissions will be generated.	NFIMAP &/FORMIS/FIP I (generated every 2 years) and related government and project reports. Need to consider links to the LEAF initiative that also works in the Central Highlands.		Annual natural forest loss in 4 districts during 2021-2022 (Based on annual forest status reports of Lam Dong and Dak Nong): Di Linh: 167 ha Lac Duong: -245 ha (natural forest area increased) Dak R'lap: 0.04 ha Dak G'long: 48.52 ha BAU scenario: total forest loss in 2	This is to be updated annually

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						provinces is 14,000ha/year, equivalent to a loss of 5,382 ha/year in the 4 districts (as total natural forest areas in the 4 districts account for 38.44% of total natural forest area of the two provinces. Compared to the baseline scenario, forest loss in 2021-2022 has been reduced by 96% (note that forest status data for 2023 is not yet available). This reduction is equivalent to 750,552 tons CO2eq emission avoided.	
2. Improve livelihoods through the inclusion of vulnerable groups - including ethnic minorities and women - in agriculture, forest-farming, and ecotourism value chains.	A3. % of total population of the 4 districts with improved livelihoods (*disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin, and vulnerability status)* --- A4. % Of marginalized population of the 4 districts area with improved livelihood (*disaggregated by*	19% of the population of the project area is considered as poor; --- 28% of the marginalized population of the project area is considered as poor.	By the end of the project, 20% of the total population of the project area have improved livelihoods. --- 35% of the total marginalized population of the project area have improved livelihoods.	Report from the Statistics Office, related government reports on agricultural and rural development, and project M&E reports.		During 2022-2023, through the operation of PPI compacts in Lam Dong province, the project provided training to 13,938 farmers, and provided non-financial supports to 2,533 farmers. A total of 11 interventions	This is to be updated annually

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
	gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status)					(agriculture and NTFPs) were developed to support farming practices in the 4 districts.	
3. Sustain food production and improve quality through improved farming practices, better organization of producers, and transparent and shortened supply chains.	A5. Increase of the total value generated by commodities in the project area (in % of the current value) A6. % of total agricultural land under new sustainable management practices by the end of the project.	To be further assessed. --- 122,500 hectares of agricultural land in the 4 pilot districts	By the end of the project, 25% increase in the total commodities value in the project area. --- 15% of the agricultural land in the project area is supported towards sustainable practices.	Report from the Statistics Office, related government report on the agricultural sector, and project M&E reports. Annual district-level socio-economic development reports.		In 2022-2023, in Di Linh district, a total of 7,103 farmers received production certifications with a total volume of certified agricultural products of 23,905 tonnes. The agricultural land areas supported towards sustainable practices: with the support of PPI compacts in Di Linh district, the area of coffee intercropped with fruit trees and other trees have increased from 20% in 2020 to 35% in 2023, the total production of fruit tree increased 30% while the total production of coffee remained stable.	This is to be updated annually

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
The main medium-term effect of the intervention focusing on behavioral and institutional changes resulting from the intervention *(It is good practice to have one specific objective only, however for large actions, other short-term outcomes can be included here)*	*(see definition above)*	*The value of the indicator(s) prior to the intervention against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.*	*The intended final value of the indicator(s).*	*Sources of information and methods used to collect and report (including who and when/how frequently).*		*Factors outside project management's control that may influence the impact-outcome(s).*	
OUTCOME 1: Effective governance systems including integrated land use planning and management tools and processes are established at district and provincial levels.	B1. Compliance of the land use changes observed in the M&E reports with the district-level land use plans and targets. --- B2. Number of value chains for which sustainability standards have been endorsed supported by full traceability systems including near real-time monitoring.	Not available. To be further assessed. Land cover maps to compare with land use planning (LUP).	80% of the land-use changes observed and reported by the provincial M&E system are aligned with the targets and allocations of the land use plan. --- 02 value chains are piloting sustainability standards including a full traceability system and near real-time monitoring (coffee and NTFPs).	Provincial M&E reports; land use plans; Standards endorsed; Traceability and near real-time monitoring via Terra-i and relevant bottom-up tools		The intended outcome is based on the assumptions that (1) the district land-use planning process of the Government covering the period of 2021-2025 is implemented without significant delay; and (2) the project would also be implemented as planned support to the land-use planning process in 2021. The above assumptions were not materialized as the project started in March 2022. Some activities under this outcome should be revised.	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						Proposed changes/revisions have been documented upon an assessment of stakeholder's capacity for integrated LUP under activity 1.1c. Two sets of criteria, coffee sustainability and deforestation-free standards and pepper sustainability and deforestation-free standards, have been drafted. The M&E framework for monitoring jurisdictional sustainability in the two provinces has been completed. The Terra-i system (near real-time forest monitoring) has been updated with baseline information and is providing warnings in 4 project districts. Two capacity building events (for	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						forest rangers and forest holders in Lam Dong and Dak Nong) have been organized. Training materials on Terra-i have also been updated. All natural forest areas in the 4 districts (approximately 250,372 ha) are under surveillance of Terra-I system.	
OUTCOME 2: Sustainable, climate-smart, productive standardized practices are implemented for agriculture and non-timber forest products and services	B3. Number of farmers that have been supported to develop sustainable and climate-smart standardized practices (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin, and vulnerability status) --- B4. Area of land where sustainable and climate-smart practices have been deployed (hectares)	Zero	More than 30,000 farmers are supported by the project's leveraged effects. --- More than 30,000 hectares are supported by the project's leveraged effects.	Project annual and final reporting		Farming systems in the pilot districts have been identified. These are coffee monocropping and coffee intercropped with pepper, avocado, durian, macadamia, as well as greenhouse vegetable-flower farming systems particular to Lac Duong district. Prioritized agricultural interventions of the project have also been identified:	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						there are four major models that consist of 11 smaller intervention models (Dak R'lap: 3; Dak Glong: 3; Di Linh: 2; and Lac Duong: 3). These interventions mostly focus on intercropping coffee and pepper with fruit trees, thus increase chances to obtain higher income and reduces production and environmental risks. Training materials for intervention models involving coffee monocropping and coffee intercropping have been drafted.	
OUTCOME 3 : The financial environment is enhanced with innovative mechanisms, increased funding, and thriving partnerships to support transformation towards sustainable landscapes, with emphasis at provincial and district levels	B5. Total financial volume committed/targeted towards the sustainable business models identified in Outcome 2 leveraged through the project	Zero	Total public & private financial volume leveraged through the project to support Outcome 2 reaches 15-25 million EUR by the end of the project	Project annual and final reporting		The project has conducted a land use financial mapping study based on a land use finance tool developed by EFI, and drafted a TOR on data collection and tracking financial investment in the land use	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						sector in the two provinces. Regarding the development of a business case, UNEP has conducted an economic and market analysis to assess the viability of the sustainable agricultural systems based on results of 2.1c and 2.1. Business case development will be intensively conducted in 2024.	
OUTCOME 4: Sustainability and scaling up are ensured through robust coordination, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge production and dissemination, and active advocacy at regional and national levels	B6. Level of awareness and policy commitments of key stakeholders at national and provincial levels about the deforestation-free and sustainable landscape development approach	Zero	The deforestation-free and sustainable landscape development approach is well-defined, understood by related stakeholders at national and provincial levels and moving towards integration into relevant provincial and national planning and policy frameworks.	Project annual and final reporting; related policy briefs and documents		Project inception workshop organized. Project Annual Review meeting (2023) organized. Project branding package developed. iLandscape inception workshops were covered by a number of English and Vietnamese news articles.	

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						Two workshops on the European Union Delegation Report (EUDR) were organized (one at the national level in February 2023 and one in Dak Nong in August 2023). The project results have been shared in national and international events, including organizing a side event at the Global Conference on Sustainable Food Systems in April 2023 in Hanoi and supporting a side event at COP28 on Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Food Systems.	
Output 1.1: An integrated land use plan, aligned with the Provincial Master Plan, is produced for each pilot district, with clear maps, targets, and action plans towards sustainability and deforestation-free	C1. Number of district with a formulated and endorsed integrated land use plan including clear maps, targets, and action plans towards sustainability and deforestation-free	No spatially explicit district-level integrated plans are available.	04 districts with a spatially explicit land-use plan formulated and 2 districts with a land use plan endorsed	Land use plans; Official endorsement by relevant authorities;	1.1c: An assessment of capacity & experiences for integrated LUP among provincial and district officials in both provinces has been conducted in 2023,	1.1c: An assessment of capacity & experiences for integrated LUP among provincial and district officials in both provinces has been conducted, with a summary report prepared. This has	1.1d and 1.1g: specific support to each district has been identified, including support to mid-term review of land use planning, integration of LUP information and feedback mechanism with

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					with a summary report prepared. 1.1e: During the year 2023 several stakeholder engagement activities were organised, aiming to improve awareness about the mapping activities and collect feedback on the map. This facilitated the acquisition of valuable insights to refine and optimize map utilization by authorities. To do so, two workshops were conducted in March, along with a stakeholder engagement field trip in August. Furthermore, additional discussions occurred with the PPMU during the July consultation workshop, and three meetings were organized with MARD and	served as input for further discussion and proposed detailed activities under 1.1d,1.1g, and other activities relating to LUP. Initial work is also underway on a guidance document related to integrated LUP for pilot districts. 1.1d and 1.1g have been delayed and are awaiting the PSC's agreement on adjusting activities. 1.1e: The crop-specific maps for targeted districts in Lam Dong and Dak Nong have been developed by CIAT, and a 1st round of consultations with local stakeholders was organized in March 2023. A stakeholder engagement field trip was organized in August 2023. The map and report on the first map of 1.1e was shared at the	district level Intelligent Operation Center (IOC) of Lac Duong and Di Linh districts, training to local citizens on LUP and LURC, methodology support on Land Use Planner

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					UNDP to formulate and agree upon an action plan for finalizing the map. As a result of these activities, supplementary data was collected to finalize the initial crop specific map. The map was developed through 40 sampling/mapping iterations, utilizing a dataset of 72,000 GPS locations in the Central Highlands, with 34,000 points located in the project districts. A comprehensive report detailing the map has been prepared and will be shared with authorities in early 2024. The incorporation of a local land use plan, once made available by local authorities, will further contextualize the information	start of 2024. When additional local base-map is available, the final map will be in Q1 of 2024. 1.1f: The land use planner tool has been developed by EFI. A training with 32 participants was organized in 2022. A report and a briefing have been produced, summarizing the main aspects of the training. For piloting the LUP at the district level for analysis of the land use plan, Dak Glong (Dak Nong) and Lac Duong (Lam Dong) were selected. During 2023, EFI collected information about the agricultural activities and land uses in both districts, and scenarios have been developed using the districts' plans as guidelines. Initial results were shared in a technical	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					provided by the map. 1.1f: During 2023, the project has collected data and developed land use scenarios using the districts' plans as guidelines. Initial results were shared in the technical workshop in Dak Nong (July 2023). Final draft is shared in the workshop in January 2024.	workshop in Dak Nong (July 2023). The final draft was shared in a workshop in January 2024.	
Output 1.2: Implementation of Master Plans in Lam Dong and Dak Nong is supported through the design and implementation of a robust cross-sector and spatialized institutional monitoring and evaluation system, serving as a control panel to track transition of landscape towards sustainability	C2. Number of M&E reports for Provincial Master Plans produced and validated by relevant authorities --- C3. % of observed land-use change events are reported in the provincial M&E reports	No M&E framework nor integrated indicators to support Master Plans are available --- n/a	04 annual M&E reports (Y3 & Y4 for the 2 provinces) --- 70% of observed land-use change events by Terra-i are reported in provincial M&E	Terra-i online platforms and provincial M&E reports	1.2a: In 2023 expert and multistakeholder consultations were carried out to formulate recommendations on a set of integrated indicators at provincial and district levels to monitor transition towards landscape sustainability in a consolidated M&E framework. Assess gaps and draft	1.2a: An advance report on advancing jurisdictional sustainability in Vietnam (M&E framework) has been completed. An initial list of 32 indicators in five areas (Environment, Social, Economic, Governance, and Legality) was drafted using available policies and strategies, which was then shortened to 23	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					associated work plan. Review existing information on sustainable land use monitoring at jurisdiction level in Vietnam and related approaches to measuring jurisdictional sustainability, through specific and comparative review of pilot experiences, province REDD+ action programme M&E, Master Plans of Lam Dong and Dak Nong and integrated land use plans of pilot districts. A technical review and legal analysis of the sustainability in both provinces was carried out that helps to develop indicators on land use, forest and commodity production. This assessment was complemented by	after consultation with local stakeholders. It includes an assessment of data availability. EFI leads the protocol and has a prototype of a web platform for M&E of indicators at the provincial level that can be used by the provincial government to follow up on their commitment towards sustainability. Other partner agencies can collaborate to tailor this platform into a district or provincial system. A final working paper entitled "Gaps in forest-risk commodities production in terms of sustainability and the feasibility for a subnational jurisdictional approach in Vietnam" is available. 1.2b: This activity requires the formalization of the	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					face-to-face discussions with local PMUs, who have reviewed the roles of stakeholders, including leaders and institutions on sustainability at the provincial scale. During different technical exchanges and calls, the methodology was shared with project partners. 1.2c: After analyzing the stakeholders in the coffee value chain in relation to future anticipated market demands and regulatory requirements regarding sustainable and zero-deforestation commodities, a series of indicators has been built by reviewing various national and regional regulations (laws and decrees),	M&E framework that was identified as a challenge by local stakeholders in both provinces (through stakeholder consultation under 1.2a undertaken by EFI). It is proposed that the M&E framework be tested within the framework of the project (managed by provincial PMUs), but this must wait for the PSC's agreement. 1.2c: A draft of the working paper entitled "Stakeholder mapping and the engagement strategy for establishing an Advisory Committee on jurisdictional sustainability in the Central Highlands, Vietnam" is available. During the first quarter of 2024, a final consultation will be needed to confirm how the data can be	

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					policies and strategies to draw an initial set of indicators, sources of information and data accessibility. With the initial draft of indicators, we conducted a series of technical meetings and consultations to tailor these indicators to the province level. 1.2d: in 2023 EFI has developed a web platform prototype for M&E of indicators as mentioned earlier	collected or produced in the jurisdiction. 1.2d: EFI has a web platform prototype for M&E of indicators that has been modified to host the data and analysis of each indicator, so the local government can use it to track the transition towards sustainability in each district. Other partner agencies can collaborate to tailor this platform into a district or provincial system.	
Output 1.3: Platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue (i) between public authorities and the private sector at the district level, (ii) across each main commodity supply chain, and (iii) for NTFPs are established and supported	C4. Number of effective multi-stakeholder platforms with regular meetings at least every 2 months, formulating engagement (PPI), and producing recommendations for the general public on the implementation of sustainability and deforestation-free strategies .	Multi-stakeholder dialogues are already active and partially organized on various commodities, notably on coffee, but not specifically engaging all relevant stakeholders at the scale of the pilot districts and provinces. Effectiveness of each platform is also uneven and progress is needed in strengthening the agenda and functioning of these platforms.	At least 05 multi-stakeholder platforms are very effective, formulate engagement, and produce recommendations	Trimestrial platforms reports; publications/ statements to the general public; PPI endorsed	1.3a: In 2023, the operation of 2 PPI compacts in Lac Duong and Di Linh were attributable to the following activities (more details provided in the enclosed reports for Lac Duong and Di Linh): - Supporting private companies (LDC ACOM, Intimex My	1.3a: In Lam Dong, 2 PPI compacts in Di Linh and Lac Duong were signed and have been implemented since quarter 4 of 2022 with 5 meetings of PPI compact Steering Committee organized to date. Key results of PPI compact operations in Lam Dong since 2022 include:	2 PPI compacts in Dak Nong have been established 2 commodities identified: durian and macadamia

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					Phuong, etc.) in their operations in the district - Conducting field surveys on coffee intercropping in communes in communes that are part of PPI compacts - Collecting baseline data of farming households using FarmerSurvey tool. - Providing TOT for extension workers and key farmers; - Providing lawnmowers and coffee seedlings/fruit tree seedlings to famers - Conducting study tours on agroforestry techniques and low emission coffee production - Organizing quarterly PPI compacts meetings - Providing inputs to EUDR action plan of Lam Dong provinces In Dak Nong province, a multi-	1. Number of farmers and trainers in training: 13,938 people 2. Number of farmers accessing non-financial inputs and services: 2,533 farmers 3. Number of supply chain partners receiving technical support: 50 people 4. Number of farmers of certification standards: 7099 farmers 5. Purchased Volume purchased from farmers according to certified standards: 38,269 tons of coffee beans 6. Completion of the framework of an action plan for EUDR with the consensus of Lac Duong DPC,	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					stakeholder workshop was organized in April 2023 to introduce PPI compacts to stakeholders in Dak R'lap district, and a study tour was organized in October 2023 for Dak Nong's PPMU and DARD to visit successful PPI models in Dak Lak and Lam Dong provinces. 1.3b: In 2023, in order to identify 2 commodities (in addition to coffee and pepper), two field surveys and one national workshop was organized. The final report will be completed in April 2024.	Di Linh DPC, and stakeholders piloting in Di Linh District. In Dak Nong, the project has conducted 5 consultation meetings / workshops with Dak R'lap and Dak Glong, DPCs and Intimex Group, and some coffee middlemen. As a result, Intimex Group has a plan to invest in Dak R'lap's PPI Compact. A MOU with private partners was developed and will be signed in Q1 2024. 1.3b: The identification of the other two commodities (in addition to coffee and pepper) within the project framework is being carried out, and a consultation workshop was organized in the fourth quarter of 2023. A report on criteria of	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						commodities selection and support has been developed. Coffee and pepper commodity platforms, TOR for proposals of Platform, and work plans for the 2 commodities (coffee and pepper) with mechanisms of operation have been drafted. IDH is working with the MARD consultant team to process this output, which is expected to be completed in April 2024.	
Output 1.4: Deforestation-free and sustainability commodity standards (incl. NTFPs) are endorsed by relevant multi-stakeholder platforms and supported by regulations	C5. Number of deforestation-free/ sustainability commodity standards endorsed by relevant multi-stakeholder platforms	Past efforts to improve technical curricula and practices for coffee and other sectors like rubber have delivered improved models, which have sometimes been captured in national sector curricula. However, these are not yet considered as comprehensive standards, and there is no commitment from public authorities to enforce them in collaboration with the private sector.	02 Deforestation-free /sustainability standards endorsed by relevant platforms (coffee and NTFP&S)	Standard documents	Both 1.4a and 1.4b started in 2023, thus 2023 progress of these activities is the same to the reported cumulative progress.	1.4a: Two draft proposals for coffee sustainability and deforestation-free standards and pepper sustainability and deforestation-free standards have been compiled, and are waiting for the consultation process with relevant partners. The completed draft of criteria will be	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						presented in Q1 2024. This, however, has been slow compared to the initial plan. 1.4b: The development of criteria for NTFP&S has started. One mission (to two provinces) and one workshop (in Da Lat) were organized to collect local information and perspectives on NTFP&S development.	
Output 1.5: An early-warning, transparent and inclusive framework supporting enforcement of environmental regulation and traceability of commodity value chains is developed and tested in the 4 pilot districts	C6. Efficiency and transparency of an enforcement and traceability system to track commodity value chains in the 4 pilot districts	The Terra-i system is being implemented in Di Linh with lower image resolution, groups of stakeholders have been trained, and information is being disseminated through an online platform (although it does not yet allow for end-user feedback). In pilot provinces and districts, various solutions are being piloted in the frame of initiatives like REDD+, coffee buyer supply security efforts, etc Technical and financial models are scattered,	01 effective data production and sharing system linking bottom-up and top-down tools has been designed and piloted, and a roadmap for full implementation has been endorsed by local authorities	Terra-i online platform; Concept note of the overall system and its individual components; Roadmap endorsed by MARD	1.5a. Within Activity 1.5a, there are two main sub-activities within 2023: ● Satellite images are regularly downloaded and pre-processed every two weeks as they are available from image provider (ESA). Input data to the model was updated when forest maps from Dak Nong	1.5a The activity is on track. ● Regular satellite image downloading/updating and pre-processing: every two weeks as new images are available from image provider (ESA); ● Deforestation alerts are published on the Terra-i Vietnam website: (most recently in 12/2023);	1.5c. Report on bottom up data collection has been completed

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		however, and require further analysis to accelerate replication and dissemination. CIAT also started to work in Lac Duong (Lam Dong province) in a project with SNV (cafe REDD+) (ended in 2020).			were provided. Model calibration is a continuous process with new base maps (when available) and indoor checking of historical alerts using high resolution satellite data (from Google Earth Pro). The latest deforestation alerts up to December 2023 are updated on the Terra-i Vietnam website. ● Two intensive capacity building workshops for technical staff involved in forest monitoring from two provinces were held in August and November 2023. The procedure of operating the	● Two intensive capacity-building workshops focusing on technical capacity to operate and run the Terra-i system were held in August and November 2023. Ten technical staff from forest protection departments, forest companies, and other relevant stakeholders from two provinces participated. 1.5b The strengths and weaknesses of the Terra-i system are being assessed, including reviewing information-gathering activities from the grassroots level in two provinces, and a roadmap for integrating Terra-i with the local forest monitoring and	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					Terra-i system, from initial setups including software installation to step-by-step satellite image processing and alerts producing, was introduced and participants had hands-on practice using actual data on the project study areas. 1.5b. In 2023 the assessment of Terra-I and bottom up data collection was carried out with the following activities: (1) one field trip to Lam Dong and Dak Nong to assess the accuracy of Terra-I alerts and understand existing data collection mechanisms in the two provinces; (2) desk-work to	surveillance system is being developed. A field survey in the two provinces took place in May 2023. The assessment report is expected to be available in the first quarter of 2024. The project also supports the Provincial Project Management Board of Lam Dong province in preparing for the implementation of EUDR regulations with the provision of satellite imagery in the Di Linh and Lac Duong districts of Lam Dong province with high-quality optical satellite images from the SPOT 6/7 project (Airbus/France) before the EUDR cut-off date of December 31, 2020.	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					verify Terra-I algorithm and base data; (3) Attendance and interview of trainee of Terra-I training events. In addition, the project also support PMU Lam Dong to start purchasing satellite imagery for Di Linh and Lac Duong that will serve province's action plan to comply with EUDR		
Output 2.1: Most promising interventions for sustainable agriculture and NTFP&S development are prioritized and developed including technical guidelines and economic assessments	C7. Number of intervention models fully developed for sustainable agriculture and NTFP&S including technical guidelines and economical analysis	Localized information, but no comprehensive mapping of farmers types and agro-ecological zoning (AEZ) in the pilot districts. Economic analysis and technical guidelines for the most promising models are non existent or incomplete.	Minimum 6 intervention models are fully developed with the direct support of the project.	Reports, investment briefs	2.1b: A systematic review of policies and regulations related to Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and implementation status of those policies and regulations in Lam Dong and Dak Nong were conducted in Q3 of 2023 through desk studies and key informant	2.1a: A full-time agricultural commodity expert has been recruited and deployed for the execution of project activities. 2.1b: Based on the classification survey of households and agricultural farming systems in 300 households in the province in the fourth quarter of 2022 (conducted by	

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					interviews with 19 relevant stakeholders in the two provinces. The review report uncovered both drivers and barriers to NTFPs development in the project locations, and provided practical recommendations for consideration of follow-up interventions of this project in each location. 2.1c: Based on the results of 2.1b survey, a more interactive and in-depth stakeholder engagement survey was conducted during Q2-3 of 2023 with 389 stakeholders representing government agencies from provincial to commune levels, research institutes, private sector companies and selected farmers of	CIAT), a consultation was held in March 2023 to gather input from relevant stakeholders on the survey results. They also contributed opinions to the draft technical report. The draft report focuses on the farming systems in the pilot districts (surveying over 600 households in the project's 4 districts) and identifies key farming systems, including single-crop coffee, coffee intercropped with pepper, coffee with avocado, coffee with durian, coffee with macadamia, and greenhouse vegetable-flower farming systems in Lac Duong district. The report indicates the distribution of these farming systems in the project districts based on "agricultural ecological zones" (mainly classified by	

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					the identified farming systems in the four project districts. Findings from this survey provided further insights of context-specific information regarding agro-ecological zones (AEZs), distribution of main commodity crops and cropping systems across the identified AEZs; characteristics of farming systems and farmer typologies in the studied locations; current situation of the NTFP&S; and specific challenges and needs of different farm households in the project locations. 2.1d: Considering the feasibility of economic analysis from the prioritized list of intervention models, 8 intervention	altitude) and household groups (by ethnicity). CIAT has also drafted a report highlighting findings and recommendations from policy reviews and on-site surveys for the development of sustainable land use and forest service activities in the two districts. 2.1c: CIAT collaborated with PPMUs and district-level authorities to conduct a survey in May-June 2023 and reported the results in a consultation workshop in July 2023. The PMU, PPMUs and project stakeholders have provided feedback on the report classifying priority intervention models for various activities. Currently, CIAT has the final draft of the report. The report is based on in-depth	

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					models were included in 2.1d survey and Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) in 2023. These include: 2 intervention models in Dak R'Lap district; 3 models in Dak Glong; 1 model in Di Linh; and 2 models in Lac Duong district (see details in 2.1c report). This survey was conducted between August and September 2023 in the four project districts with the participation of 521 individual farmers who represent typical farming systems in the studied locations. Initial BCA results have been completed for the first four models. A full BCA report of the 8 selected intervention models is expected to be completed in	interviews with 300 households, 67 officials in the project area, and 12 representatives from research institutes and companies. The report proposes four major models, including 11 smaller intervention models (Dak R'lap: 3; Dak Glong: 3; Di Linh: 2; and Lac Duong: 3). 2.1d: Based on the results of 2.1c, CIAT conducted a household survey in September 2023, aiming to generate a comprehensive economic analysis and technical guidance report. Out of 11 intervention models, eight models can have economic analysis. CIAT will present the preliminary results of 4 intervention models at a consultation workshop in January 2024 to gather	

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					the first quarter of 2024, and will be finalized by mid 2024 after receiving comments and feedback from PMU, PPMUs and partners. This will provide recommendations for selection of the most cost-effective interventions from the economic standpoint. A policy brief will also be produced and shared with the local governments.. 2.1e: Two field trips were conducted in March and in May-June 2023. A draft report that outline the methodology and evaluation tools was developed and will be shared with project stakeholders on January 2024.	feedback from stakeholders, before consolidating data and analysis of 4 additional intervention models. The final report is expected at the end of Q2 2024. 2.1e: A UNDP consultant conducted field surveys together with CIAT and developed a draft report reviewing agro-ecology concepts and practices, identifying suitable indicators for agro-ecological models, determining models within the project area, and establishing collaboration mechanisms among stakeholders for implementing and testing them in the field from 2024. The consultation will be reported at a workshop in January 2024.	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
Output 2.2: Local institutions and farmers are trained and made aware on prioritized sustainable production models	C8. Number of farmers/organizations sensitized / trained on most promising sustainable models (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status)	Training material is broadly available but tailored to specific issues, seldom providing comprehensive knowledge and building understanding on options to move farmers' practices towards sustainability. No regular dialogue or collaborative mechanisms exist to engage multiple stakeholders in developing solutions to promote agroecology.	*At least 8,000 farmers trained, 30% being marginalized households	Training materials; Awareness /training event reports	2.2a Activities of 2.2a started in 2023, thus 2023 progress of the activity is the same to the reported cumulative progress.	2.2a: A training document on sustainable models (outputs from 2.1c) is under development. It includes 3 parts: 1. "A guide to sustainable coffee farming towards agroecological farming and carbon emission reduction - Robusta"; 2. "A guide to Robusta coffee intercropping"; 3. "A guide to sustainable coffee farming towards agroecological farming and carbon emission reduction - Arabica". The draft of parts 1&2 has been completed, consultations will be conducted in January 2024, and the report will be completed in Q1 2024. The TOR of part 3 under	A workshop on agroecology development in Central Highlands was organized Part 1 and Part 2 are under endorsement

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						development and a contract will be signed with a consultant to compile it . The training courses will be conducted in Di Linh, Lac Duong District, and Dak Nong Province in Q2, 2024. 80 TOT trainers and 1,200 farmers are expected .	
Output 2.3: Transformation towards sustainable practices at field level are technically and financially supported	C9. Number of farmers supported to implement sustainable cash-crop production (disaggregated by gender, ethnic origin and vulnerability status) --- C10. Number of marginalized households supported to implement agroecology farming models (disaggregated by gender and ethnic origin) --- C11. Number of marginalized households supported to implement sustainable NTFPs (disaggregated by ethnic origin)	n/a	With funding leveraged by Outcome 3, 12,500 (farmers) will be supported to move forwards sustainable practices in cash crop production --- 6,250 (farmers) will be supported to move forward agroecology practices --- 6,250 (farmers) will benefit from sustainable NTFPs	Project reporting		Activities 2.3a, 2.3b, and 2.3c under Output 2.3 are delayed as according to the project document, activity 2.3a requires output 1.1, which is also largely delayed. A proposal to the PSC on revising the project document (to leave out output 1.1 in 2.3) has been submitted and is awaiting the PSC's agreement on adjusting activities. Activity 2.3d: The MARD PMU recruited a consultant and	2.3b and 2.3c: households who will receive support for developing sustainable and agroecological modelshave been identified in both Lam Dong and Dak Nong province, consultant's reports on this have been approved by the province 2.3d: NTFPs models have been identified

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						organized a consultation workshop on NTFP development in Lam Dong in November 2023, based on the report constructing the NTFP models after a field survey in October 2023.	
Output 3.1: Public & Private land-use finance is mapped and increasingly aligned to support sustainable land use and climate mitigation objectives	C12. Number of collaboration agreements with public programmes/ donors to align funding and support sustainable land use activities	No existing system to track public and private land use investments and analysis of resources available for sustainable landscape. No existing collaboration with public programmes and donors (which represent 28% of planned land use investment in the Central Highlands)	10 MoU signed with public programmes/donors	MoUs	3.1a: In 2023, two field surveys and a number of stakeholder consultation workshops were organized to track financial flows in land use sector in Lam Dong and Dak Nong provinces. The draft report is available from January 2024. 3.1b:Due to the sensitivity of the requested data and the limited initial understanding of this activity, it has been challenging to approach local state actors and convince them to cooperate with	EFI has produced an initial land use financial mapping study following the guidance of the Land Use Finance Tool of EFI, and the methodology and lessons learnt from previous studies such as: the Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review supported by the UNDP and the World Bank, the Planned Public Investment Related to Land-Use in the Central Highlands region of Vietnam 2016-2020 supported by EFI, and the Biodiversity Expenditure Review 2011-2015	

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					providing financial data. With the support of UNDP, EFI has approached both PPMUs to clarify the concepts, goals and methodology used in the land use financial mapping, clarifying that the data will be kept confidential. As a result, PPMUs have decided to support EFI and UNDP to carry on this activity. The typology validation was completed in 2023. The topology was sent, via PPUMs, to identified local departments and agencies (i.e., DARD, DONRE, DPI, PFDF, etc.). This feedback on the typology helps to adjust definitions/concepts to suit the specific conditions of each province best. Some departments and	supported by the UNDP. The implementation plan, updated to 2023 is formulated.	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					agencies of both provinces (i.e., Lam Dong PPMU, Lam Dong DARD, Lam Dong PFDF, Dak Nong PPMU, Dak Nong FPDF, etc.) sent their comments, while others actively commented the report. 3.1c: In 2023, EFI has produced periodic report with key findings and recommendations. The final results will be shared in the first quarter of 2024.		
Output 3.2: Robust business cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national and international companies to secure deforestation-free sourcing of main cash crops and NTFP&S	C13. Number of viable business models for sustainable commodity supply chain developed and piloted C14. Number of deforestation-free sourcing cooperation agreements with national/international companies	Limited data and understanding, and no consolidated analysis of the economic viability of sustainable and standardized commodity models. There has been a growing momentum in the coffee sector, but pilot MoUs are very generic and there is presently limited	At least 3 business models are robustly assessed and demonstrated 10 MoUs signed with sourcing companies	Business cases	3.2a: Most activities start in 2023 according to the project document. Business case development in outcome 3 needs to occur after technologies and models have been prioritized in outcome 2.	3.2a: UNEP has started an economic and market analysis to assess the viability of sustainable agricultural systems based on results of 2.1c and 2.1d. This activity is expected to be completed in Q1 2024, and will be followed by	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
		engagement from other agricultural commodities.				business case development.	
Output 3.3: Robust financial cases are developed and cooperation agreements are signed and implemented with national or international institutions to provide additional financial resources or insurance solutions to main agriculture and NTFP&S supply chains	C15. Number of cooperation agreements with financial institutions to provide additional financial resources to sustainable business models	Limited understanding of the financing interests and capabilities of domestic banks to finance (= financially invest in) the transition towards sustainability.	2 MoU signed with financial institutions	MoUs	3.3a: Activities of 3.3a started in 2023, thus 2023 progress of the activity is the same to the reported cumulative progress.	3.3a: UNEP has collaborated with EFI and IDH to conduct initial surveys (combined with Activity 3.2a) and a baseline assessment of financing options within and outside of Vietnam for sustainable agricultural systems and NBS in commodity value chains in Viet Nam. A report is expected in Q2 2024.	
Output 3.4: Innovative and effective PFES modalities are promoted, piloted and deployed in the four pilot districts to generate additional financial volume and increase social and environmental benefits	C16. Direct contribution of the pilot PFES mechanism to the transition towards sustainable land use practices and business models developed under outcome 2.	Existing PFES mechanism is " rent-drive" and is likely not to encourage investments into productive practices that build sustainable and resilient livelihoods	The pilot PFES mechanism is fully operational and generates significant impacts and lessons learnt	Final pilot PFES assessment, and independent evaluation;	3.4a: Activities of 3.3a started in 2023, thus 2023 progress of the activity is the same to the reported cumulative progress.	3.4a: On-site surveys were conducted in two provinces in October 2023. A consultation workshop among relevant stakeholders was organized in Hanoi in November 2023 to review challenges and opportunities for expanding and improving the revenue of PFES facilitated by the project. The results	One workshop on 3.4a organized TOR for 3.4b has been developed to develop pilot models on PFES in 4 districts

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						of activity 3.4a will serve as inputs for subsequent activities under output 3.4 (activities 3.4b and 3.4c), which will be implemented in 2024. 3.4b: Delayed, waiting for results of 3.4a. 3.4c: Delayed, waiting for results of 3.4a and 3.4b	
Output 4.1: The project is effectively implemented, safeguarded and delivers on expected targets thanks to adequate capacities to coordinate, backstop, monitor and evaluate activities and impacts (with gender aggregated) at central and provincial levels, including with appropriate institutional anchorage	C17. Effective coordination of the relevant bodies, instrument and operations; C18. The transition towards landscape sustainability aligns with and contributes to Viet Nam's national REDD+ safeguards approach	n/a Through its national REDD+ process, Vietnam has developed relevant safeguards and M&E instruments that are ready to be translated at project/ landscape level and linked.	Methodology and M&E framework for project interventions & landscape sustainability incorporate safeguards consideration	Annotated review of manual/ operational plans for LUPs; of standards as part of due diligence; materials for training and safeguards operational guidance; record of safeguards relevant information/indicators; refined sections of SIS	4.1c: in 2023, UNEP has conducted a review on REDD+ in Central Highlands and provided a brief on REDD+ developments relevant to various project activities.	4.1c: A number of coordination meetings/annual review workshops/travel were organized. Comments provided on review of coffee sustainability/legal framework.Inputs also provided on the draft sustainability framework indicators (e.g. considering safeguard linkages) A review of REDD+ related initiatives, focused on those relevant to the Central Highlands,	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						was begun in 2023, with a first draft brief available. More information on the proposed LEAF program is needed to add to this review.	
Output 4.2: A technical network of leading institutions at multiple levels is strengthened and an integrated sustainable management and deforestation-free approach is defined, documented and endorsed at national level, and progressively introduced through policies, laws and regulations	C19. Level of direct contributions produced by the project to inform policies, laws and regulations in Vietnam to promote integrated land use management	The concept of integrated and sustainable land use management has emerged recently and it advocates for integrated approaches that are not actively facilitated by policies, laws and regulations in Vietnam	Contributions are provided to at least 3 relevant legal, regulatory and normative texts	Annual progress reports Policy support report;	In 2023, two workshops on the European Union Delegation Report (EUDR) were organized (one at the national level in February 2023 and one in Dak Nong in August 2023). The project results have been shared in national and international events, including organizing a side event at the Global Conference on Sustainable Food Systems in April 2023 in Hanoi and supporting a side event at COP 28 on Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Food Systems. Also in 2023, the KAP study was	Project Inception Workshop organized; A technical workshop on deforestation free production and commercialization organized. Project branding package developed. iLandscape inception workshops covered by 7 English news articles and 15 Vietnamese news articles. iLandscape was tweeted about its methods (Land use planning, PPI compact, Terra-i) to solve the areas' issue for better landscape management. Two workshops on the European Union Delegation Report (EUDR) were organized (one at	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
					started and the report is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2024.	the national level in February 2023 and one in Dak Nong in August 2023). The project results have been shared in national and international events, including organizing a side event at the Global Conference on Sustainable Food Systems in April 2023 in Hanoi and supporting a side event at COP 28 on Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Food Systems. In 2023, the project continued with the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) Baseline Study of project stakeholders (farmers, businesses, and the Government) about deforestation-free jurisdiction and documenting the project's activities through visualization. The project was	

Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)*	*Target (value & reference year)*	*Source and means of verification*	*Progress in 2023*	*Cumulative progress to 31 December 2023*	*UPDATE TO JUNE 2024*
						highlighted in 55 national newspapers with more than 1.2 million reads. The project got more than 14K reaches and engagements through social media channels.	

Annex 5. MTE contributors and sites of interview

No.	Contributors	Organization	Sites	Notes (Male/Female, FGD)
1	Do Trong Hoan	UNDP in Vietnam	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
2	Han Thi Ngan	Forestry Department (MARD) and PMU (MARD)	Hanoi, Vietnam	F
3	Le Ngoc Nam	Department of Horticulture (MARD)	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
4	Tran Quang Bao	Department of Forestry (MARD)	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
5	Mac Tuyet Nga	IDH	Hanoi, Vietnam	F
6	Cornelis Swan	CIAT	Hanoi, Vietnam	F
7	Thibaud Vantalon	CIAT	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
8	Thuy Nguyen	CIAT	Hanoi, Vietnam	F
9	Tuan Ha	CIAT	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
10	Carlos Riano	EFI	Kuala Lumpur	M
11	Thanh Phuong Nguyen	UNEP	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
12	Charlotte Hicks	WCMC		F
13	Hoang Thanh	European Union Delegation to Vietnam	Hanoi, Vietnam	M
14	Le Van Trung	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU of Lam Dong province	Da Lat City, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
15	Hoang Xuan Hai	Lac Duong District People's Committee/PPMU (Department of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development)	Lac Duong District, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
16	Vo Ngoc Quyen	ACOM Company (coffee exporter)	Lac Duong, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
17	Vo Duy Giao	ACOM Company (coffee exporter)	Lac Duong, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M

No.	Contributors	Organization	Sites	Notes (Male/Female, FGD)
18	Bonner Cil Da Nim,	CPC Lat commune (Chairperson)	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
19	Le Huu Hung	Farmers' Association, Fatherland Front, Women's Association of Lat Commune People's Committee	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 1
20	Ro Ong Ka Chuong	Farmers' Association, Fatherland Front, Women's Association of Lat Commune People's Committee	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	F, FGD 1
21	Liem Hot Ka Hiem	Farmers' Association, Fatherland Front, Women's Association of Lat Commune People's Committee	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	F, FGD 1
22	Ra Ul Ka Giel	Head of Tan Tien 1 village	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 2
23	Ko Sa Guin	Deputy leader of the village youth union	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 2
24	Lo Mu Gio Ra	Coffee farmers	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 2
25	Lieng Gra Ha Hoa	Da Nghit village head	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 2
26	Cil Ha Sit	Village Veterans' Association	Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 2
27	Vu Hong Long	Di Linh District People's Committee (FARD)	Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
28	Tran Dinh Hung	Di Linh District People's Committee (FARD)	Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M
29	K'Brel	Bao Thuan Commune People's Committee and organizations (vice president)	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 3
30	Ka Boi	Bao Thuan Commune People's Committee and organizations	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 3

No.	Contributors	Organization	Sites	Notes (Male/Female, FGD)
31	Ka brao	Bao Thuan Commune People's Committee and organizations	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 3
32	Nguyen The Phong	Bao Thuan Commune People's Committee and organizations	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 3
33	Villager 1	Head of Kalatangu village	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 4
34	Villager 2	Village women's association	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	F, FGD 4
35	Villager 3	Kalatangu village	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 4
36	Villager 4	Kalatangu village	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 4
37	Villager 5	Kalatangu village	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 4
38	Villager 6	Representative of WA	Bao Thuan commune, Di Linh district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 4
39	Ha Dang	PPI Compact farmer group	Da Nhim commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 5
40	Ha Biet	PPI Compact farmer group	Da Nhim commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 5

No.	Contributors	Organization	Sites	Notes (Male/Female, FGD)
41	Le Quang Dan (Deputy Director)	Dak Nong Provincial People's Committee/Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 6
42	Tran Van Linh	Forest Protection Department/Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 6
43	Le Kim Minh	Forest Protection Department/Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	F, FGD 6
44	Nguyen Cao Cuong	Forest Protection Department/Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 6
45	Nguyen Chi Phuc	Department of Horticulture/Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M, FGD 6
46	Vu Trong Tai	Dak R'Lap District People's Committee/Consultant to Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU	Dak R'Lap district, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M
47	Tran Quoc Thang	Dak R'Lap District People's Committee/Consultant to Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU	Dak R'Lap district, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M
48	Hoang Van Dong	Dak G'Long District People's Committee/Consultant to	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M

No.	Contributors	Organization	Sites	Notes (Male/Female, FGD)
		Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU		
49	Ha Viet Dung	Dak G'Long District People's Committee/Consultant to Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/PPMU	Gia Nghia city, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	M

Annex 6: Pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation signed by evaluators.

Annex 7: List of documents consulted

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