Independent Interim Evaluation of Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South- Central Coast regions of Viet Nam

FP125 – Viet Nam Quantum ID 00101965 (Atlas ID 00098747)

Submitted to: UNDP Viet Nam
Central Office for Water Resources Projects (CPO)/Ministry of Agriculture and Development (MARD)

Submitted by: Ellen Woodley, Liana Environmental Consulting
Pham Quang Nam

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Project/Outcome Information

Project/Outcome Title:	Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam (SACCR Project)
Atlas/Quantum ID	00098747/ 00101965 (UNDP PIMS 6117)
Corporate outcome and output	Contributing to: **Country Programme Outcome #2**: Low-carbon, resilience and environmentally sustainable development **UNDP SP Outcome**: **UNDAF Outcome 2.1.** Low-carbon, climate and disaster resilient development: By 2021, Viet Nam has accelerated its transition to sustainable development and green growth towards a low-carbon economy and enhanced its adaptation and resilience to climate change and natural disasters, with a focus on empowering the poor and vulnerable groups. **Outcome 2.2**: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment: By 2021, Viet Nam has enhanced sustainable management of natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystem services and improved the quality of the environment, while contributing to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.
Evaluation time frame	9 April to 4 August 2024
Country	Viet Nam
Region	Central Highlands and South-central coast regions
Date project document signed	28 May 2024
Project dates	Start date: 9 June 2020 (FAA Effectiveness) End date: 9 June 2026
Total committed budget	USD **138,286,686** in which GCF: USD 30,205,367 and Co-finance: USD 108,081,319
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 24,690,570 in which GCF: 4,710,974.08 and Co-finance: USD 19,979,596
Funding Source	Green Climate Fund (GCF)
Implementing Party	Central Office for Water Resources Projects (CPO)/Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
Responsible Parties	Provincial People's Committee (PPC) / Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of the five provinces, namely of Dak Lak, Dak, Nong, Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, and Khanh Hoa
Final/midterm review/ other	Midterm Evaluation
Period under evaluation	June 2021 - June 2024
Evaluators	Ellen Woodley and Pham Quang Nam
Evaluators email addresses	woodleyej@gmail.com namtuvan2007@gmail.com
Evaluation dates	8 April 2024 to 9 August 2024

i. Acknowledgements

The mid-term review of the project *Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam* was efficiently and expertly facilitated by the UNDP project team, with special mention to Dung Le Ngoc, who was always there for support when needed. Thank you to the rest of the team at UNDP as well for our initial meeting and the thorough debrief after the field consultations. We also want to thank MARD and the project management units at the central level, provincial, district and commune levels of Dak Lak and Ninh Thuan, the PPMU of Khanh Hoa as well as the two regional advisors for hosting the MTR team during their field consultations in from 12-20 June 2024. The draft version of the MTR report received detailed and valuable input in the form of comments from UNDP, the CPMU, the five PPMUs as well as other key stakeholders.

1 Executive Summary

Description of Project

Viet Nam is greatly affected by climate change impacts. Highlands and coastal areas are particularly disaster prone and highly vulnerable to climate change-related events that are affecting the lives and livelihoods of communities, severely affecting water security and agricultural productivity. Women play a lead role in water security and household level resilience to climate change.

The "Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam" (SACCR Project) aims to empower vulnerable smallholder farmers in five provinces of the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam. The project targets the most vulnerable – particularly women and ethnic minority farmers - to manage increasing climate risks to agricultural production. To achieve its objective, the project set out to enable smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change-driven rainfall variability and drought through the implementation of two inter-linked outputs and their associated activities:

Output 1: Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts and **Output 2**: Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture and access to climate information, finance, and markets.

The purpose of the Mid-term Review (MTR[1]) is to assess progress towards the achievement of the objectives and two outputs of the project. The MTR also reviews the project's strategy and risks to sustainability and provides an assessment of the project's successes and challenges at midterm with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on track to achieve its intended results.

Approach and Methods: The mid-term evaluation was conducted from 18 April 2024 to September 2024, with the final submission of the final report on early September 2024. Field consultations took place from 10-20 June. The approach used for the MTR was participatory, involving many key stakeholders from the national to the commune level, and consultative, working closely with UNDP and MARD to ensure the process met the required guidelines and produced a review that is of utility to them and other stakeholders. The MTR was conducted by a team of two independent consultants, one national and one international.

The methods of data collection included a thorough desk review of project documents, provided by UNDP, as well as field consultations which involved interviews of more than 100 people ranging from national, district and commune level governments as well as women and men smallholder farmer beneficiaries. Data collected were qualitative and data analysis was based on a trends analysis of transcribed interview data. The MTR adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNDP Evaluation Policy, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines as well as GCF's Evaluation Guidelines. It assessed the program's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, progress toward impacts and program management, as well as cross cutting issues such as Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and gender mainstreaming.

Project Progress Summary

The SACCR project has encountered significant challenges associated with delays from co-financing Water Efficiency Improvement in Drought-Affected Provinces Project (WEIDAP) activities, impacting the construction of mainline irrigation works (SACCR Activity 1.1) and the construction of last-mile connections (SACCR Activity 1.2) for smallholder farmers. Other delays impacting the SACCR project include changes to Viet Nam's Overseas Development

[1] also called Interim Evaluation or IE

Assistance (ODA) management legal framework which has contributed to greater decentralization, COVID-19 restrictions and GoV protocols.

Mitigations applied by the SACCR project include accelerating other project activities, restructuring of the project in Khanh Hoa province, organizing joint WEIDAP-SACCR monitoring missions to accelerate implementation, and closely monitoring WEIDAP progress. As WEIDAP has begun to accelerate implementation, SACCR project has also moved forward on design and construction of last mile connections for smallholder farmers.

However, considering the project activities completed to date the SACCR project is significantly behind schedule. The remaining two years of the project may not be sufficient to complete all activities in a meaningful and sustainable manner and to implement an orderly exit strategy that ensures sustainability.

Despite all the challenges, the project has achieved a number of accomplishments. The most notable achievements at midterm are the rehabilitation and construction of ponds for irrigation and the Farmer Field Schools that reached thousands of farmers and facilitated the learning of new agricultural skills in soil nutrient and moisture retention and other Climate Resilient techniques as well as skills to enable greater access to credit and markets.

Another noteworthy accomplishment of the project at midterm is the inclusion of gender into project design, implementation and monitoring as well as the benefits accrued to several of Viet Nam 's ethnic minority populations. Most of the activities have exceeded the GAP targets for women and ethnic minorities. This represents a significant achievement.

Summary of Conclusions

Based on the analysis that has been completed, the MTR has identified factors that indicate the SACCR project has the potential for successful and sustainable completion of several project activities that can provide significant and much needed benefits to project beneficiaries and enhance the capacity for the government of Viet Nam to address the larger need within the targeted highland and coastal provinces:

i) The SACCR project is well aligned with Viet Nam 's commitment to climate change adaptation, and it is responding to a critical and identified need for water security and improved agricultural practices for climate change adaptation for smallholder farmers.

ii) The project design is suitable and the analysis of the SACCR project Theory of Change (ToC) demonstrates a logical framework that supports several appropriate activities. Monitoring and Evaluation are thorough and efficient, generating data regularly to ensure adaptive management is possible.

iii) A strong project management structure is in place, including the high technical capacity of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), as well as the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the five provincial project management units (PPMUs).

iv) The project has suffered from delays due to several reasons and the completion of the last mile connection activity that is dependent on WEIDAP is questionable. To overcome this, there are financial resources and committed teams at the central, provincial, district and commune levels to work towards accelerating project activities until the end of the project.

v) The rehabilitation/construction of ponds and the FFS training in Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) and soil and biomass management have been very successful,

reaching many beneficiaries by mid-term, and have shown to be a suitable method of training for smallholder farmers, with the majority being women and ethnic minorities. The success of these activities is an indicator of the potential for the other activities to be on a similar track.

vi) Most activities exceeded the Gender Action Plan (GAP) targets for the inclusion of women and ethnic minorities.

The required MTR ratings table is shown below, which is a qualitative ranking of the findings discussed in more detail throughout the report.

MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table for SACCR Project

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	**5**	**S: Satisfactory**
Progress Towards Results	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating**: 4**	**MS: Moderately Satisfactory**: The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, but with significant shortcomings
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: **5**	**S: Satisfactory**: The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Achievement Rating: **6**	**HS: Highly Satisfactory**: The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
Sustainability	Achievement Rating: **4**	**L: Likely**: ModerateNegligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future

The MTR is required to develop a set of recommendations based on the findings and conclusions. The recommendations are directed to the project management and relevant stakeholders on actions to take and decisions to make.

MTR Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
Project Management and Implementation		
1. Collaborate with projects with similar interests in the provinces that emphasize biodiversity conservation, reforestation and watershed protection to ensure groundwater conservation and recharge, ultimately leading to improved water security.	PPMU, CPMU	Before end of project
2. The CPO and CPMU need to closely scrutinize possible significant delays (i.e Activity 1.2) and adjust the project workplan accordingly, taking into consideration the potential risks to sustainability with the acceleration of activities.	CPO/CPMU	As soon as possible

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
3. Based on the WEIDAP MTR findings, assess the likely timeline required to complete Activities 1.1 and 1.2	UNDP, CPO/CPMU	Once WEIDAP MTR is available
4. Better inclusion of the youth and people with disabilities in subsequent trainings, including FFS.	DARD	For the next FFS training
5. Irrigation ponds (Activity 1.3) require committed contributions to ensure fencing for safety	PPMU	As soon as the pond is constructed
Financial Management		
6. Consider balancing (in total capital) the co-financing to compensate for costs incurred during the project management and implementation process.	GoV	
7. Address the increase in pond construction costs due to inflation. Options include increasing the budget for an individual pond, and increasing the number of shared ponds to maximise the number of beneficiaries.	UNDP, CPO	As soon as possible
8. Careful financial decisions need to be made on how to manage activities where inflation has caused large increases in costs compared to the budget prepared at project inception.	UNDP, CPO, PPMU	As soon as possible
Beneficiary Numbers and Targets		
9. Streamline approval process for changes to beneficiary numbers, the beneficiary selection criteria, targets and indicators based on the most updated data, country context and actual project implementation results.	CPO, UNDP	Next meeting with GCF and PSC

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
10. Based on the most updated data, the number of small-scale irrigation infrastructure under Activities 1.2 and 1.3 might not be fully achieved by the end of the project. There is also a mis-alignment between the project's fixed targets for beneficiary numbers and the demand-driven approach, which requires beneficiaries to request and register for support. In some cases, the number of beneficiaries registering will not reach the project target. The MTR suggests: • in order to reach out to more climate-vulnerable households, include those vulnerable families that have close proximity to the water points. • More awareness among beneficiaries may be needed so registration in activities increases. • Approve the participation in the last mile connections (LMC) for more climate-vulnerable households whose farms the LMCs pass through, recognizing that both the non-poor and poor HH are grouped together and both have access to the outlet. • Investigate the potential to use other water sources such as existing reservoirs and canals to extend beneficiary numbers beyond those eligible for last mile connections with WEIDAP.	CPMU, PPMU UNDP	As soon as possible
Project Sustainability		
11. Increase support for officers working on project at the commune level. Consider additional remuneration or other benefits in recognition of the project support they provide.	CPMU	As soon as possible
12. Mechanisms could be put into place so that communities can save some profits from their increased productivity from project CRA and inputs, to use in subsequent input purchases.	DPMU, DARD	Next monitoring report
13. The project should find ways to amplify the role of DARD's existing local extension agencies.	PPMU	Next training session and funding disbursement
14. Manage community expectations. During visits to communities by the PMU team, it is important to inform the community of potential delays so they are not discouraged by the time it takes for activities to be implemented.	Commune level heads of WU and FU	As soon as possible
15. The adoption of an adaptive project management strategy of a rapid acceleration of project activities to fully utilize the total approved budget, considering potential unsustainable outcomes.	UNDP, CPMU, PPMU	

Interim Evaluation Lessons Learned

At project mid-term, there are some lessons learned that could be applied to the remaining two years of the project:

1. Ninh Thuan may provide an example of best practices, since many of their activities are further ahead than in the other provinces. There were several reasons given for this: i) the provincial officer at DARD is very experienced and motivated; ii) the people are in great need of water so are more committed to the project; ii) the qualifications of the PPMU are well suited to this kind of project; iii) local people are very short of resources so are very willing to get on board with the project; and iv) the provincial leader is very committed so collaboration and coordination are very good.
2. There is a lot of repetition of data in project documents. For example, the ESMP overlaps with the ESMF; the APR overlaps with the mid-term report which overlaps with the MTR, and the Restructuring Proposal repeats much of what is in the original funding proposal. While project M&E and reporting are thorough and detailed, they may take resources away from other important activities.
3. Baseline data collected during project design and which may be included in the FP may not be a true reflection of the situation when the project is implemented. Provision to update baselines at project start-up should be included as part of project inception.
4. Several community members expressed some dissatisfaction with project delays. Therefore, to manage the expectations of community members regarding the project implementation process, communities should be made fully aware of the risks of project delays that are beyond the control of the project implementation team. It is advisable to hold regular public meetings to allow for information sharing and further discussion and understanding of project delays.
5. The beneficiary selection process for household-based activities is a complicated task involving many issues such as full and transparent selection of beneficiaries based on the four established selection criteria, the willingness of the household to participate, approval by the local Commune Peoples' Committee as well as environmental and social safeguard issues, including local geology for irrigation establishment. This has meant that beneficiary selection is a long process and has not provided a means to easily and accurately select the targeted number.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AE	Accredited Entity
CDR	Combined Delivery Reports
CEMA	Committee for ethnic minority affairs
CIP	Climate Innovation Platform
CO	Country Office
CPO	Central Project Office for Water Resources
CRA	Climate Resilient Agriculture
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EE	Executing Entity
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FAA	Funded Activity Agreement
FFS	Farmers Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
IP	Implementing Partner
IPPF	Indigenous People's Planning Framework
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTR	Midterm Review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPD	National Project Director
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPMU	Provincial Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SACCR	Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VWU	Viet Nam Women Union
WUG	Water User Groups
WEIDAP	Water Efficiency Improvement in Drought-Affected Provinces

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the MTR and Objectives

The purpose of the Mid-term Review (MTR[2]) is to assess progress towards the achievement of the objectives and two outputs of the "*Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam*" project, as specified in the GCF Funding Proposal (FP), GCF Funded Activity Agreement (FAA), the UNDP Project Document (ProDoc) and the Restructuring Proposal. The MTR also reviews the project's strategy and risks to sustainability. The MTR is to assess project successes and challenges at mid-term with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.

The findings of the MTR are intended to be used by the Accredited Entity (UNDP), the Executing Entity (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to, where necessary, make changes that ensure the SACCR project is on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also provides an independent assessment to GCF of achievement of the FAA. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MTR are provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Scope & Methodology

The MTR methods and reporting follow the direction provided in Terms of Reference (TOR) and Guidance for Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects, along with guidance provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (OECD 2021 Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully). A comprehensive draft and final Inception Report detailing the proposed methodology, evaluation questions, stakeholders, field mission and document list for review was prepared for and reviewed by the UNDP CO and MARD.

The scope of the MTR is to assess the following categories of project progress:

(i) *Implementation and adaptive management* - to identify challenges and propose additional measures to support more efficient and effective implementation. The following aspects of project implementation and adaptive management will be assessed: management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications;

(ii) *Risks to sustainability* - to assess the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. The assessment of sustainability at the IE stage considers the risks that are likely to affect the continuation of project outcomes;

(iii) *Validate the risks* - as identified in the FP, RP, ProDoc, Annual Project Performance Reports (APR), and the ATLAS Risk Management Module and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date;

(iv) *Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency* of projects and programmes - to assess the appropriateness in terms of selection, implementation and achievement of FAA and project document results framework activities and expected results (outputs, outcomes and impacts);

(v) *Coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities* – to assess how GCF financing is additional and able to amplify other investments or de-risk and crowd-in further climate investment;

[2] also called Interim Evaluation or IE

(vi) *Gender equity* – to ensure integration of understanding on how the impacts of climate change are differentiated by gender, the ways that behavioral changes and gender can play in delivering paradigm shift, and the role that women play in responding to climate change challenges both as agents but also for accountability and decision-making;

(vii) *Country ownership of projects and programmes* – to examine the extent of the emphasis on sustainability post-project through country ownership; on ensuring the responsiveness of the GCF investment to country needs and priorities including through the roles that countries play in projects and programmes;

(viii) *Innovativeness in results areas* - focuses on the identification of innovations (proof of concept, multiplication effects, new models of finance, technologies, etc.) and the extent to which the project interventions may lead to a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways;

(ix) *Replication and scalability* - the extent to which the activities can be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries; and

(x) *Unexpected/unintended results, both positive and negative* – to identify unexpected challenges and the learning, both positive and negative, that can be used to inform further implementation and future investment decision-making.

MTR Approach

The MTR was conducted by an evaluation team, consisting of two independent evaluators with no previous involvement in the SACCR project, thus ensuring a third party objective and impartial project review. The evaluation team included a national evaluator familiar with the region where the project was operating and who was able to communicate in both Vietnamese and English as required. The international evaluation team member provided leadership developing the evaluation methodology in consultation with UNDP and the CPMU. Data analysis and report writing was done in collaboration with the national evaluation team member, to meet the requirements outlined in the ToR (Appendix 1).

The MTR approach was collaborative, consultative, participatory and utilization-focused. The evaluations was **collaborative**, working closely with key stakeholders such as the CPMU and UNDP in order to determine the stakeholders, timing and extent of field consultations, project documents to review etc. It isommon practice during evaluations to ask key stakeholders what they feel is most important to get out of the evaluation which can provide more of a learning and reflective process for all stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement helps to establish a thorough understanding of the assignment and will propose both an evaluation framework and process that is tailored to specific decision-making needs, as well as the operating environment and any practical limitations (such as budgets, human resources, time and access to stakeholders). The consultant team was also committed to the **participatory evaluation/approach** which includes the primary stakeholders as active participants, not just as sources of information; ensuring that all involved, including involved women and men community members have the opportunity to analyze, reflect and take action. The evaluations was "**utilization-focused**", an approach that emphasizes the needs and expectations of all the intended users from the outset of the evaluation process to ensure that the findings, lessons and recommendations are useful.

The evaluation followed **gender equality** and social inclusion guidelines. This includes understanding women and men's differential access to resources as well as local differences in rights, responsibilities, and gender roles. Data collection and analysis was gender-disaggregated and in data analysis and reporting gender was considered in term of whether the project was effectively addressing any inequalities. Stakeholder consultations followed **ethical guidelines**, specifically UN's Ethical Guidelines to ensure safe, non-discriminatory and respectful engagement of all involved and that all who engaged in the review were aware of the purpose of the evaluation, that their participation was voluntary and that all information is confidential.

The document review was guided by the CPMU, who took on the responsibility of providing all project documents to the evaluation team. The evaluation team consulted with the CPMU on the Inception report, as well as the location, timing and conduct of the field consultations. The MTR methods included a comprehensive review of the available documents (listed in Appendix 5), field consultations to conduct key informant interviews and group discussions with project staff, national, provincial, district and commune government officials, and project beneficiaries (all interviewees are listed in Appendix 3). In two cases, virtual interviews were conducted virtually for stakeholders who were not available (due to distance) for in-person meetings.

Evaluation scope and timeline: the scope of the evaluation was from the project start up in June 2019 until the time the mid-term review was conducted, in June 2024.

The mid-term evaluation took place between 18 April 2024 and was completed with the submission of the final report on 05 September 2024. Field consultations took place from 10-20 June. A full account of the evaluation activities by date is in Appendix 4. Since this was a mid-term review, there was no difficulty contacting and interviewing stakeholders since all were still actively involved in project implementation.

Stakeholder and Site Selection: The selection of stakeholders and beneficiaries was made in consultation with UNDP and the PMU, and based on information identifying stakeholders in relevant documents, such as the TOR, the FP, the UNDP ProDoc etc. Stakeholder selection generally included those who are directly involved in the project every effort was made to ensure that women representatives were interviewed whenever possible so that both perspectives informed the MTR.

The project works in two regions, five provinces and 15 districts in Viet Nam, with poverty and ethnic minority shown in Table 1 below. Project beneficiary selection for interviews was based on obtaining a sample across the four beneficiary selection criteria[3] in three of the five provinces. The MTR team selected Dak Lak and Ninh Thuan, the provinces with highest poverty rates in the two regions. In each province, the team selected one district for in depth investigation. In Dak Lak, Ea Kar district has the lowest ethnic minority population, but the highest poverty rate among the four districts. In Ninh Thuan, Bac Ai district has the highest ethnic minority population and the highest poverty rate. In addition, the MTR team consulted with the provincial agencies in Khanh Hoa province, where the project implementation had just started. Data sampling was designed to ensure that an equal number of men and women were interviewed, and all information collected through interviews was disaggregated by gender.

Table 1. Site selection based on provincial percentages of ethnic minorities and poverty rates (blue color highlights provinces and districts selected)

Region	Province	Provincial Percentage of EM (2019)[4]	Provincial poverty rate (2023)[5]	District	District Percentage of EM (2019)[1]
Central Coast	Khanh Hoa	5.7	5.77	Cam Lam	5.7
	Ninh Thuan	24.4	8.82	Ninh Hai	9.2
				Ninh Son	26.1
				Thuan Bac	69.9
				Bac Ai	88.1
	Binh Thuan	7.9	5.58	Duc Linh	3.0
				Ham Thuan Nam	4.7
	Dak Lak	35.7	15.95	Ea H'leo	42.7

[3] Woman-headed HH, poor, near poor and ethnic minority

[4] According to the Viet Nam Population and Housing Census 2019 (full datasets are available at http://portal.thongke.gov.vn/khodulieudanso2019/Default.aspx?M=1&time=11495629042024)

[5] Decision 134 of MOLISA publishing the results of the review of poor and near-poor households according to the multi-dimensional poverty criteria for the period 2022-2025 (https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Van-hoa-Xa-hoi/Quyet-dinh-134-QD-LDTBXH-2024-cong-bo-ket-qua-ra-soat-ho-ngheo-ho-can-ngheo-2023-599059.aspx)

Central Highlands				Cu M'gar	51.3
				Ea Kar	31.1
				Krong Pac	36.5
	Dak Nong	32.5	11.75	Cu Jut	49.3
				Dak Mil	21.7
				Krong No	42.1

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation relied on following methods to allow for data triangulation:

i. Inception: On 19 April, 2024, a brief inception meeting was held for the purposes of introductions and an overview of logistics and any preliminary questions. On 30 April, the Inception Report was submitted to the UNDP and CPMU.

ii. A Desk review of project documents provided by the CPMU (for the full list of documents reviewed, refer to Appendix 5) formed the foundation for the key evaluation questions (KEQ) (refer to Appendix 6).

iii. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the KEQs as a guide. The KEQs were structured based on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and cross cutting (gender and inclusiveness) as well as on project design and implementation. Key actors (stakeholders) are listed in the stakeholder's Table 2 above. The interviews were carried out either on a one-on-one basis (between the consultant and one stakeholder) or in a group setting, as described below. Two interviews were conducted virtually due to the location on the stakeholder.

iv. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held when there were several stakeholders together and directing questions to the group was preferable to individual interviews. For example, these FGDs were held often with several members of the PPMU, or at the commune level.

Triangulation of data and findings were done using these different methodologies, so that what was derived from the document review was substantiated by the interviews and vice versa.

Data analysis was qualitative. The major findings were based on a **trends analysis** and some anecdotal evidence is presented as quotes or testimonials. After interviews with stakeholders were conducted, they were transcribed and information was inserted under different headings that corresponded to the Findings. Once the interviews were transcribed, keywords were tagged and patterns in responses emerged. These patterns are what informed the main findings presented in the report. Anecdotal information, that was not backed up by the trends analysis, was still considered and where these data are included, it is noted that it is from one interview only. The evaluation took note of the gender of stakeholders (refer to Table 2) and also reviewed the project based on its targets of gender and ethnic minority inclusion.

Another tool used to evaluate different components of the project was an assessment of the project's Theory of Change, which reviewed project assumptions, risks, outcomes and outputs, related to the Theory of Change (ToC) as described in the SACCR ProDoc.

Data Validation: For validation purposes, a presentation of preliminary findings was held two times in the UNDP office in Hanoi on June 20th – the first meeting was with the UNDP team and the second meeting was with the CPMU, UNDP, and the PPMU of the five provinces (present virtually).

Finally, the evaluation is required to make ratings of different aspects of the project, which are outlined in Tables 5 and 19 with the GCF ratings tables in Appendix 11.

The suggested ratings tables as outlined in the UNDP-GEF guidelines for MTR are outlined in Section 4.

Quality Assurance: The Quality Assurance (QA) arrangement put in place for the project implementation, as per the FAA, was applied in the conduct of this mid-term review (or Independent Interim Evaluation). That is, a three-tiered QA support was provided by the UNDP Country Office in

Viet Nam, the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub and the UNDP Headquarters. The guidance for the formulation of the Terms of Reference for the MTR as well as adherence to UNDP and GCF evaluation policies was provided by the UNDP Directorate in the HQ. The procurement of the MTR consultants was led by the Country Office with inputs from the Bangkok-based advisor. The Inception Report as well as draft and final MTR reports have been reviewed extensively by operations and programming teams in both the Country Office and the Bangkok Regional Hub. The MTR consultants interviewed – in-person and virtual – UNDP staff members both in the Country Office and the Bangkok Regional Hub who are providing QA support to the project.

Dissemination and Knowledge Management Plan

Upon completion and approval by the GCF and final sign off by the CPMU, the evaluation report will be translated into Vietnamese for sharing with government partners. In addition, the project team will summarize the key findings of the report into a short summary communication brief. Both the full report in Vietnamese and the summary communication brief will be disseminated to key project stakeholders, including the CPMU, PPMUs, local authorities, and communities.

The findings from this evaluation, along with the proposed management response, will be presented at the annual Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting, scheduled in the fourth quarter of 2024. The PSC's conclusions regarding the implementation of these management responses will be recorded in the meeting minutes and communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

The implementation of the findings and management response from the evaluation will be reviewed during the project's annual implementation review workshop, which is tentatively planned for November-December 2024.

Limitations and Challenges of the Mid-Term Review

Several SACCR project activities are behind schedule (see Section 4.2.2) and without the completion of activities as intended at the mid-way point in the project, there are limitations to analyzing all of the evaluation criteria because outputs are still at an early stage. For example, under Output 1, Activity 1.2, the MTR team was unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the last mile connections (LMC) for poor/near poor households as there were no connections established at the time of the MTR, however, the Activity is in progress with some connections well mapped out and approved for construction in 2024. The evaluators were able to see firsthand, progress that was being made in Activities 1.2, in addition to reports from the PPMU that outlined progress and goals for 2024.

A challenge for the MTR team was the specific numbers allocated for beneficiaries and their targets which were difficult to track, especially given the preponderance of documentation that exists for this project. Also, due to the number of documents, there is so much information to present in the MTR, that it is difficult to synthesize and summarize the data, so some trends get lost in the copious amounts of information. The evaluators were able to read through all project documents and with the help of the CPMU were able to obtain final numbers of beneficiaries to assist in the review of progress.

2.3 Project Description and Background Context

Viet Nam is particularly vulnerable to climate change and is impacted by more irregular and intense rainfall, and higher temperatures. The World Bank estimates that "climate change impacts on the Viet Nam ese economy and national welfare are already significant—about 3.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020—and they are expected to escalate rapidly even if greater efforts are made to mitigate future climate change around the world."[6]

Two of the regions that are most vulnerable to climate risks affecting smallholder farmers are the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast. Changes in precipitation are leading to increasing deficits in surface and groundwater availability for agricultural production with longer periods of severe water

[6] The World Bank Group, Country Climate and Development Report, July 2022, page 1.

scarcity during the dry season and increased frequency and intensity of droughts. Overall agricultural productivity is increasingly at risk, along with incomes, which have a significant impact on vulnerable small-scale farmers dependent on rain fed lands and who are poor and near-poor, ethnic minority and women farmers.

The SACCR project was developed as part of an integrated programme funded through multiple sources, as envisaged by the Government of Vietnam (GoV), that was aimed at enhancing water security and building the climate change resilience of the agriculture sector. The project focus is in Central Highland and South-Central Coastal Regions. The project aims to enable the GoV to adopt a paradigm shift in the way smallholder agricultural development is envisioned and supported through an integrated approach to agricultural resilience. This approach involves planning for climate risks based on community-assisted identification and analysis of agroecosystem vulnerabilities; enhancing water security; scaling up adoption and application of climate-resilient agricultural practices and cropping systems; and creating partnerships among value chain stakeholders to ensure access to market and credit. This approach directly addresses climate risks while also establishing or strengthening institutional capacities for long-term multi-stakeholder support to vulnerable smallholders.

The objective of the project is to assist and empower vulnerable smallholder farmers in five provinces of the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam. The project targets the most vulnerable – particularly women, poor and near poor, and ethnic minority farmers - to manage increasing climate risks to agricultural production. To achieve its objective, the project set out to enable smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change-driven rainfall variability and drought through the implementation of two inter- linked outputs:

Output 1: improved access to water for vulnerable smallholder farmers for climate-resilient agricultural production in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts, and
Output 2: strengthened capacities of smallholder farmers to apply climate and market information, technologies, and practices for climate-resilient water and agricultural management.

The SACCR project both complements and enhances the activities and results of the ADB-funded Water Efficiency Improvement in Drought Affected Provinces (WEIDAP). The WEIDAP project, aims to bring primary irrigation infrastructure to four drought affected provinces and is financed through a USD 99.59 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as USD 22.06 million from the Government of Vietnam. GCF funding for the SACCR project will build on WEIDAP activities to achieve last mile connections to this infrastructure by poor/near-poor smallholders, with a particular focus on ethnic minority and women farmers. The ADB-financed WEIDAP project carried out a thorough analysis of water sources to be used for irrigation in the eight distinct irrigation schemes. The sources of water for WEIDAP are existing reservoirs and canals – the WEIDAP project improves and connects canals and pipe systems to these sources. Irrigation water under Output 1, Activity 1.2, below, comes from the WEIDAP system. The sources of water for the GCF-funded water harvesting systems under Activity 1.3, below, is rainfall and ensuing surface flow in the micro-basins surrounding the ponds that are the ultimate sink for the harvested water

The project is using GCF financing to specifically target ethnic minority, women and other poor/near poor small holder farmers. It is also reliant on GCF and co-financing resources to build the capacities of all farmers in climate vulnerable areas. As such, the project will reach over 200,000 direct individual beneficiaries in the five provinces of Dak Lak, Dak, Nong, Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan and Khanh Hoa.

The project also advances Viet Nam's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) through the support for livelihoods and production processes that are appropriate under climate change conditions which are linked to poverty reduction and social justice; community-based adaptation, including using indigenous knowledge, prioritizing the most vulnerable communities; and using integrated water resources.

At COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam made several commitments, including an ambitious target of reducing emissions to net zero by 2050. The national plan for climate change adaptation (NAP) for the period of 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050, was approved in July 2020. The national strategy on climate change up to 2050 was approved in July 2022. These policy documents demonstrate Viet Nam 's efforts and determination in climate change response.

The SACCR project also contributes to Viet Nam 's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals[7] (SDG), especially to SDG 13*, Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*; as well as SDG 1, *End poverty in all its forms everywhere*; and SDG 5, *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*

The SACCR project is linked to UNDA's Outcome 2.1 *(Low-carbon, climate and disaster resilient development: By 2021, Viet Nam has accelerated its transition to sustainable development and green growth towards a low-carbon economy and enhanced its adaptation and resilience to climate change and natural disasters, with a focus on empowering the poor and vulnerable groups)* and Outcome 2.2 *(Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment: By 2021, Viet Nam has enhanced sustainable management of natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystem services and improved the quality of the environment, while contributing to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements).* The project is also reported under UNDP'S Outcome 2*: Low-carbon, resilience and environmentally sustainable development of Country Programme Document (CPD).* The SACCR project also incorporates UNDP strategies and principles such as Leave No One Behind (LNOB), gender equality and gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability.

[7] 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations members in 2015.

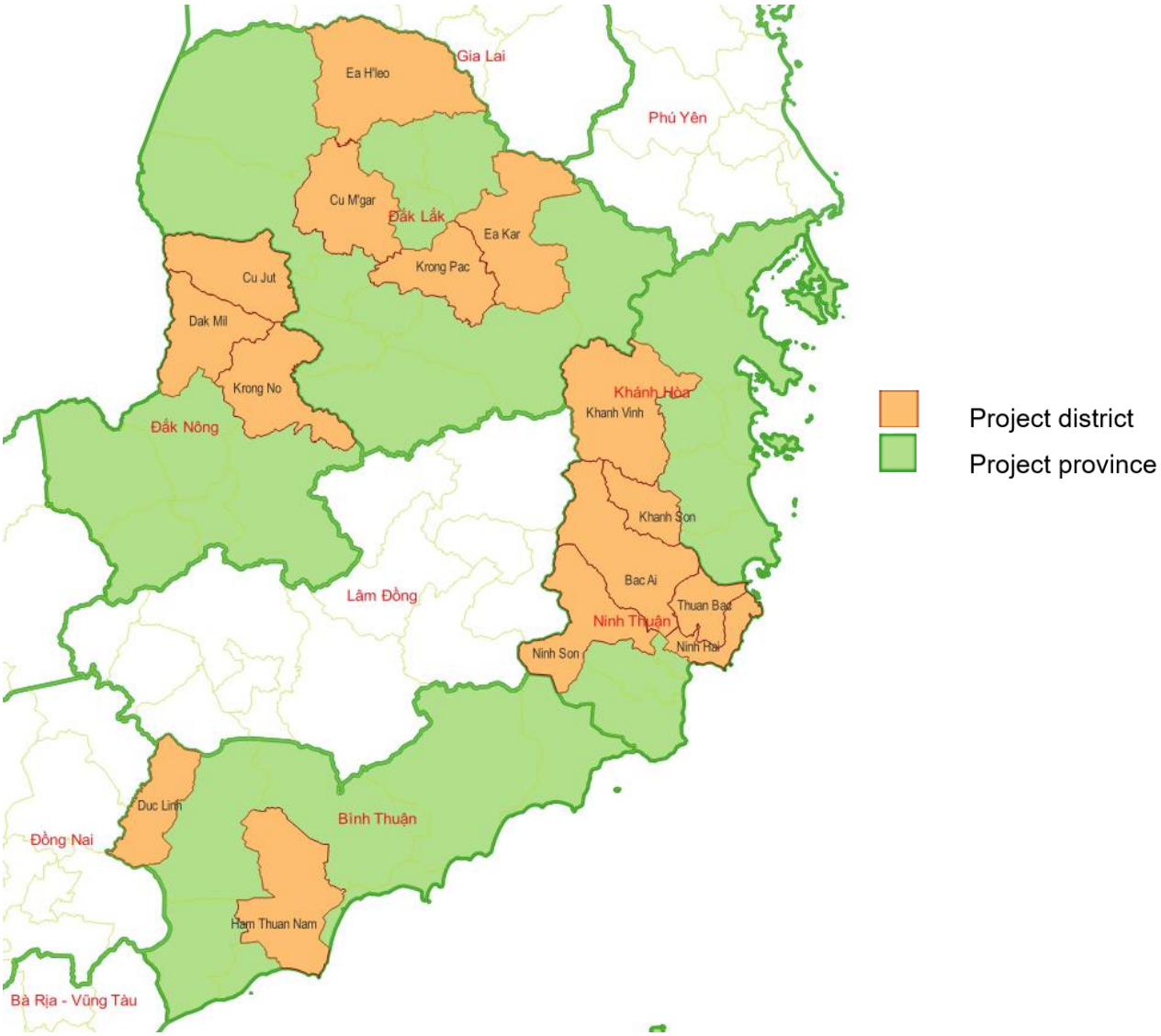

Figure 1. Location of the five Provinces and Districts where the SACCR project is being implemented

Socio-economic context: In Viet Nam, there are residing 54 ethnic groups, which the Kinh ethnicity (the ethnic majority) makes up 86% of the population[8]. The other 53 ethnic groups account for approximately 14% of the population. The second most populous ethnic group after Kinh accounts for less than 2% of the population reflecting the huge disparity in population between the ethnic majority and ethnic minority (EM)[9].

All five target provinces have indigenous ethnic minority populations such as the Cham, Raglai and Chau Ro in the South-Central Coast and the E De, Gia Lai and Mo Nong (or M'Nong) in the Central Highlands. The indigenous ethnic groups all live under a matriarchal social system. The Central Highlands also have a large share of minority groups such as Tay, Nung, Thai, Muong and H'Mong, who mainly migrated from the North decades ago either spontaneously or as part of Government-supported internal labor migration. These latter groups as well as the Kinh are patriarchal. While all five target provinces have different ethnic minority groups, their share of the total population is highest

[8] TCTK, 2010
[9] ESMF

in Dak Nong (29%), Ninh Thuan (23.1%) and Dak Lak (19.6%). Ethnic minority poverty is particularly high in remote highland areas and in communes with higher rates of ethnic minority population.

Problems that the project sought to address: The SACCR project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) states that[10]: "The five provinces of Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Dak Lak and Dak Nong were selected based on their high levels of climate change risk, smallholder vulnerability and potential for effective investment. These were among the most drought-affected provinces induced by El Nino over 2014-2016, and are at significant risk from flash-floods, drought and other hazard events." The project aims to target the most vulnerable populations in the regions most at risk of climate change impacts.

2.4 Project Description and Strategy:

The SACCR project objective will be achieved through the following two inter-related project outputs and their associated activities:

Output 1 - Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts

Activity 1.1: Establish large-scale irrigation infrastructure to bring irrigation water to seven farming areas across the target regions in the four provinces

Key sub-activities:

1.1.1 Develop modernized irrigation infrastructures serving at least 13,180 ha in the eight command areas by installing 146.5 km of piped irrigation systems including:
(i) Pressurized pipe systems taking water from canals or reservoirs, and supplying hydrants located at a reasonable distance from a farmer's field;
(ii) Main system modernization including canal lining, control structure, balancing storage and installation of flow control and measurement devices with remote monitoring; and
(iii) New and improved weirs which will replace farmer constructed temporary weirs and provide storage from which farmers can pump to irrigate HVCs.

Activity 1.2: Establish last-mile connections between WEIDAP irrigation infrastructure and the poor and near poor farmer lands to help cope with increasing rainfall variability and drought

Key sub-activities:

1.2.1 Design and construct 3,733 connection and distribution systems including installation and maintenance of irrigation equipment to cope with climate variability.
1.2.2 Train 3,733 poor and near poor farmers households on climate-risk informed utilization of irrigation equipment and system maintenance.
1.2.3 Establish Water Users Groups for O&M of communal or shared systems, including structures and agreements on potential funding mechanisms.

Activity 1.3: Enhance supplementary irrigation for rain fed smallholders to cope with rainfall variability and drought

Key sub-activities:

1.3.1 Construct or upgrade 1,507 climate-resilient ponds (based on site-specific designs construct 849 new ponds and upgrade 658 existing ponds)

[10] Page 116 in the ESMF

1.3.2 Train aprox. 17,000 poor and near-poor farmer beneficiaries in climate-resilient water resource management to enhance supply
1.3.3 Establish 218 pond-management groups for O&M, including structures and agreements on potential funding mechanisms

Activity 1.4: Increase smallholder capacities to apply on-farm water-efficient practices and technologies to maximize water productivity in coping with rainfall variability and drought (not covered by this ESMP)

Key sub-activities:

1.4.1 Train over 21,200 farmers through 900 Farmer Field Schools on soil and biomass management to enhance moisture-holding capacity, recharge of groundwater, and water productivity to cope with evolving climate risks on water security (in conjunction with Activity 2.1)
1.4.2 Train 30 DARD staff and champion farmers in 15 districts (one course in years 2, 4 and 6) to support farmers' groups in co-design, costing and O&M of climate-resilient, water-efficient technologies
1.4.3 Install on-farm water efficiency systems for 8,621 poor/near-poor smallholders linked to performance-based investment support (linked to Activity 2.1)
1.4.4 Train smallholder farmers in five provinces on climate-risk informed O&M of water efficiency technologies

Output 2: Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture and access to climate information, finance, and markets

Activity 2.1: Investments in inputs and capacities to scale up climate-resilient cropping systems and practices (soil, crop, land management) among smallholders through Farmer Field Schools

Key sub-activities:

2.1.1 Sensitize smallholders to establish/re-activate 900 Farmer Field Schools
2.1.2 Train DARD personnel and lead farmers, as well as other interested parties (NGOs, Farmers and Women's Unions, etc.) to build a cadre of farmer champions to galvanize adoption and application of CRA packages (15 provincial level workshops for 30 DARD staff in years 2, 4 and 6; 30 district and 136 commune level trainings for 30 lead farmers in years 2 and 6)
2.1.3 Train farmers and value chain actors - particularly private sector input providers, buyers, processors, transporters - through 900 FFS on scaling up of climate-resilient cropping systems and practices. (Each FFS will conduct 1-day trainings twice per year)
2.1.4 Investment support to 8,621 targeted poor/near poor smallholders to acquire inputs and technologies for implementation of the CRA packages through vouchers.
2.1.5 Participatory auditing of implementation of voucher systems for climate resilient cropping systems and practices (One 1-day meeting for 100 participants in each of the 68 communes in Years 2, 4 and 6)

Activity 2.2 Technical assistance for enhancing access to markets and credit for sustained climate-resilient agricultural investments by smallholders and value chain actors

Key sub-activities:

2.2.1 Establish and operationalize multi-stakeholder Climate Innovation Platforms (CIP) in each province and at the level of agro-ecological zones (Annual stakeholder meetings organized once every two years in each of the 5 provinces)
2.2.2 Provide technical assistance and training to enable market linkages with input, information and technology providers and buyers for climate-resilient agricultural production (two

trainings, two networking workshops and three trade fairs in each of the 15 districts over four years)

2.2.3 Provide technical assistance and train farmers to enable access to credit through financial intermediaries (One workshop in each of the 68 communes in years 2 and 4).

Activity 2.3 Co-development and use of localized agro-climate advisories by smallholders to enhance climate-resilient agricultural production

Key sub-activities:

2.3.1 Train 50 hydromet and DARD staff on generating and interpreting down-scaled forecasts for use in agricultural planning (eight training over four years for 50 participants)

2.3.2 Provide technical assistance for the formation of ACIS technical groups and training of 450 participants at the district level (1-day workshops for 30 participants in each of the 15 districts)

2.3.3 Co-develop, through Participatory, Scenario Planning (PSP) of seasonal and 10-day/15-day agro-climate advisories with smallholder farmers (20 provincial level trainings for 30 staff and 60 district level trainings for 60 participants over four years)

2.3.4 Disseminate advisories to 132,836 households in the 68 communes

The SACCR Restructuring proposal was written to account for the changes in project strategy and beneficiary numbers after the WEIDAP Activity 1.1 and 1.2 were no longer to be implemented in the province of Khanh Hoa. Two new districts in Khanh Hoa were introduced to the project and beneficiary numbers for Activity 1.3 were increased as a result due to the higher number of beneficiaries for rain-dependent irrigation in the two newly designated districts.

2.5 Main stakeholders

A summary of stakeholders including beneficiaries visited is provided in Table 2. Consultations were held with 130 individuals, including 66 women (50.8%).

Table 2: Summary table of stakeholders and beneficiaries who participated in the interim evaluation data collection

Stakeholder Category/Stakeholder	Role/responsibility of Stakeholder	# of Females	# of Males	Total
National Level				
UNDP (AE)	Support in implementation, quality assurance (QA)	3	11	13
CPMU/MARD (EE)	Implementing Agency	0	6	6
MARD (Departments)	Responsible for overall implementation and management of the project Project Support - CPMU coordinates and provides technical support to the Provincial Project Management Units (PPMUs) with quarterly and annual planning. CPMU is responsible for supervising and expediting the implementation progress of the RPs activities.	1	2	3
MPI	Laison with GCF; signed NDA	0	1	1
WEIDAP	Partner for Activity 1.1 and 1.2	1	3	4
Provincial Level				
PPMU	Project implementation; financial control			14
DARD	Responsible government agency at the provincial level			10

Stakeholder Category/Stakeholder	Role/responsibility of Stakeholder	# of Females	# of Males	Total
Provincial WEIDAP Project Management Units	Managing the WEIDAP project at the provincial level			
UNDP (Regional Advisor)	Oversight and quality assurance	1	1	2
WU	Laison between project activities and women members	7		7
FU	Laison between project activities and farmers		5	5
District Level				
PMU	Assist the PPMU in project oversight			12
Agriculture Extension	Implementing project activities; ToT training			10
District DARD	Implementing project activities			
WU	Provide women's voice in activities and collaboration organizations	3		3
FU	Provide farmers' voice in activities and collaborating organizations		3	3
Commune Level				
CPC	Participants in project activities at the commune level			7
WU		3		3
FU			3	3
Community Level				
Farmers	Participants (beneficiaries) in project activities; provision of insight into project design based on needs assessment	41	9	50
NGO				
Community Development Centre	Assisted with project activities in Ninh Thuan Province		1	1
Other				
Consultants	Provision of specialized service, for example designing the performance-based voucher system			
Research Institutions	Providing expertise on water resources planning, climate information, climate innovative platform			
ADB	Partner (WEIDAP project)			
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Donor			
Total		66 F	64 M	130 Total

2.6 Direct beneficiaries

The total number of direct beneficiaries for the project is 50,199 smallholder households (HH) which represents 200,798 individuals within the 68 communes who benefit from access to climate-resilient irrigation. The beneficiaries include:

i) 130,168 individuals (reduced from 156,560 as per the original Funding Proposal, FP) benefited from access to irrigation within the 36 communes common to both the GCF and WEIDAP projects. Of these, the GCF project supports 14,932 individuals from poor or near poor smallholder households (reduced from 19,060 individuals as per the original FP) through last-mile connections to the irrigation mainline.

ii) 69,980 individuals from poor or near poor rainfed smallholder households (increased from 65,852 from the original FP) within the additional 32 communes supported by the GCF, who will benefit from water storage and productivity activities on rain fed lands.

At the time of the MTR, the M&E team updated/reviewed beneficiary households of the five project provinces. As of June 30, 2024, with the updated midterm Progress Report, 22,487 beneficiary households under the GCF grant had been identified (1,774 in Khanh Hoa, 7,441 in Ninh Thuan, 1,249 in Binh Thuan, 6,256 in Dak Lak, and 5,760 in Dak Nong). This exceeds the midterm target of 21,228 beneficiaries.

Table 3. Number of beneficiaries by province at Mid-term (Mid-term report, June 20 2024)

Province	No. Beneficiary[11] HH
Khanh Hoa	1,774
Ninh Thuan	7,441
Binh Thuan	1,249
Dak Lak	6,256
Dak Nong	5,760[12]
Total	**22,487**

2.7. Project Implementation Arrangements

MARD is the Executing Entity (EE) and UNDP is the Accredited Entity (AE). MPI is the National Designated Authority (NDA). MPI supported MARD to get the grant and signs a no-objection letter with MoF and MARD. The SACCR project is governed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC), which is co-chaired by UNDP and MARD and comprises the following organizations: CPO/MARD, MPI, WU, FU, CEMA, UNDP, the five Provincial Peoples Committee (PPCs) of Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan province. The PSC is responsible for making, by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the National Project Director (NPD) in the CPMU. PSC decisions are made in accordance with standards that ensure management for development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. The PSC is supposed to meet every six months[13]. Figure 2 shows the project management structure.

[11] It is assumed that this number is for direct beneficiaries
[12] Updated to a total of 5,821 households to date, after June 30, for Dak Nong. Note that data from the June 30th report were used for consistency
[13] ESMF 2023

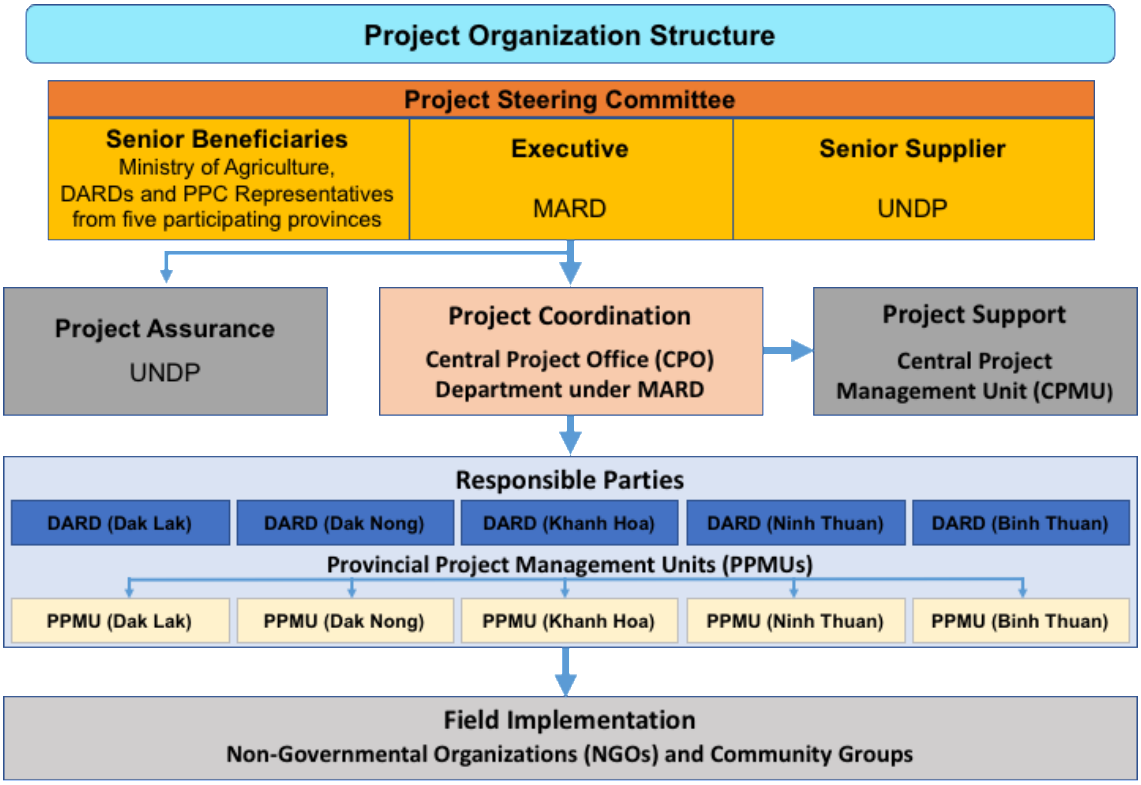

Figure 2. SACCR Project Management and Implementation Structure (source Mid-term Report June 30, 2024)

3 Findings

This section provides statements of fact about the SACCR project that are based on analysis of the data, both primary data from field consultations and secondary data from project documents. The findings are structured based on the agreed upon Table of Contents for the MTR report which was outlined in the ToR. For the analysis of results, variances between planned and actual results are explained as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results.

3.1 Project Strategy

3.1.1 Project Design

The SACCR project brings together an ODA grant with an ambitious ODA loan. The ADB-funded WEIDAP project is projected to a build large irrigation infrastructure in drought-stricken areas in five provinces[14]. The SACCR project is an extension of that to assist poor and near-poor smallholder farmers to make a "last-mile connection" to this irrigation infrastructure[15]. The GCF support is enabling this sector of the population to take advantage of and to benefit from the state investment in irrigation.

The project was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in response to a great need in the Central Highlands and the South-Central Coast where there is a high potential for production but at the same time, there is severe water scarcity due to climate change. During project consultations with communities, MARD observed that the "local people know where they need support" and thus incorporated local and traditional knowledge into project design.

The project design arose out of the severe drought experienced in Viet Nam in 2016. Several trainings were conducted in late 2022 and project field activities did not start until mid 2023. Due to the length of time from the design phase to actual implementation, the baseline data that served as a basis for setting project targets and the budget became out-of-date: the size of the local population and the

[14] ADB, Viet Nam: Water Efficiency Improvement in Drought-Affected Provinces Project.
[15] SACCR Project document.

number of poor households changed due to changes in the national poverty standards and inflation affected the costs of constructing ponds and last mile connections. Due to these changing variables, it would have been more suitable for the project design to set more general, instead of exact, targets for beneficiaries. Exact targets such as 111,206 direct male beneficiaries and 111,206 female direct beneficiaries make achievements more difficult. The project design should be more realistic by giving an approximate number with a plus or minus five percent.

The MTR noted the tension between project fixed targets and the demand-driven approach, which starts from the needs of beneficiaries by asking them to request and register for support. In some cases, the number of beneficiaries registering for a certain form of support, for example, households wishing to receive water-saving irrigation systems, will not reach the project target.

The MTR also noted differences in budgeting for the same activities across provinces, with Dak Lak having the lowest budget per training, for example. This negatively affected the involvement of key provincial agencies in the project implementation.

The SACCR project is purported to represent a “paradigm shift”. This is implicit in the project design due to the move by the government from a focus on mitigation to adaptation and the emphasis on a multistakeholder, consultative approach that includes and involves smallholder farmers with 1 ha of land or less.

The project design clearly included gender issues as women-headed households were the primary target of several of the activities. There are clear targets and indicators set for gender inclusion in every activity in the project’s Gender Action Plan (GAP). Project M&E includes data disaggregated by gender on activities and indicators. The project also targeted ethnic minorities who often represent the poor/near poor in Viet Nam and are thus a marginalized population. The GAP includes targets for EM participation in every activity. The project did not explicitly address issues of inclusion of people with disabilities nor did it address issues affecting youth.

Analysis of Theory of Change

As part of the assessment of the SACCR project design, the MTR Team assessed the project’s Theory of Change (ToC), (refer to Appendix 7) which includes consideration of the logic of the assumptions made regarding key causes and barriers and the likely ability of proposed project activities (“impact drivers”) to achieve the outputs and the project objective in support of a global GCF level impact (goal). The ToC analysis framework includes Impact Drivers (ID) and Assumptions (A) that are based directly on outputs (activities) associated with the project objective and two outputs as presented in the SACCR Logical Framework (LogFrame). The Intermediate State (IS) is also assessed to identify the level of achievement of outputs leading to the establishment of foundation elements that provide stepping stones towards the achievement of the long-term goal.

In summary, the ToC analysis showed that the objective and Output 1 were given the highest rating of 3, meaning that the ToC component is explicitly recognized and appropriate activities are underway with some interim targets achieved. Mechanisms are in place that show progress towards achievement of the ToC component and there is assurance of substantial contribution towards achievement of the long-term goal. Output 2 received a rating of 2, which indicates that the ToC component is explicitly recognized and the mechanisms set out to achieve it are appropriate but insufficient to ensure successful completion and sustainability upon project closure and meaningful progress towards achievement of the long-term goal.

The project diagram of the Theory of Change is presented in Figure 3 below.

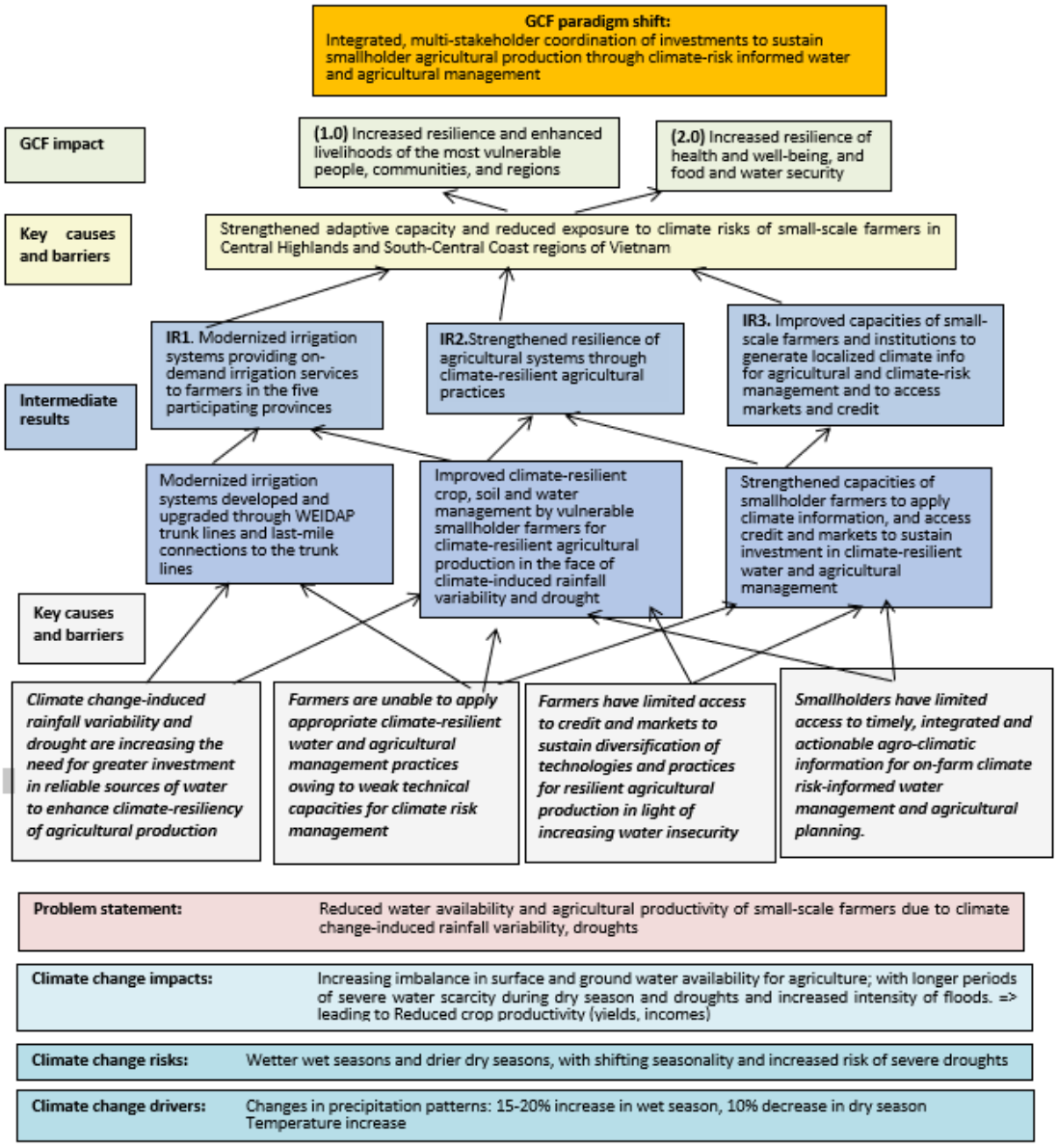

Figure 3. SACCR Project Theory of Change

3.1.2 Results Framework/Logframe: Evaluation of SACCR's project's indicators:

The MTR team undertook an analysis of the project's Logical Framework[16], to assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). This analysis along with specific amendments/revisions to the indicators or targets, is shown in Appendix 8 with the rating shown as green for "compliant", yellow for "questionably compliant", and red for "not compliant". In summary, most indicators and targets conformed well to the five criteria.

3.1.3 Relevance

The MTR finds that the project is relevant at all levels, global, national, subnational, organizational and at the community and individual farmer levels:

[16] Also called "LogFrame" or Results Framework

1. The project directly contributes to Goal 13 Climate Action and specifically Target 13.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals: “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”.
2. The project is fully aligned with “Viet Nam ’s National Climate Change Strategy until 2050”, which sets a specific objective for adaptation to climate change: “To reduce vulnerability and risk of the effects of climate change through improving the resilience and adaptive capacity of natural, economic and social systems, and reducing damage from natural disasters and climate extremes increase due to climate change.”[17]
3. The project directly contributes to Viet Nam ’s National Adaptation Plan (NAP) which sets out to “Strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of natural, economic and social systems through investing in adaptation actions, science and technology, capacity building and awareness raising to be ready to adapt to climate change.”[18]
4. This project will advance the implementation of priority activities in Viet Nam ’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which includes support for livelihoods and production processes that are appropriate under climate change conditions and are linked to poverty reduction and social justice. The NDC commits to the implementation of community-based adaptation, including using indigenous knowledge, prioritizing the most vulnerable communities and implementing integrated water resources[19].
5. The design of the SACCR project is based on the Viet Nam Communist Party’s resolution No. 19 on New Rural Development. Since the land area covered by irrigation is quite limited, there is a significant need for water supply alongside new cultivation techniques[20].
6. The project directly supports UNDP’s strategy of “Leave no one behind”. The principle behind this ideology is the inclusion marginalized populations, including women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and those living in poverty. In addition, the Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) are other UNDP's principles that the project integrates and follows.
7. The project is linked to UNDA's and UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) outcomes, as mentioned earlier in this report.
8. At the provincial level, the project is aligned with the development philosophy of the Master Plan for Central Highlands, which states: “Environmental protection, effective and sustainable use of natural resources, especially forest resources, and ensuring water security are urgent requirements for the Central Highlands region…Strengthen coordination in river basin management, proactively prevent and combat natural disasters and respond to climate change.”[21]
9. Discussions with provincial, district and commune officials in three provinces of Dak Lak, Khanh Hoa and Ninh Thuan consistently indicate that the project’s two outcomes are in complete agreement with local priorities and strategies.
10. Farmer respondents during the MTR interviews emphasized that water security was highly relevant to their immediate needs for agricultural livelihoods and overall well-being.

[17] Decision 896/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister “Approving the National Strategy for Climate Change until 2050”, dated July 26, 2022.
[18] Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, “Report National Adaptation Plan for the Period 2021-2030, with a Vision to 2050”, page ix.
[19] Funding Proposal to GCF 2020
[20] MARD interview
[21] Decision 337/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister “Approving the Master Plan for the Central Highlands Region for the Period 2021-2030, with Vision to 2050”, dated May 04, 2024.

3.2 Progress Towards Results

> "Never before has a project in the commune given physical support and such a strong commitment"
>
> From interview with commune official

The project is assisting vulnerable farmers to achieve water security for agricultural production. By the end of June 2024, there have been several accomplishments[22], which are outlined below in Section 4.3.1 by Output and Activity. The most significant achievements at the time of the MTR are the ponds to provide irrigation for farmers dependent on rainfed agriculture and the Farmer Field Schools that taught small holder farmers a range of skills.

Table 4 below shows the Progress Towards Results matrix, outlining the progress of the four indicators for Output 1 and three indicators for Output 2 against the midterm and/or end of project targets.

Of note is that two of the four indicators for Output 1 have not been achieved by mid-term, which will be discussed more in section 4.4 on Efficiency. The other two indicators for Output 1 are "on target to be achieved" – but only by the end of the project in 2026. Two of the Output 2 indicators are also on target to be achieved by the end of the project, and one indicator is not achieved (by mid-term).

[22] Mid-term report, June 30 2024

Table 4. Progress Towards Results Matrix:

Achievement of outcomes against Project Targets (Red = Not achieved; Yellow = On target to be achieved; Green = Achieved)

Project Outcome	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1st PIR (self reported)	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Output 1: Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts	Number of irrigated hectares of farmland served by modernized irrigation systems	0		3,295 ha	13,180 ha	**0 ha**	.	Due to delays beyond the control of the Project, there are still no last-mile connections and therefore no irrigated areas due to the pipeline. At the time of the MTR there was 38.7 km of main pipeline installed.
	Number of hectares of farmland climate proofed through last-mile connections	0		448 ha	1,120 ha	**0 ha**	**MU** (moderately unsatisfactory) The output is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings	Due to delays beyond the control of the Project, there are still no last-mile connections at the time of the MTR which Activity 1.2 is dependent on Activity 1.1
	Number of rain-fed hectares exhibiting water harvesting and conservation measures.	0			5,074 ha	2,362 ha (estimation from the irrigated area of ponds and farming area applied conservation measures from trainings)	**S** (Satisfactory) The output is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets with only minor shortcomings.	46.6% of the end of the project target was reached at mid-term. This shows speed and good progress since June 2023

	Application of water efficient techniques and practices by farmers	0%		25% of smallholder farmers trained through FFS report switching to micro-irrigation techniques (drip or sprinkler systems) 25% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFS report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches.	60% of smallholder famers trained through FFS report switching to micro-irrigation techniques (drip or sprinkler systems. 60% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFS report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches	Field visits to 3 of the 5 target provinces revealed that some farmers are targeting the irrigation to the base of the tree/crop as a result of the training on water efficiency. Most farmers do not have the resources to purchase the drip irrigation systems.	**S** (Satisfactory) The output is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.	Training has occurred and there is evidence that farmers are targeting their water use instead of widespread water broadcasting, but there are no specific data on how many farmers are practicing this
Output 2: Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture	% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories	0%		25%	60%	Traditionally farmers plant according to weather conditions and forecasts – and farmers indicated they do this	**S** (Satisfactory) The output is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.	Farmers interviewed during the MTR indicated that they are aware of weather forecasts and plant accordingly but there are no specific data on this at the time of the MTR

and access to climate information, finance and markets						but no definitive data at the time of the MTR		
	% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	0%		25%	60%	This is in the planning stages at the time of the MTR	**MS** (moderately satisfactory) The output is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings	Planning stages only at the time of the MTR
	% Women participation and decision-making in CIPs	0%		20%	50%	Planning stages only – noting that 41% women have been invited via the official letters to establish CIPs to date	**MS** (moderately satisfactory) The output is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings	

Table 5. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for the SACCR Project
(ranking is from 1: highly unsatisfactory to 6: highly satisfactory)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	4	**Satisfactory**
Progress Towards Results	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating**: 4**	**MS: Moderately Satisfactory**: (The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, but with significant shortcomings).
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: **5**	**S: Satisfactory**: (The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings).
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Achievement Rating: **6**	**HS: Highly Satisfactory**: (The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings). Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Sustainability	Achievement Rating:**4**	**L: Likely**: Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future outcomes. While there are several delays and it is uncertain whether all activities and outcomes will be achieved, there are good, built in sustainability mechanisms.

3.2.1 Effectiveness: Progress of Activities in Outputs 1 and 2

Appendix 10 provides a visual rating of the progress to date (achievement rating) for each of the Activities listed below and Figure 4 below shows the achievement status of the 22 main activities.

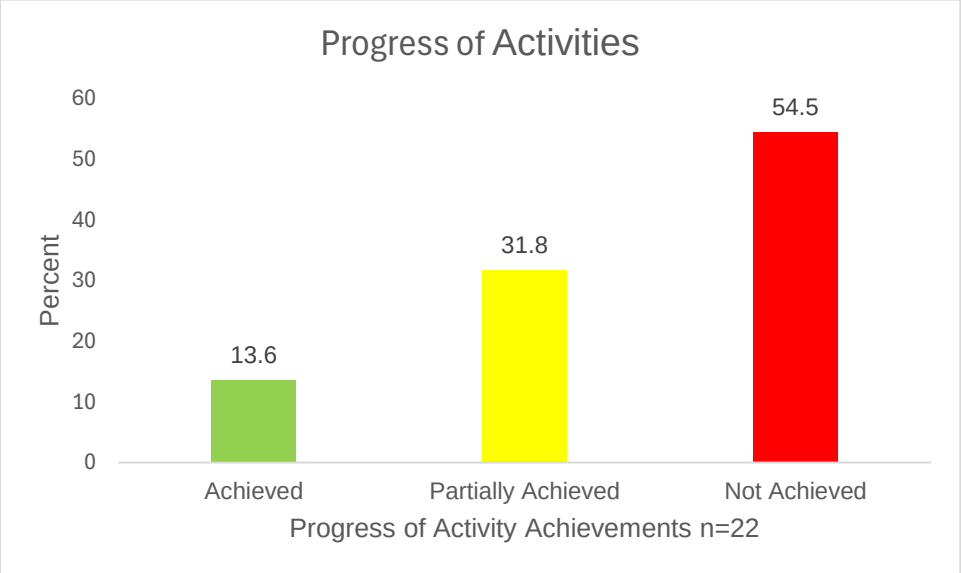

Figure 4. Progress of Main Activities

Output 1 Achievements

Activity 1.1: **Establish large-scale irrigation infrastructure to bring irrigation water to seven farming areas across the target regions in the five provinces**
At the time of the MTR, 38.7 km of pipeline has been put down[23]. In WEIDAP's Aide Memoire it is stated that as of 30 April 2024, only 11.4% of the total project funds were spent. While this is not a SACCR activity funded through GCF, Activity 1.2 and the associated sub-activities and indicators[24] are fully dependent on it.

Activity 1.2 Establish last-mile connections between WEIDAP irrigation infrastructure and the poor and near poor farmer lands to help cope with increasing rainfall variability and drought
Direct beneficiaries = 3,733

Activity 1.2.1: *Design and construct 3,733 connection and distribution systems including installation and maintenance of irrigation equipment to cope with climate variability*

This activity is in the design phase only, with approximately 7 % (250/3,733) of the design completed. However, there are no last mile connections established at the time of the MTR. In Ninh Thuan, the last mile connection for phase 1 is completed. Now the survey is ongoing for phase 2.

Target for 1.2.1 In Progress

Table 6. Progress of Activity 1.2.1 Last mile connections (data from the Mid-term report, June 30, 2024)

Province	Beneficiary List Prepared	No. of Last mile connections approved	No. HH registered to join last-mile connection	No. HH surveyed to date[25]	% of Target Achieved
Dak Lak	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	0%
Dak Nong	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	0%
Ninh Thuan	√	250	714	507	16.1% (250/1557)
Binh Thuan	√	In progress	58 (out of 216 beneficiary HH)	In progress	0%

Successes:
Ninh Thuan has had good progress overall with project activities, more than other provinces, and that is due to: i) cooperation and a good relationship with WEIDAP: ii) commitment by local stakeholders; iii) from the beginning everyone involved in the project was "on the same page"; iv) They had access to some detailed maps of last mile connections and the location of beneficiary households by using the same WEIDAP map designer consultant who had the maps available, and most importantly, v) the strong engagement of the DARD Director.

Challenges:
1. The primary reason for delays on this activity is the delays to Activity 1.1, as the detailed designs and construction of the last-mile connections are dependent on the final approved designs and ultimately the construction of large-scale irrigation works

[23] June 10 powerpoint presentation by MARD)
[24] Number of irrigated hectares of farmland served by modernized irrigation systems
[25] As of June 30 2024

through the WEIDAP co-financed Activity 1.1. It is recommended to assess the duration of project extension that may be required to account for the delays that cannot be recovered from the acceleration actions that have been/will be taken. This will be further informed by the findings from upcoming WEIDAP MTR.

2. Besides the delays in Activity 1.1, there are other challenges to Activity 1.2, especially with regard to a change in beneficiary numbers of farmers for the last-mile connection.[26]. There is some difficulty in securing the target number of HH for this activity. For example, in Dak Lak people living in proximity to the water points may not meet all of the four vulnerability criteria as both the non-poor and the poor HH are grouped together, and both have access to the outlet. Therefore, it is difficult to attain the required number of strictly poor/near poor at the location of the outlet. Therefore, with the current criteria, only an estimated 50-60% of the HH will benefit due to the difficulty of grouping those most in need for the outlet. There may be a need to include more sources of irrigation (existing reservoirs and canals where water is available) to increase their stakeholder numbers which would also increase the total area irrigated. The province of Ninh Thuan, for example, has 33 reservoirs [27]which could potentially be included as a water source for the poor/non poor. At the time of the MTR, 623 HH were identified for the last mile connection, out of a target of 1557 beneficiaries. The design has been completed for 250 which is 0.7% of the end of project target for all four provinces. Another way to meet the required number of beneficiaries is to expand the number of beneficiaries by selecting HH that satisfies one of the criteria only, such as women-led HH or ethnic minorities– this may unintentionally select for HH that are not poor/near poor, but it still may include those HHs that are vulnerable to climate impacts, droughts and water insecurity.
3. The allocated budget for last mile connections may need further consideration to take into account cost differences associated with different terrains. In reality, conditions vary and, in the highlands, the terrain is undulating. In addition, recent fluctuations in the costs of fuel, materials, machinery and labour may impact the costs of construction. The project team advised that they closely monitor fluctuations in key project inputs for the last mile connections, taking into account the development of detailed technical designs technical aspects as the project moves from the overall design in the FP and its annexes to the specific and detailed technical designs based on the final works designs of the WEIDAP project and the selection of beneficiaries for last-mile connections. As advised by the project team, some adjustments are required, however these are currently manageable within the existing overall budget provisions for this component.

4. The project's original design envisaged a separate last-mile connection for each beneficiary household. This presented a challenge of getting the last-mile connection pipe through the fields that belong to non-project households, because usually poor households have their fields far away from water sources. The technical design of the last-mile connections in Ninh Thuan changed the approach to collective last-mile connections. This means bigger pipes at the outlet of the WEIDAP tube and then they are divided into smaller pipes as the water flows to individual fields. The new approach solves the issue of getting pipes through the neighbour's fields and promotes community cohesion while increasing the total irrigated area and ensuring that the targeted poor, near poor, ethnic minority and women-headed smallholder farmers can benefit from the irrigation works. However, in also benefiting other (mostly ethnic minority) smallholders, the project will need to ensure that the focus on poverty and marginalization is maintained. The new approach is expected to require enlarged future water user groups that manage last-mile connections, and the project will have

[26] MARD interview
[27] CPMU personal communication

to work out how to ensure the voices and interests of the poor households in those groups are still heard.

Activity 1.2.2 *Train 3,733 poor and near poor farmers households on climate-risk informed utilization of irrigation equipment and system maintenance*

This activity is still in progress – it was scheduled for 2024 and is to be followed up after the design of last-mile connection and distribution systems in activity 1.2.1.

Target for 1.2.2 Not Achieved

Activity 1.2.3. *Establish Water Users Groups for O&M of communal or shared systems*

This activity is dependent on the implementation of Activity 1.2.2. As a result, the activity has only occurred in Ninh Thuan province. In Ninh Thuan, 65 WUGs have been established, of those 49 are women-led groups, which exceeds the target of 35% set in the GAP. The target is the establishment of approximately 36 Water User Groups (on average at least one WUG in each of the 36 communes targeted for last-mile connections).[28]

Target for 1.2.3 Partially Achieved

Activity 1.3: **Enhance supplementary irrigation for rain fed smallholders to cope with rainfall variability and drought**
The number of beneficiaries for this activity has changed due to the increase in number of ponds targeted for the two new districts in Khanh Hoa after the withdrawal of Cam Lam district, with 452 additional households and 33 additional pond management groups in Khanh Son and Khanh Vinh receiving ponds
Direct Beneficiaries = 16,915[29]; Target number of ponds = 1507

Activity 1.3.1 *Construct or upgrade 1,507 climate-resilient ponds (based on site-specific designs construct 849 new ponds and upgrade 658 existing ponds[30].*

Target for 1.3.1 Partially Achieved

Table 6 shows that a total of 441 ponds have been completed as of June 30, 2024, which provides a total of 499.7 ha of irrigated land, accounting for 60% % of the final target However the rate of pond establishment varies between provinces. For example, in Ninh Thuan Province, 149 of the targets of 357 ponds (41.7%) have been constructed.

Of the 441 ponds, 350 ponds (80%) are individual HH ponds and 91 (20%) are shared. Traditionally, farmers dug ponds themselves to secure water for farming, but often those ponds were not well designed to ensure pond durability. The upgraded and newly built ponds funded by the project passed a “stress test”, which was a severe drought and extended dry season in the Central Highlands and Central Coast in 2024. As reported by the farmers, all project supported ponds still hold water at the end of the dry season.

Having enough irrigation water, coupled with training in improved farming techniques and provision of agricultural inputs, has increased the average agricultural yields by 15-30%, as reported by the farmers. In some places, the beneficiary farmer could add an extra crop of maize because of the availability of water. In some communes in Dak Lak, farmers also have

[28] June 2024 Progress Report
[29] This is an additional 1,808 beneficiaries from the original funding proposal
[30] based on revised numbers in the RP

changed their crops because they now have ponds, which indicates some system change and risk taking by farmers.

Table 7. Number of ponds constructed/upgraded (individual and shared) as of June 30, 2024

Province	No. Ponds Completed			% of Target	No. Beneficiary HH	Total Area Irrigated (Ha)
	Indiv	Shared	Total			
Dak Lak	**138**	**12**[31]	**150**	57.7 (260)	186	121.2
Dak Nong	**75**[32]	**14**	**89**	33.2	148	92.3
Khanh Hoa	**0**			0 (430)	0	0
Ninh Thuan	**84**	**65**	**149**	41.7	344	238.5
Binh Thuan	**53**	**0**	**53**	45.3[33]	53	48.2
Total	**350**	**91**	**441**	Target = 1507	**731**	**499.7**

Successes:

1. The first **pond construction** was in June 2023, so it shows clear progress in this activity that 441 have been constructed/upgraded in the time span of one year.
2. In addition to providing much needed water for rainfed agriculture, ponds also reduce the costs of gasoline needed to fuel water pumps that pump water from the aquifer.

Challenges:

1. Some farmers have withdrawn their registration for pond construction for a number of different reasons:
    i. Due to the size of land a pond takes from their small farms (less than or equal to 1 ha).
    ii. Determining the balance between the potential income from each valuable tree vs the size of land taken up by the pond.
    iii. Some farmers chose to switch crops which may have less need for water.
    iv. Some HHs have withdrawn because of discouragement due to the long wait times
2. Pond Safety: a budget is required to ensure that ponds are fenced. In all cases of ponds observed for the MTR, there were safety signs at the pond site (Photo 1) and in Dak Lak province, it is also equipped with life-saving rings (funds from other sources). The sides of the ponds are steep and there is a potential risk especially to children, which necessitates fencing in most cases. Only with private ponds, there is a

[31] The narrative indicates 13 shared ponds. Also, the ability to identify 43 groups of shared ponds is difficult due to the hilly and mountainous terrain of Dak Lak
[32] The narrative is different than the numbers in the table: i.e. in Dak Nong**:** 54 out of 73 groups of shared ponds have been established, but the numbers in table only indicate 14 shared ponds
[33] In this case, the target is difficult to determine. It was set at 117 which is the numbet of HH registered. 45HH withdrew and only 59 ponds met he requirements for upgrading/new construction.

commitment to build a fence, which is according to the responsibilities of beneficiary households when participating in the project. The MTR noted local proactiveness in ensuring pond safety. In Dak Lak province, the PPMU worked with the provincial Committee for Disaster Response, Search and Rescue to have a lifebuoy at each of the project constructed pond.

3. Pond construction is best done during the dry season because construction is easier and to prevent subsidence during heavy rains. Because of a lengthy process of tendering and constructor's selection, coupled with the project pressure to accelerate the implementation, most of the pond construction in Dak Lak and Ninh Thuan happened during the rainy season. This seems to be repeated in Khanh Hoa province, due to the delay caused by the location change and project restructuring.
4. Inflation has increased the costs of pond construction. Project officials in Ninh Thuan in particular noted the challenge of inflation, indicating that construction costs had increased by as much as 1.7 to 2 times compared to the project budget. They noted that this made it challenging to construct an individual pond with the allocated budget of 25-35 million VND. In this context, options identified for meeting the target number of pond beneficiaries included increasing the budget for pond construction and increasing the number of shared ponds (compared to individual ponds).
5. There were no data provided in the June 30 Progress report on the number of women-led HH that were beneficiaries of pond construction/rehabilitation. The target set in the GAP is 30%.

Photo 1. Safety sign installed at pond site

Activity 1.3.2 *Train approx. 17,000 poor and near-poor farmer beneficiaries in climate-resilient water resource management to enhance supply*

There are two levels of training for this activity: the Training of Trainers (ToT) and the subsequent training for smallholder farmers. The ToT training is for staff at provincial, district, and commune levels, who have appropriate expertise and skills to become facilitators for farmers. As of June 30, 2024,[34], the ToT training on water resource management has been completed in 4 provinces (Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Dak Lak, and Dak Nong). For Khanh Hoa province, the implementation is behind as the province is waiting for the legal procedures to be completed after restructuring.

[34] Mid-term Report, CPMU

Table 8. Number and breakdown of participants in the ToT for water resources management training

Province	Total trainees	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	29	44.8	27.6
Binh Thuan	30	30.0	20.0
Dak Lak	29	17.2	13.8
Dak Nong	24	25.0	33.3
Total	**112**	**29.5**	**23.3**

Training smallholder farmers: The target is 17,495 poor and near-poor households and the number trained at the time of the MTR is **45% of the final target**. The GAP established target for participation by women is 50%, which was exceeded in this activity. The target for participation by ethnic minorities is 20%, so the target was well exceeded at 79% (Table 8).

Table 9. Number of trainees (farmers) (HH) for Water Resources Management training

Province	No. trainees	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	2,838	66	94
Binh Thuan	0	0	0
Dak Lak	873	27.2	74
Dak Nong	4,161	61.2	69.7
Khanh Hoa	0	0	0
Total	**7,872**	**59.1**	**78.9**

Target for 1.3.2 Partially Achieved

Successes: the targets for the inclusion of women and for ethnic minorities was exceeded
Challenges:

1. This training activity enabled farmer trainees to learn to use a drip irrigation system, however, farmers lack the financial resources to invest in this technology. However, the project intends to support the equipment under Activity 1.4.3

Activity 1.3.3 *Establish 218 pond-management groups for O&M, including structures and agreements on potential funding mechanisms*

Target for 1.3.3 Partially Achieved

At the time of the MTR, 131 shared pond groups have been established out of 218 groups of the whole project, reaching 60% of the end-of-term target. In Dak Nong Province, the number of groups of shared ponds is even higher at 74% (54 out of 73 groups). Details on the number of PMG for each province, the number of women leaders, and the number of women in each group are in the June 2024 Progress Report. Gender disaggregated data on the PMG participants are only available for Dak Lak, which shows that of the 13 shared pond groups that were established for 51 households, 12 of those are women-headed households. Currently, only household heads are indicated as PMG participants. At 23.5%, this does not reach the GAP target of 50%. In order to reach this target, it is recommended that the project ensure that household members (not just household heads) have equal opportunities to participate in the PMG, including specific efforts to promote the participation of women, including women from male-headed households.

Most of the shared ponds were set up according to familial bonds. In one case, three brothers agreed to dig a pond in a plot of land that belonged to one of them and this pond would supply water for three neighboring fields. These shared familial ponds helped the users of the ponds reach and maintain rules regarding responsibilities and benefit sharing.

In Bac Ai District, for example, the Pond User Groups are referred to as "collective interest groups" and exist under the Farmer Associations – which operate similarly to cooperatives, so the groups have some institutional backing for their management and functioning.

Activity 1.4: Increase smallholder capacities to apply on-farm water-efficient practices and technologies to maximize water productivity in coping with rainfall variability and drought

Direct Beneficiaries = 21,228

Activity 1.4.1 *TOT: Train over 21,200 farmers through 900 Farmer Field Schools on soil and biomass management to enhance moisture-holding capacity, recharge of groundwater, and water productivity to cope with evolving climate risks on water security (in conjunction with Activity 2.1).*

The total number of people trained as trainers for soil and biomass management is 146, which is almost 100% of the target of 150**.** The target for women as trainers was exceeded at 52% (GAP target is 35%). However, the target for ethnic minorities is low, as is most of the ToT training, at only 8% (GAP target is 20%).

Table 10. Number of ToT trainees for soil and biomass management

Province	Total trainees	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	30	50	n.d.
Binh Thuan	27	48.1	22.2
Dak Lak	29	41.4	6.7
Dak Nong	30	43.3	1
Khanh Hoa	30	76.7	3.3
Total	**146**	**52.1**	**8.2**

Training of smallholder farmers:

Khanh Hoa province is still to hold FFS trainings; but of the 4 provinces, 15,722 out of the target of 21,228 were trained which is 74.1% of the target. The average of the four provinces for women's participation was 67% which well exceeds the GAP target of 35% and the participation by EM averaged 75% which also well exceeded the target of 20%.

Table 11. Number of farmers trained through FFS on soil and biomass management

Province	Number of training sessions	Total trainees (farmers)	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	343	6,158	72.9	86.7
Binh Thuan	209	1,043	58.6	58.3
Dak Lak	372	4,877	72.9	86.7
Dak Nong	256	3,634	62.9	69.8
Khanh Hoa	0	0	0	0
Total	**1,180**	**15,722**	**Ave: 66.8**	**Ave: 75.4**

Target for 1.4.1 Partially Achieved

Successes:

1. In Ninh Thuan farmers are now phasing out the use of pesticides on grapes and jujube a very high percentage of farmers have switched to using compost.
2. In Nhon Hai commune in Ninh Hai, where most HH own cows, they use the compost system more than chemical fertilizers because of the ready availability of compost. They have found that the productivity of onions has increased with both the use of compost and irrigation.
3. In Phuoc Tan commune in Bac Ai, an estimated 30% of the farmers changed to organic compost use.
4. For those who had not used fertilizer before and who tried the nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (NPK) supplied to them for their maize, they found their productivity increased from 3 bags per 500 sq meter to more than 10 bags, which represents an increase in income from 210,000 vnd to 700,000 vnd[35] per 500m^2.
5. The coffee growing ethnic minority farmers in Dak Lak applied biomass management techniques in concrete ways. Instead of using herbicides to eliminate grass around coffee trees, they control grass growth by cutting the tops off the grasses, leaving the underground roots intact and some above-ground parts to preserve moisture. They also use straw and other agricultural waste products for this purpose.

Challenges:

1. While the FFS training is very effective, in some cases it may not be used, as some farmers may switch to a different crop after training. An example is in Ea Sar commune (E-de ethnic group) where 25 HH grew coffee but due to the price drop, some switched to different crops. They may gradually replace coffee with lychee and macadamia even though their training has been specific for coffee.
2. The MTR noted variable applications of compost and organic fertilizer use, which are better for biomass management compared to chemical fertilizers. While farmers in Ninh Thuan reported greater adoption of composting, farmers in Dak Lak showed greater hesitance, mostly due to higher labour requirements of composting and using organic fertilizers.

Target for 1.4.2 Not Achieved

Successes of FFS Training:

1. All farmers consulted by the MTR team appreciated the FFS they attended. Unlike traditional agricultural trainings, which usually happen in a communal hall and utilize the classroom-based teaching approach, the FFS methodology teaches farmers to use a hands-on approach in the field to demonstrate improved techniques and to answer questions as they arise. This approach is suitable for adults with limited formal education but who possess a rich understanding of their farms and crops they cultivate.
2. Government extension staff are involved in FFS training as supporters and co-facilitators. They also expressed appreciation for the new training approach. With capacities acquired through participation in ToT, they are confident and willing to use the FFS approach in their mainstream agricultural extension activities.
3. HH participation in training is very good and the training is practical for improved production practices. The training was received separately for separate crops which can be suitable for farmers.
4. The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has helped women of ethnic minority groups be confident to confidently share their experience and ask questions during group discussions and take part in general activities of FFS sessions.

> "The FFS model provides perfect training as it is very specific"[36]

[35] 1 bag is 10kg and the price is 7,000 dong per kg. for maize.
[36] interview with CPC

5. For both the soil and biomass and the water management training the trainees stated that before they didn't think about the whole picture and soil fertility wasn't really considered. Now they better understand that "chemical fertilizers degrade the land and uses money and puts chemical residues in the water and soil"[37]. They also learned an interesting way to mulch by using plant remains or weed management to retain soil moisture and nutrients[38]. The training also provided methods to make compost using discarded coffee pods + leaves which is considered an economical way to fertilize. In Bac Ai district many HHs used to sell manure from the cows they keep, but now they are more likely to keep the manure and apply it on their farms, indicating that their awareness of the value of compost has increased.
6. In all provinces, the project encourages the use of organic compost by providing training on composting and composting ingredients are included in the voucher system.

Challenges to FFS training:

1. It was stated that the FFS at times does not consult the farmer enough on their knowledge, especially related to the impacts of climate change[39].
2. The number of farmers trained on soil and biomass is higher than the number who receive vouchers and there is the opinion that everyone who is trained should receive assistance from vouchers.

Activity 1.4.3 *Install on-farm water efficiency systems for 8,621 poor/near-poor smallholders linked to performance-based investment support (linked to Activity 2.1)*

This activity remains in progress. Consultants have sent the detailed design of irrigation models for beneficiary households of 4 provinces to CPMU for review in May 2024.

Challenges: The challenge for this activity is that water efficiency systems are economically feasible only for high-value perennial trees like coffee, durians, grapefruits, jujubes and grapes. For farmers growing annual crops of maize and casava in Bac Ai district in Ninh Thuan, the need for water efficiency systems is quite low and Ninh Thuan will miss the target of households registering for this project support. Dak Lak faces an opposite challenge: too many households want to install on-farm water efficiency systems, but the project budget, developed six to seven years ago, is outdated and too low for poor households.

Target for 1.4.3 Not Achieved

Activity 1.4.4 *Train smallholder farmers in five provinces on climate-risk informed O&M of water efficiency technologies*

This activity is in progress. The implementation depends on the installation of water-saving irrigation systems (Activity 1.4.3)

Target for 1.4.4 Not Achieved

Activity 2.1 Investments in inputs and capacities to scale up climate-resilient cropping systems and practices (soil, crop, land management) among smallholders through Farmer Field Schools

Direct Beneficiaries = 21,228

[37] Interview with FFS trainee
[38] Several farmers during interviews
[39] Interview with District level Farmers Union

Output 2 Progress Towards Results

Activity 2.1.1 Sensitize smallholders to establish/re-activate 900 Farmer Field Schools

The project has established 865 out of 900 FFS groups with 20,633 out of 21,228 participating households (97.2%) in the five target provinces. The average percentage of women participants in the FFS was 46.4%, with the highest in Dak Nong at 84.8% and the lowest in Khanh Hoa at 23.4%. 90-100% of the beneficiary targets has been reached in all five provinces. The GAP targets for women and EM are both surpassed.

Table 12. Summary of FFS group establishment results

Province	Number of groups	Number of farmer participants	% Female	% EM
Ninh Thuan	283	6,633	40.0	32.9
Binh Thuan	55	1,232	45.6	33.1
Dak Lak	234	5,775	26.5	50.4
Dak Nong	222	5,212	84.8	92.5
Khanh Hoa	71	1,774	23.4	41.0
Total	**865**	**20,633**	**46.4**	**52.0**

Target for 2.1.1 Achieved and Surpassed

Activity 2.1.2 ***ToT on CRA****: Train DARD personnel and lead farmers, as well as other interested parties (NGOs, Farmers and Women's Unions, etc.) to build a cadre of farmer champions to galvanize adoption and application of CRA packages (15 provincial level workshops for 30 DARD staff in years 2, 4 and 6; 30 district and 136 commune level trainings for 30 lead farmers in years 2 and 6)*

In August 2023, the CPO 08 consulting unit completed the Manual for Farmer Field School on Climate Resilient Agriculture (version St-CRA-01-08.2023) which has been approved by UNDP as a training document for training of trainers (TOT) and training of farmers (TOF).

Each province was to organize three TOT training courses on CRA. At the time of the MTR, each province completed one ToT involving 153 trainees (55% women which exceed the GAP target of 35% and 15.7% ethnic minorities which does not achieve the GAP target of 20%).

Table 13. Results of TOT training on CRA

Province	Number of classes	Number of trainees	% Female	% EM
Ninh Thuan	1	35	54.3	20.0
Binh Thuan	1	30	53.3	13.3
Dak Lak	1	27	40.7	18.5
Dak Nong	1	26	53.8	11.5
Khanh Hoa	1	35	68.6	14.2
Total	**5**	**153**	**54.9**	**15.7**

Training for Lead Farmers (facilitators) on CRA: The project target is 120 training classes for 1,800 core farmers in 68 project communes (30 farmers per commune on average) in the

2nd and 6th years. At the time of the MTR, 51 training classes (42.5% of the target) have been organized for 1,346 out of 1,530 core farmers (88%) for the first time in four of the five provinces, with no training yet in the Province of Khanh Hoa. The GAP targets of 35% and 20% participation by women and EM are both well surpassed.

Table 14. Results of training on CRA for Lead Farmers

Province	Number of classes	Number of trainees	% Female	% EM
Ninh Thuan	15	403	71,0	65,3
Binh Thuan	9	246	51,7	38,6
Dak Lak	11	283	49,1	58,3
Dak Nong	16	424	47,9	52,1
Khanh Hoa	0			
Total	**51**	**1,346**	**55.7**	**55.0**

Activity 2.1.3 Train farmers and value chain actors - particularly private sector input providers, buyers, processors, transporters - through 900 FFS on scaling up of climate resilient cropping systems and practices. (Each FFS will conduct 1-day trainings twice per year)

The Target for this activity is FFS training for 21,228 direct beneficiary households through about 900 FFS groups: Based on the numbers in Table 15 below, the number of FFS training sessions is 37.6% of the target and the number of beneficiaries is 35.1% of the target[40].

Table 15. Number of farmers trained through FFS on climate resilient agriculture (CRA)

Province	Number of FFS training sessions	Total trainees (farmers)	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	283	6,402	67	96.6
Binh Thuan	55	1,054	65.5	63.6
Dak Lak	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Dak Nong	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Khanh Hoa	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d
Total	**338**	**7,456**	**-**	**-**

Target for 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 Partially Achieved

Successes in CRA Training:

1. In Ninh Thuan province there were over 6000 trainees in FFS (which is 86% of their target) and 70% were women and 80% were poor/near poor ethnic minorities, which exceeds the GAP targets. In Ninh Hai district in Ninh Thuan, an onion growing area using fertilizer and water using CRA techniques is showing greatly increased yield: one ha can produce 19-20 metric tons per crop, with the selling price of 40,000 VND per kg. With irrigation, they can potentially increase production to three crops per year, and thus at least triple their income.

[40] The mid term report only provides data for two provinces so assumption is that the other three have not done the activity

Challenges to CRA Training:

1. The implementation of FFS training on CRA only started in Nov 2023 and was behind the overall project schedule due to the prolonged procurement time for selecting contractors. The training sessions did not adhere to the curriculum framework for FFS training on CRA and did not align well with the growth cycle of crops. Therefore, there was a general feeling of inadequacy of the CRA training. Some facilitators were not familiar with their role as "facilitators" rather than "trainers". These limitations and remaining issues of the FFS classes on CRA in 2023 have provided a learning experience for organizers of FFS training plans in 2024.

Activity 2.1.4 *Investment support to 8,621 targeted poor/near poor smallholders to acquire inputs and technologies for implementation of the CRA packages through performance-based* ***vouchers****.*

Target for 2.1.4 Achieved

For this activity, 74.5% of the target was reached by midterm.

In four of the five provinces (none have been administered in Khanh Hoa), there were a total of 6,423 beneficiary farmers receiving vouchers, with 3,732 poor and 2,511 near poor. A total of 3,311 were from women-headed HH (51.5%) and 5,328 were from ethnic minorities (83%), surpassing the GAP targets of 30% and 20% respectively. The lowest number of farmers trained was in Binh Thuan (506) and the highest number trained was in Ninh Thuan (2,724).

The voucher system is a performance-based system for members of FFS who meet the criteria of: i) being a poor or near-poor household, or ii) female-headed and ethnic minority household, or iii) female-headed household, or iv) ethnic minority household (in this priority order). Those who receive support for pond construction, last-mile connections, CRA and water-saving irrigation trainings are not eligible for vouchers[41]. When a farmer completes at least one training module and makes a production plan (for inputs such as seeds and fertilizer) they get a certificate that gives them seeds and fertilizers. Those less literate receive help to make the plan. Interviews with the PPMU indicated that the voucher system provides about 10% to 30% of what farmers need in terms of inputs (about 5 million VND out of 15 million needed). Eventually, about 40% of those farmers who are in FFS will receive vouchers. There is some degree of control built into the system as the PMU has the M&E officer to check on the use of vouchers to see if the inputs are used. There are also "audit meetings" with farmers to see if the vouchers are effective.

Successes of the voucher system:

1. The poor/near poor, ethnic minority and women-headed HH are very much in need of inputs, and the voucher system is quite effective in increasing crop productivity

Challenges to the voucher system:

1. For input delivery in Ninh Thuan, 3.9 million VND per HH was budgeted. With inflation, input costs are closer to 5 million per HH so "this activity will not be achieved" due to the increased costs. It is estimated they need to increase the cost norm per household by 1.5 to 1.7% which means they might have to reduce the number of beneficiaries. Another option may be to adjust the overall plan to adjust surplus capital between activities.

[41] Manual on the implementation of agricultural input and watering equipment provision through the voucher system.

2. It is evident that the FFS encourages the use of organic fertilizers, but the voucher system still provides inorganic fertilizers, which may have the effect of sustaining a dependency on these. It is also likely because it is difficult for farmers to change their ways since they are used to using chemicals. For example, the MTR found that when a group of 22 FFS members in Dak Lak were asked if they used organic fertilizers, only one person put up their hand.
3. In Ninh Thuan it was noted that the inputs required a long process of tendering and had to restart six times due to a shortage of bidders.

Activity 2.1.5 *Participatory auditing of implementation of voucher systems for climate resilient cropping systems and practices (One 1-day meeting for 100 participants in each of the 68 communes in Years 2, 4 and 6)*

Target for 2.1.5 Partially Achieved

An estimated 400 participants of the target of 6800 were reached for year 2, which is 6% of the target. This activity was organized in Ninh Thuan province only, reaching four communes in three districts (368 farmers; 32 staff participating in monitoring). Of the 368 farmers, there are 155 men (42.1%), 213 women (57.9%), and 362 EM (98.4%), both surpassing the GAP targets of 30% for women and 20% for EM.

Activity 2.2 Technical assistance for enhancing access to markets and credit for sustained climate-resilient agricultural investments by smallholders and value chain actors

Indirect Beneficiaries = 68 target communes in 15 districts

Activity 2.2.1 *Establish and operationalize multi-stakeholder Climate Innovation Platforms (CIP) in each province and at the level of agro-ecological zones (Annual stakeholder meetings organized once every two years in each of the 5 provinces)*

Target for 2.2.1 Partially Achieved

This activity is in progress only and the multi-stakeholder CIPs will be started from July 2024. The consultant has worked with four provinces (no work in Khanh Hoa province) to prepare the Decision on the establishment and operating regulations of 4 provincial-level CIPs and 13 district-level CIPs. The lists of CIP Steering Committees at provincial and district levels of the four 4 provinces have been received.

Activity 2.2.2 *Provide technical assistance and training to enable market linkages with input, information and technology providers and buyers for climate-resilient agricultural production (two trainings, two networking workshops and three trade fairs in each of the 15 districts over four years)*

Target for 2.2.2 Partially Achieved

Only four of the five provinces have conducted one market access training out of two trainings and none have been held at the district level[42]. UNDP consultants, in coordination with PPMUs, have supported market linkages and organized training courses to promote market linkages in four provinces. This training involves working with the support of Women's Unions (WU) and is still in the initial stages.

[42] Mid-term Report, CPMU

Table 16. Training on Market Linkages

Province	Number of trainees	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	45	55.6	6.7
Binh Thuan	40	43.0	23.0
Dak Lak	43	41.9	16.3
Dak Nong	38	50.0	23.7
Khanh Hoa	0	0	0
Total	**166**	**47.6**	**16.9**

Successes in Market Access Training and Market Linkage Promotion:

1. Evidence from a woman-headed HH who said that access to market made them comfortable and confident after the training[43].
2. Dak Nong and Binh Thuan have supported cooperatives in choosing products to participate in agricultural fairs in the provinces of the South-Central and Central Highlands region and connecting with buyers purchasing agricultural products supported by the project.
3. While training has been limited, the number of women participating is just under the GAP target of 50% and EM participation is lower than the GAP target of 20%.

Challenges to Market Access Training:

1. Post harvest storage is an important component of market training. Due to potential higher crop productivity from CRA and irrigation, there is a greater need for crop storage before sales. In Nhon Hai commune, they said they are able to store the onions for two months (by drying or using a chemical) and usually they sell right away, but training in post-harvest storage might be needed to assist with increased production.

Activity 2.2.3 *Provide technical assistance and train farmers to enable access to credit through financial intermediaries (One workshop in each of the 68 communes in years 2 and 4).*

Target for 2.2.3 Partially Achieved

For this activity in year two, 68 workshops were held, which is 58.8% of the target. The GAP targets for women and EM were both surpassed.

Table 17. Access to Credit Training

Province	No. Classes	No. of trainees	% Women	% Ethnic Minority
Ninh Thuan	15	1,259	69.8	21.4
Binh Thuan	9	619	56.5	33.4
Dak Lak	0	0	0	0
Dak Nong	16	955	60.4	65.4
Khanh Hoa	0	0	0	0
Total	**40**	**2833**	**63.7 (Ave)**	**38.9 (Ave)**

Successes of the Access to Credit system:

1. There is a potential opportunity for synergy with government activities related to the Viet Nam Social Policy bank that assists with credit access to farmers at the provincial level. In addition, the WU already conducts micro-credit schemes which the project

[43] Interview in Nhon Hai commune

can build on. As stated in the ESMP[44], "The livelihood support will need to coordinate with on-going micro-credit schemes established by the National Poverty Reduction Programme, Women Union and Farmer Union (#135) in building partnerships with private agents (who provide fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) and design and enforce implementation of a programme to ensure that these agents commit to keeping reasonable prices for smallholder farmers."

2. In Dak Nong, the PPMU has coordinated with the Provincial Women's Union to propose the establishment of a credit fund for 16 project communes to support farmers in accessing credit for livelihood development.

Activity 2.3 Co-development and use of localized agro-climate advisories by smallholders to enhance climate-resilient agricultural production

Activity 2.3.1: *Train 50 hydromet and DARD staff on generating and interpreting down-scaled forecasts for use in agricultural planning (eight training over four years for 50 participants)*

Target for 2.3.1 Not Achieved – In Progress

The CPO/CPMU, in coordination with UNDP, has developed the ToR for activity 2.3.1. To date, MARD has approved the dossier for the CPO-20 package to implement this activity. Currently, the CPO/CPMU is processing the procedures to recruit consultants for the implementation of the CPO-20 package. The recruitment of consultants is expected to be completed by August 2024.

Activity 2.3.2: *Provide technical assistance for the formation Agro-climate Information Services (ACIS) technical groups and training of 450 participants at district level (1-day workshops for 30 participants in each of the 15 districts)*

Target for 2.3.2 Partially Achieved – In Progress

By June 2024, the Provincial Project Management Boards have established 20 ACIS groups, consisting of 5 provincial ACIS and 15 district ACIS. The total number of ACIS members is 286; provincial ACIS members are 71 (accounting for 24.8%); the total number of districts ACIS members is 215 (75.2%). The total number of female members is 93 (32.6%), close to the GAP target of 35%; the total number of ethnic minority members is 45 (15.6%).

Table 18. Number of ACIS groups

Province	No. of groups established	Total No. members	% women	% Ethnic minority
Ninh Thuan	5	67	38.8	14.9
Binh Thuan	3	40	27.5	10.0
Dak Lak	5	58	25.9	10.3
Dak Nong	4	61	32.8	14.8
Khanh Hoa	3	57	36.8	28.1
Total	**20**	**286**	**32.6**	**15.6**

[44] ESP page 129

Provinces achieving the target of having at least 35% female participation: Ninh Thuan and Khanh Hoa. Other provinces have female participation rates ranging from approximately 25.9% (Dak Lak) to 32.8% (Dak Nong). The participation rate of ethnic minorities in ACIS groups ranges from 10.0% (Binh Thuan) to 28.1% (Khanh Hoa).

Agro-Climate Information Services (ACIS) refers to the provision of timely, relevant, and location-specific climate and weather information to farmers and agricultural stakeholders to support decision-making in agricultural practices. These services integrate meteorological, climatological, and agronomic data to help users anticipate and respond to climate variability and change, thus enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience.

Activity 2.3.3 *Co-develop, through Participatory, Scenario Planning (PSP) of seasonal and 10-day/15-day agro-climate advisories with smallholder farmers (20 provincial level trainings for 30 staff and 60 district level trainings for 60 participants over four years)*

Target for 2.3.3 Not Achieved – In progress

The PSP training materials have been developed by the National Agricultural Climate Expert. A portion of the PSP training content was integrated into the five kickoff and training workshops for ACIS held in five provinces. The templates for the agricultural climate bulletins will be refined during the pilot phase before training is conducted for provincial ACIS members. Currently, the CPO/CPMU is finalizing the documents and recruiting consultants.

The project is piloting a 10/15-day agricultural weather forecast bulletin in Dak Lak. After evaluating the trial results, it will be revised and expanded to the 5 project provinces.

Activity 2.3.4 *Disseminate advisories to 132,836 households in the 68 communes*

Target for 2.3.4 Not Achieved – In progress

Currently, the CPO/CPMU is finalizing the documents and recruiting consultants. UNDP will enhance the dissemination of the bulletins to residents through direct dissemination activities and increased training for commune, village officials, and residents.

Weather forecasting and advisories are underway in some provinces. For example, in Ninh Hai District in Ninh Thuan, it was said that weather information was provided to farmers via daily climate information and a forecasting newsletter and also under the new rural development program. There is an “early warning climate system” in this district which is the main area for salt making. In Bac Ai district, there is a Zalo[45] group set up between the district and the commune for weather forecasting.

Challenges to weather forecasting and climate advisories:

1. There may be some overlap between project activities on weather forecasting and what farmers obtain from TV or the internet. A short survey might assist the project to determine how efforts can be synergized and not duplicated.
2. Understanding of Meteorological and Hydrological Information and its application in agricultural Planning among District, Commune, Village Officials, and Residents is Limited Surveys and meetings conducted by ACIS reveal the following: (i) District-level ACIS members suggest that climate-agriculture information training needs to be strengthened because current forecasts are difficult to understand and highly technical; (ii) Commune and village officials and residents in many project areas are unfamiliar with reading and comprehending agricultural climate bulletins. Surveyed

[45] Zalo is similar to WhatsApp

commune officials and residents recommend increasing training so they can understand, grasp, and apply the agricultural climate bulletins.

3. The project beneficiaries include vulnerable populations with limited access to information (living in remote areas, ethnic minorities, high illiteracy rates, etc.), making information access challenging. Furthermore, many residents still follow traditional and natural production habits without fully understanding the benefits of using agricultural climate bulletins.
4. Survey Findings in Xuan Hai Commune, Ninh Hai District: In Xuan Hai Commune, which received agricultural climate bulletins in 2023, most residents were unaware of the bulletins' existence and didn't know where to access them. Although the bulletins were posted at village/commune offices, residents were still unaware of them due to the lack of introduction/training activities for the community.

Table 19. Summary of IE Indicator Achievement ratings for SACCR project

LogFrame Indicators ()	IE Achievement Rating		
	Achieved	On Target to be Achieved	Not on Target to be Achieved
Fund Level Indicators (7)	**2**	**4**	**0**
Program Level Indicators (7)	**0**	**5**	**2**

Impact: The SACCR project has not met most of its mid-term targets that would permit reporting on impact as measured by the LogFrame indicators. Nonetheless, the project has the potential to greatly assist small holder farmers with water security and increased productivity from agricultural inputs, training in CRA techniques including soil and biomass management.

Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

The key remaining barrier to achieving the SACCR project objective and outputs is related to the dependency of activities 1.1 and 1.2 on the WEIDAP project.

The project has worked closely with WEIDAP to monitor implementation progress and to advocate for effective actions to address delays and expedite WEIDAP delivery. During 2024, two joint monitoring missions were organized, with the involvement of the SACCR and WEIDAP project directors and key staff as well as senior officials from MARD and MPI). WEIDAP began construction of irrigation infrastructure in mid-2023.

The WEIDAP project director advised that the WEIDAP project will organize its mid-term review in Q4 2024. It is anticipated that this review will provide key information on the overall status of WEIDAP delivery, barriers and expected course corrections for the remainder of the project, including whether a revision in the WEIDAP timeframe would be required. This would be key information to be considered in order to identify the need and proposed duration of an extension of the SACCR project.

Concerning the withdrawal of WEIDAP from Khanh Hoa province, a restructuring paper (FP125-UNDP-13092023-RP) was developed and approved by the GCF, reflecting the changes in project locations within Khanh Hoa.

3.2.2 Efficiency

The progress of the SACCR project has been hampered by several delays, many of which are beyond the control of the CPMU and the project management team. These delays have greatly hampered several activities and have put the project on an accelerated path to achieve its targets by project termination in June 2026. The delays are summarized as follows:

1. Khanh Hoa province now has a new master plan, which resulted in the WEIDAP project pulling out from Cam Lam district. This necessitated a revision of the project design in the province, because the last-mile connections were no longer viable. A restructuring proposal was submitted to the GCF on 6 Mar 2023 and was approved on 16 Oct 2023. Following approval of the restructuring paper, the Khanh Hoa PPMU needed to secure re-approval from national and provincial authorities, which was completed in May 2024, finalizing all national procedures for project approval in Khanh Hoa.

2. In May 2020, the GoV passed a new decree[46] governing the management of ODA. As a result, the project approval process was re-directed from the central government to the five provinces as well as the central level. Each province became a project owner of the funds transferred to them. This is a clear departure from the umbrella model governing similar ODA projects used in the past, where a ministry at the central level would act as a funding recipient and then channel the funding to subnational levels. The new ODA mechanism lengthened the approval process, so that the project could only commence activities at the end of 2022.

3. Government approval processes take time: i) Changes in the FS required a lengthy government approval process; ii) approval processes for the construction packages take time, for example for Activity 1.2 in Dak Lak the ToR for the survey and design of the LMC was approved in Nov 2023 and the contract was signed in Mar 2024.

4. Activity 1.2 of the SACCR project is contingent on the progress of the WEIDAP project, which is experiencing significant delays. Some of the main causes of the WEIDAP delays are[47]:

    i. Covid-19 epidemic which occurred over two years (2020-2022) caused many project activities to be delayed.

    ii. Lengthy process of selection and contracting the SESC Consultants.

    iii. There has been significant cost escalation during the time gap between the Feasibility Study preparation and actual implementation activities.

    iv. Inadequate performance of the WEIDAP design consultant leading to prolonged discussion and finalization of the detailed engineering design with the Australian Water Partnership (AWP), as well as delays in the appraisal and approval by the executing agency/subproject implementing agencies.

    v. The land compensation process takes longer than expected.

    vi. In the WEIDAP project design, the pipeline diameter had to be increased and the design had to be re-submitted, which is a long process that must go through the PPC and their internal processes. The design change was submitted in Jan 2023 and approval came 11 months later.

In addition to delays, there are other factors that contribute to inefficiency:

5. Officials at the commune level, members of the WU and FU spend a lot of time on the project, but they do not receive additional support from the project. They are therefore contributing their personal time to the project in addition to their other roles in the

[46] Decree 56/2020/ND-CP on management and use of official development assistance (ODA) and concessional loans granted by foreign donors.
[47] WEIDAP Annual report 2022

commune. There is no office space, or allowance for those who work these extra hours on the project.

6. FFS training and the timing of input delivery do not always match the agricultural seasons. If the training is not used right away, certain techniques may be forgotten and if the input deliveries aren't timed with the season, then the farmers need instruction as to how to store the inputs until needed.

7. Beneficiary selection process has shown to take a lot of time and effort. For example, the selection process in Nhon Hai commune, involved seven community meetings (three to develop the list and four to communicate the list) in seven different villages.

8. The bidding process is time-consuming and onerous and must comply with Viet Nam 's bidding law. The new Bidding Law was adopted by the National Assembly on 23 June 2023. The new law addresses issues regarding the selection of investors for project implementation, in sectors like power and infrastructure and includes investment projects on water-supply works and systems[48]. This project is considered as an infrastructure investment project which requires lengthy bidding and appraisal processes for ponds and LMC packages.

9. COVID-19 restrictions have delayed projects worldwide and Viet Nam is no exception. The lockdowns and travel restrictions meant that communities could not be visited, FFS training could not be conducted, and project monitoring could not take place.

3.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Despite the project being required to follow strict protocols and regulations, there was some adaptive management implemented during the project.

1. The project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was developed in June 2023 and in the one-year span of time up to the time of the MTR the project has recorded and satisfactorily resolved 91 complaints from beneficiary HH (53 in 2023 and 38 in 2024). Obtaining feedback from project beneficiaries and working to resolve the issues that arise by making changes to project implementation is a good example of adaptive management.
2. Another example of adaptive management is the lessons learned from other provinces that were incorporated into the Khanh Hoa province activities which many allow them to be accelerated there to some extent.

3.3.1 Management Arrangements

The management arrangements for the SACCR project were found to be very effective and facilitated the delivery of project activities.

UNDP, as the GCF Accredited Agency was very effective in bringing to fruition the "paradigm shift" that the project represents in Viet Nam. Applying UNDP's framework of "Leave No One Behind" assisted the project in ensuring that those people who are marginalized and who lack the choices and opportunities required to participate and benefit from development progress were included in the SACCR project.

"UNDP is good at what they do"[49] as a specialized agency that is experienced in working with vulnerable people and enabling them to participate. In this way, UNDP was a good partner to

[48] https://www.Viet Nam -briefing.com/news/Viet Nam -decree-23-outlines-bidding-processes-for-key-sectors-projects.html/#:~:text=Adopted%20by%20the%20National%20Assembly,sectors%20like%20power%20and%20infrastructure.
[49] CPMU Interview

MARD who has less experience drawing on this philosophy. UNDP acts as a bridge between the government agencies and GCF and provides advice on GCF's requirements to work at the community level. In doing so, UNDP helps the PPMU facilitate activities in the field.

UNDP also has a "project assurance" function and supports the Project Steering Committee by carrying out independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, MARD, as the Executing Entity (EE) at the Central level delegated the project implementation responsibility to a central project management unit (CPMU) established under the Central Project Office for Water Resources (CPO). MARD is responsible for the overall implementation, management, and coordination of the project. MARD has the technical expertise to implement a climate change adaptation project, with their departments of water resources and plant protection and the Local Agricultural Extension Units who are important players in the project, especially regarding the FFS ToT training.

Changes made during the project to the management arrangements include the shift in responsibility to the provinces, due to the government ODA decree 114. These changes have caused delays to the project while the new roles and responsibilities at the provincial level are established, and they can handle direct financial transfers from UNDP. The Central Project Management Unit (CPMU) continues to provide support to the Provincial Project Management Units (PPMU).

The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) as the National Designated Authority is the liaison between the PMU and GCF.

The PPMU has the technical oversight and works with the District Agriculture Department who alongside the Commune Peoples Committees (CPC) does more of the day-to-day project work. The Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) delegated the responsibility to their respective Agriculture and Rural Development Departments (DARD), as the implementing agencies responsible at the provincial level. Each DARD has set up a Provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU), which is in charge of the day-to-day implementation activities including: i) preparation and processing of subproject investments; ii) preparation of detailed technical engineering design, safeguards mitigation documents, implementation, and Procurement Plans; iii) implementation of fiduciary (procurement and financial management) and safeguards activities at the subproject level; iv) operation and maintenance of the project account; and, v) M&E of subproject implementation. Each of the PPMUs are staffed with qualified and experienced employees in all areas, particularly on subject matter (technical, financial, environmental, resettlement, gender etc.) and safeguards related aspects.

The MTR observed a good working relationship between CPMU, PPMU, UNDP of the SACCR project and WEIDAP/ADB at the national, provincial and district levels. Senior management from UNDP and ADB regularly exchange updates on the implementation of SACCR. At the project level, periodic meetings are held between the project management boards of WEIDAP/ADB and SACCR/UNDP at both central and provincial levels. Additionally, annual joint missions have been conducted, involving WEIDAP's project director and the SACCR/UNDP team, to the project provinces. Monthly meetings are also held between the technical thematic teams of WEIDAP and SACCR/UNDP to facilitate ongoing collaboration.

The value added of GCF involvement is to empower the poor and near-poor farmer population, which has experienced an increasing degree of vulnerability over recent years due to water insecurity from climate impacts. Investing in the connectivity of poor and near-poor farms to WEIDAP infrastructure and investing in water storage on rain fed agricultural lands will enable poor farmers to utilize irrigation technologies and CRA practices to increase crop productivity.

3.3.2 Work planning

Project delays were discussed in Section 3.2.2 on Efficiency. The project management units at the central and provincial levels are aware of the causes of the delays and are acting accordingly. In 2022 and 2023, the CPMU together with UNDP and the five provincial PMUs organized four workshops which more than 350 delegates attended, including the International Cooperation Department and Department of Finance, MARD, officials from MPI, leaders from DARD, representatives from WU and FU, representatives of relevant departments (water resource departments, agricultural extension centers), a number of local leaders at commune and village levels, and representatives of ethnic minority households.

Activity planning was conducted at three of those workshops. In addition, workshops on M&E and summaries of project aspects were conducted in November 2023, which included work planning of PPMUs/CPMU for 2024, developing plans/estimated finance, disbursement procedures, and information about environmental and social performance results.

The MTR also observed comprehensive Annual Progress Reports, which outline in detail the project implementation progress with indicator measurements, updated financial information, social and environmental safeguards, gender and updates on the GRM.

3.3.3 Finance and co-finance

The financial costs of climate-induced water scarcity to agricultural livelihoods among the poor/near poor are very significant and can cost smallholder farmers their livelihoods due to yield reductions. Investments by the GCF and the GoV are a critically important way to help smallholder farmers avoid these losses.

The first SACCR funding proposal was approved on 12 Mar 2020.and the Restructuring Proposal's approval is dated 16 October 2023[50], the main changes between the financial aspects of the two proposals is budget changes to Activities 1.1 (WEIDAP with GoV and ADB co-financing), 1.2 and 1.3 (both GCF grants). Activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 were affected by the ADB withdrawal from Khanh Hoa:

- Activity 1.1 (WEIDAP GoV and ADB co-finance) was reduced from USD 119,995,000 to 101,988,844.
- Activity 1.2 (GCF fund) was reduced from USD 7,456,870 to 6,278,225 (representing a 15.8% reduction) and
- Activity 1.3 (GCF fund) increased from USD 3,111,419 to 4,290,064, representing a 37.9% increase.
- Total project funds were reduced from USD156,292,842 to 138,286,686, which is a 11.5% reduction.

Developing and enhancing the capacity for water security though different methods of irrigation for smallholder farmers is a cost-effective and locally appropriate strategy to address climate-induced water scarcity. The budget allocated for Activities in Output 1 and 2 and project management are shown below in Table 20.

Table 20. Budget allocations for Outputs 1, 2 and Project Management

	GCF Grant	GoV co-finance	WEIDAP co-finance	Total
Output 1	15,037,156	3,148,175	101,988,844	**120,174,175**
Output 2	13,741,622	824,000	0	**14,565,622**
Project Management	1,426,589	465,300	1,655,000	**3,546,889**
Total	30,205,367	4,437,475	103,643,844	**138,286,686**

[50] Consideration of funding proposals - Addendum II Funding proposal package for FP125

Increasing water security (Output 1) for 41,876[51] direct beneficiaries with a budget of USD 18,185,331 represents a cost estimate of USD $ 434 per person.

Strengthening the capacities of smallholder farmers to apply climate and market information, technologies, and practices for climate-resilient water and agricultural management (Output 2) is another sustainable, cost effective and locally appropriate strategy to address the need to adapt to climate induced water scarcity. The budget of USD $14,565,622 for Output 2 is proposed to provide for 21,228 direct beneficiaries. This represents a cost of USD $ 686 per person.

Detailed financial planning and reporting with appropriate controls are evident in the Annual Progress Reports, 2020 to 2023, with clear and comprehensive financial Information. Reviewing the APR 2023 financial information, Table 21 below shows at the end of the third year of the project 84.4 % of the GCF grant and 80.7 % of GoV co-financing and 81.5% of the WEIDAP co-financing remains to be utilized in the remaining two years of the project. Since it is determined that Activity 1.2 may not be completed before project closure, it must be concluded the approved budgets associated with implementation of project activities associated with these targets, will not be utilized before project closure.

The adoption of an adaptive project management strategy of a rapid acceleration of project activities to fully utilize the total approved budget will have to be conducted with care due to the potential for unsustainable outcomes. Project activities that require training, capacity development and the start-up of novel activities must be implemented sequentially and iteratively, allowing knowledge uptake, learning by trial and error, knowledge sharing and behavioral change to be successful and more importantly, sustainable following project closure.

Analysis of the budget utilization rate highlights the inability of the SACCR project to implement planned activities over the past two years due to several reasons, as discussed in Section 3.2.2 Efficiency. It is hoped that a greater proportion of SACCR activities planned for 2024-26 will be implemented and that this will be reflected in an increased budget utilization rate at the end of the year.

Table 21. SACCR project budget and expenditure from (June 2020 to Dec 31, 2023)

Financing Type	Total Approved Budget	Cumulative Expenditures (to Dec 31, 2023)	Percent of Budget Spent	Percent of Approved Budget Remaining
GCF Grant	30,205,367	4,710,974.08	15.6	84.4
WEIDAP Co-financing	103,643,844	19,122,655	18.5	81.5
GoV Co-financing	4,437,475	856,941	19.3	80.7
TOTAL	138,286,686	24,690,570.08		

Successes in financial delivery:

1. The project's financial management process have been able to successfully coordinate the financial mechanisms of the five provinces, after the budgets were decentralized to the provinces.

[51] Not including Activity 1,1 and project management costs. Numbers taken from RP page 25

2. Financial reporting processes are clear, accurate and timely, with financial accounting presented in the annual progress reports. The ease of access and clarity of reporting enabled the PSC to comprehend, analysize and discuss the financial status of the project.

Challenges to financial delivery:

1. The MPI is required to show GCF that a certain percentage of the activities are completed before the next tranche is made. Because some of the activities are dependent on Activity 1.1 progress, there are significant delays which then affect overall disbursements from GCF.
2. With the new changes to ODA, provinces are now responsible for project budgets allocated to them. This may require more oversight by the UNDP financial officer to track six different budgets: the five PPMUs and the CPMU.
3. There was late approval of annual workplans by the PPC, and late allocation of financial resources by the treasury for the PPMUs/CPMU, and changes to procurement plan of the PPMUs.

3.3.4 Coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities

There are currently several climate change/environment related projects operating in the five target provinces, with funding from a variety of international donors and co-financing from the GoV. Specifically, ongoing initiatives outside of the project that contribute to the overall availability of water include three projects in Ninh Thuan, two in Binh Thuan, one in Dak Lak and one in Dak Nong[52]. Funding sources include JICA, the New Zealand government, the EU and national and provincial budgets. Activities include afforestation, the establishment of plantations and protection of natural forests.

Projects previously implemented that specifically focus on climate change adaptation include 'Managing groundwater access in Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands) (2005 to 2008), a pilot project 'Re-hydrating the earth by sustainable, small scale sub-surface water retention techniques' (2007 to 2009) in Ninh Thuan; a pilot project 'Augmenting groundwater resources by artificial recharge in Binh Thuan province, Viet Nam' (2004 to 2010), funded by the Italian Government, UNESCO and the International Council for Science; 'Integrating Water Security and Climate Resilience Programmes into Viet Nam Irrigation Management Plan' (2014-2019); through the multi-country 'Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans (NAP-Ag)' program, funded through the German Government's International Climate Initiative; 'More coffee with less water – towards a reduction of the blue water footprint in coffee production' (2014-2019) with funding from the multinational Nestlé and the SIDA; and the project 'Cultivation Soil Management and Water Conservation project' in Dak Lak and Lam Dong with funding from Jacobs Douwe Egberts/Mondelez International (2016-2018).

Projects that aim to improve climate information for better risk management have also received support from GoV and other donors and include: "Building Drought Maps for Viet Nam' (2013 to 2014) as well as several other climate-based projects in provinces outside the five SACCR target provinces.

As mentioned in the relevance section, the SACCR project is aligned with other UNDP projects in Viet Nam. For example, UNDP supports the development of the National Adaption Plan (NAP) for Viet Nam, as well as the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) which is a collaborative effort among UNDP, UNEP-WCMC, and UNESCO, supported by the Government of Germany's Climate Initiative (IKI) and SwedBio, which aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of diverse ecosystem services. Another UNDP supported project aims to address multiple development challenges threatening the sustainability of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Viet Nam 's Biosphere Reserves by

[52] Water Assessment Report 23 December 2022

strengthening coordinated planning in terms of national and provincial policymaking on socio-economic development, promoting sustainable natural resources management, facilitating biodiversity conservation and restoration, and fostering transformative livelihood models.[53]

The SACCR project plays a pivotal role in UNDP's overall climate resilience strategy, aligning closely with Outcome 2 of the Country Programme Document (CPD) on enhancing community resilience to climate change. Building upon the foundation laid by previous initiatives such as the study “Viet Nam Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. Summary for Policymakers” on agro-climate information and the project “Improving the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities to climate change -related impacts in Viet Nam” on climate-resilient infrastructure, the SACCR project has successfully integrated and expanded upon these efforts.

Moreover, the project's demonstrated initial success in access to credits has led to its replication in the project “Viet Nam Climate Smart Coastal Communities” funded by the Canadian government, enhancing coastal resilience. Similarly, the Farmer Field Schools approach, proven effective in the SACCR project, has been widely adopted in the “Korea-Viet Nam Peace Villages” project funded by KOICA, contributing to broader agricultural development. These interconnections not only optimize resource utilization but also create a multiplier effect, amplifying UNDP's impact on climate resilience.

The SACCR project activities are consistent with those identified for other projects in terms of addressing the widespread need for irrigation and climate-resilient agriculture and the building of the government’s capacity to scale-up these activities and to allocate budget to ensure their continuation.

3.3.5 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the SACCR project is a part of the larger M&E program of the UNDP Country Office (CO). Since the CO has annual targets, the M&E officer ensures that the SACCR project fits within these targets as well as the Country Program Document (CPD) evaluation.

The M&E system in place for the SACCR project includes a total of 958,000 USD allocated specifically for M&E activities as set out in the Project Inception Report. In terms of human resources, each PPMU has mobilized one M&E officer who is responsible for data collection, monitoring and reporting. At the CPMU level, there is one M&E specialist and one M&E officer. A baseline survey was conducted at project inception, indicators in the Project Results Framework are monitored annually and are reported in detail in the Annual Progress Reports, along with changes to identified risks and with specific gender indicators and targets identified in the GAP.

The project employs a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track progress, measure outcomes, and inform decision-making. Key tools include:

•Weekly progress reports: these reports detail key indicators such as the number of irrigation structures constructed, trainings conducted, and number of beneficiaries reached. These reports are shared with project staff and key stakeholders.

•Quarterly progress reports: Comprehensive overviews of project implementation, including financial performance, are produced every quarter. These reports analyze trends, identify challenges, and propose corrective actions.

•Annual Performance Reports (APRs): Prepared in accordance with GCF requirements, APRs provide a holistic assessment of project achievements, including results, outputs, and outcomes.

•Site visits: Regular site visits (at least monthly) are conducted by technical specialists and management to verify progress, identify bottlenecks, and provide on-the-ground support.

[53] UNDP Viet Nam website

•Joint monitoring visits: Collaborative visits with WEIDAP are conducted twice yearly to strengthen coordination and knowledge sharing.

The M&E system is designed to ensure data quality and utilization. Data collected through these tools inform project management decisions, track progress against targets, and measure project impact. For instance, data on irrigation infrastructure has been used to adjust implementation plans and allocate resources effectively.

The project management has placed a strong focus to ensure M&E system operated properly. First, M&E plan and related allocated resources have been set out in Project Inception Report. Reporting mechanism is reflected in Project Implementation Manual. The implementation of M&E activities are reported to project management in quarterly basis and Project Steering Committee in annual basis.

The M&E system is thorough and detailed and contributed greatly to the MTR evaluation due to the rigor of reporting. The system fully captures and reports on the participation of women and ethnic minorities, as it collects disaggregated data on those two dimensions. The Mid-term report produced in June 2024 produced recent indicator measurements and a narrative that was detailed, transparent and optimistic about the progress of activities until the project ends in June 2026.

The risk factors and mitigation measures identified at project inception [54] and in the Restructuring Proposal were clearly stated, accurate and included the main challenge that the project is currently facing. The risk identified as “Delays in co-financing fund flows under the WEIDAP project resulting in slow progress that may impact the GCF project” is accurate, but the risk rating should be elevated this risk to moderate as found by the MTR. Some other risks were downgraded from Moderate to Low in the MTR. Appendix 9 provides a table that compares the risk ratings identified at project inception with the MTR Teams assessment at midterm.

As Table 22 below indicates, there were no other significant changes in the risk ratings from project inception to the midterm.

Table 22. Summary of FP and MTR risk rating analysis

Risk Evaluation	Risk Ratings (# of risks)			
	Low	Medium/ Moderate	Substantial	High
Funding Proposal	5	7	0	0
Interim Evaluation	5	7	0	0

3.3.6 Stakeholder engagement and Partnerships

The MPI, as the National Designated Authority, works very closely with UNDP and MARD and they have a “long and good relationship[55]”. MPI supported MARD to secure the GCF project. MARD consistently works in partnership with MPI and PPC, as they are currently managing several ODA projects. The partnerships are considered effective and efficient because the model is constantly used. Another important player is the Provincial Agricultural Extension Centre which plays a key role in four of the provinces at the local level in FFS activities which have had a significant impact on participating farmers.

[54] Funding proposal 2020
[55] Interview at National level

In the funding proposal, it was recognized that the CPO works closely with MPI, and MoF as well as with provinces and the commune level. The MTR found this level of partnership to be strong and effective. There was also the expectation that MARD, through the CPO, would strengthen partnerships with development partners (e.g. GIZ, JICA, World Bank, ADB, etc.), CSO, INGOs and private sectors to mobilize and catalyze resources, maximizing the impact of combined resources. The MTR did not see evidence of these partnerships and envision these being developed during the second half of the SACCR project. Partnerships with the private sector, while not observed during the MTR, will become important as Output 2 activities progress. The establishment of Climate Innovation Platforms (CIP) is designed to bring together representatives of the key stakeholders in specific value chains: growers; mass organizations like the Women's and Farmers' Unions, as well as cooperatives and other associations; input providers; buyers; lending institutions; GoV and NGO technical assistance organizations; key climate, market and agricultural information providers; and others, as relevant [56]. The CIPs are intended to be multi-stakeholder platforms for value chain stakeholders to collaborate on the challenges of climate change impacts on water resources and agricultural productivity in their locality and to promote resilient agricultural systems.

The MTR documented limited evidence of partnerships with NGOs and the private sector. In Dak Lak, the CDC (Community Development Centre) conducted the FFS training with little involvement of the Provincial Extension Centre. However, in the other four provinces, there are no NGOs and as a result, the local agricultural extension unit is relied upon for training, as is the Agricultural Science Institute for Southern Coastal Central of Viet Nam (ASISOV) assisted with training in Ninh Thuan.

From the start of the project, stakeholder consultations took place to review and finalize or confirm the criteria for household selection developed during project formulation. Consultation meetings at the commune level were held to ensure that the final selection of direct beneficiaries was fully transparent and that all local stakeholders, including local Government authorities, participated in site and beneficiary selection. The ESMP[57] states that Activities 1.2 and 1.3 include resources for specific participatory consultations to carry out final community-based pond siting, landscaping, and O&M. This participatory approach to planning site-level interventions helped to ensure that activities are context sensitive, have community buy-in, and are sustainable over the long term.

At the national level, the project was to engage stakeholders through the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG), which was to include a wide range of NGOs and donor organizations working in the field of climate change. The MTR only documented Project Steering Committee activities, which met in June 2022 and also virtually. The MTR did not note any CCWG activities.

At the provincial level, active stakeholder engagement was observed to be occurring largely through Farmers' Union, Women's Union and the commune governance structures. Interviews with WU representatives at the provincial, district and commune levels indicated that their role in advocacy and communication with their members is an important link to ensure that women, especially those who have little or no formal education, are gaining knowledge of the project and opportunities for FFS training.

3.3.7 Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

The SACCR project was screened against UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards Procedure (SESP) and deemed to be a moderate risk project.[58] An Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) builds on the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) which was developed for the project based on UNDP's Social and Environmental

[56] Prodoc page 25
[57] The ESMP covers Activities 1.2 and 1.3 while the ESMF covers all project activities
[58] Annex VI (a) – Social and Environmental Screening Procedure for GCF

Standards (SES). The ESMF identified a range of risks considered likely and the ESMP then includes a further assessment of the proposed activities and an expanded set of risks and potential mitigations. The set of project SES documents (i.e., ESMF, IPPF, ESMP, IPP, and GAP) was updated after restructuring as requested by GCF to include information on new districts (Khanh Son and Khanh Vinh) of Khanh Hoa province. They were approved by GCF on 26 April 2024.

The ESMP provides mechanisms and measures to manage social and environmental impacts associated with construction activities associated with Activity 1.2[59] and Activity 1.3[60] and specifically Activity 1.2.1 (Design and construct connection and distribution systems including installation and maintenance of irrigation equipment to cope with climate variability); and Activity 1.3.1 (Construct or upgrade climate-resilient ponds). The objective of the ESMP is to "ensure that all potential environmental and social impacts that could reasonably be expected to occur during the delivery of the construction activities supported by the project fall within acceptable and agreed limits." This is achieved through environmental and social management planning prior to carrying out construction activities. Contractors selected to carry out construction activities under Activity 1.2 and Activity 1.3 were required to prepare specific Construction Contractor Plans that demonstrate how they met the requirements of this ESMP and the associated Site Plans on the sites under their management.

Table 4 in the ESMP outlines the activities with moderate risk potential that need to be considered: There are several potential risks listed which illustrate a thorough understanding of potential environmental impact. The environmental and social risks identified for Activities 1.2 and 1.3 in Output 1, remain relevant and as Activity 1.2 proceeds more fully over remaining time of the project, more due diligence is required to ensure that mitigation efforts are implemented. Continued risk assessment, regular reporting and adaptive management as required and when necessary, will be important to achieve the Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

The environmental aspect listed as "Climate change" under Activity 1.2.2 is, however, slightly out of place here and different than the other impacts listed. All the other risks listed are risks that the project intervention places on the local environment. For climate change, it is reversed – as it is climate change impacts the project. It is a risk to the project but not a project risk to the environment and this should be described in the table.

Initial consultations were held at the commune and community levels in July 2022 with the aim of consulting community members on potential environmental and social impacts as well as the proposed mitigation measures to be incorporated into the ESMPs. It was found that most of those consulted in the eight selected communities[61] fully supported the project. Any concerns were duly noted and integrated into the ESMP. A consultative workshop was held which was followed by further consultation meetings conducted by PPMU staff in 51 communes during August 2022 – January 2023. The project established a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) which allows those that have a complaint or that feel aggrieved by the project to be able to communicate their concern, complaints and/or grievances through an appropriate process.

Table 13 in the ESMP is a comprehensive list of the potential environmental risks and mitigation measures and appears to capture all of the possible risks and their impacts. For Activity 1.2.1, the suggested mitigation measure for the risks of: i) displacement; ii) erosion

[59] Establish last mile connections between WEIDAP irrigation infrastructure and the poor and near poor farmer lands to help cope with increasing rainfall variability and drought

[60] Enhance supplementary irrigation for rain fed smallholders to cope with rainfall variability and drought.

[61] There were 125 participants: 70 women and 55 men

and sedimentation and iii) for the generation of waste, a mitigation measure suggested is to “undertake construction in one area before moving to the next”. Due to the acceleration of activities to compensate for delays in Activity 1.2, it may not be an option to implement this mitigation measure and there may have to be several construction sites occurring concurrently. Therefore, other mitigation measures may be considered to manage these risks.

For the potential impact of disruption of agricultural activities, the mitigation measure suggested in Table 13 is to give “Early notification to farmers to optimize planting opportunities and harvest planning to minimize disruption.” The utility of this suggested mitigation measure is questionable, since farmers are dependent on seasonal patterns for agriculture and it is difficult for them to alter their planting and harvesting patterns. A more suitable mitigation measure would likely be to ensure that construction does not interfere with planting and harvesting times.

Finally, in Table 13, the mitigation measure suggested for the safety of workers and communities is to “Set up protective fences, stop points, put up warning signs/prohibited areas around the construction area to warn the community about potential dangers.” While warning signs were observed near ponds, fences were not and this safety feature is one that is greatly needed due to the steep sides of the pond and deep water during the rainy season (Photo 2). There appears to be no budget for these fences and it is an issue that the SACCR project needs to ensure there is money put aside for this. The midterm progress report (June 30, 2024) states that as a part of the Social and Environmental Screening Process (SESP) for construction activities on the field, 100% of ponds have been screened according to SESP. Then the question arises, as to why so many ponds observed do not have a fence.

Photo 2. Typical pond construction: note steep sides

In addition to the GRM, other ESMP tools include the guideline for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) which was utilized during the beneficiary selection.

An additional supporting tool of the ESMP is the Indigenous People's Plan[62] (IPP). “An Indigenous People’s Planning Framework (IPPF) was prepared in support of the SACCR project proposal prepared by UNDP and the Government of Viet Nam and approved by the GCF in April 2024 which included updated information on the two new districts of Khanh Son and Khanh Vinh. In accordance with UNDP SES Standard 6 on Indigenous Peoples, the IPPF specifies that if a proposed project or sub-project may affect the rights, lands, resources or territories of indigenous peoples, an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) needs to be elaborated and included in the Project documentation. The IPP is to be elaborated and implemented in a manner consistent with the UNDP SES and have a level of detail “proportional to the complexity of the nature and scale of the proposed Project and its potential impacts on indigenous peoples and their lands, resources and territories. With the effective and meaningful participation of the affected peoples, the IPPs shall be elaborated and contain provisions addressing, at a minimum, the substantive aspects of the outline in Annex I of the IPPF.” (from the ESMP). Based on consultations with EM in the five provinces, it was decided there was a need to develop an IPP for the project. This decision was based on the significant presence of EM people in the project locations including as both direct and indirect beneficiaries and the potential positive and negative impacts of the project on EM people.

The IPPF was guided by the relevant national regulatory frameworks on Indigenous peoples and considers the GCF’s Indigenous Peoples Policy and Operational Guidelines, UNDP’s Social and Environmental Safeguards Policy the good practices of IPPF of other multilateral agencies. The main objective of the framework is to “guide the project to enhance the climate resilience of ethnic minorities engaged in farming and related activities in the five provinces benefitting from proposed project interventions and avoidance, minimization and mitigation of adverse impacts to their livelihood sources and customary institutions.” Viet Nam has a total population of 96,462,106 (2019) of which the total population of ethnic minority people is 13.4 million. During consultations as part of the design of the SACCR project, the views of ethnic minorities were obtained and incorporated. The project also consulted with representatives of various ethnic groups, representatives from CEMA and NGOs that are supporting issues related to ethnic minorities, as described below:

1) Consultations with Ethnic Minority farming communities: representatives from ethnic minority groups participated in consultations with farming communities that took place throughout 2018. Two Focus Group Discussions with women’s farmer groups, totaling 25 ethnic minority women were conducted in September 2018.

2) Engagement of representatives of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), which is the government body that participates in all public hearing events at central and provincial levels.

3) Engagement of NGOs Three NGOs that are active in supporting ethnic minorities were engaged in national consultations. They participated in two national consultations including the national validation workshop in September 2019. The three NGOs are: the Centre of Research & Development in Upland Area (CERDA); the Centre for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas (CSDM); and Sustainable Rural Development (SRD).

As mentioned earlier in this report, all five target provinces have indigenous ethnic minority populations, such as the Cham, Raglai and Chau Ro in the South-Central Coast and the E-De, Gia Lai and Mo Nong (or M’Nong) in the Central Highlands. The Central Highlands also have a large share of immigrated minority groups who migrated from the North decades ago. There is a clear correlation between poverty and ethnic minority background, with the poverty

[62] The GoV does not use the term Indigenous Peoples as per the UNDP SES. Instead, the term “ethnic minority” is used and can be interpreted to mean ‘indigenous peoples’ in reference to project related items and the Viet Nam ese context.

rate among ethnic groups in these provinces particularly high in Khanh Hoa (68.6%), Dak Nong (40.8%), Ninh Thuan (38.8%), Dak Lak (37.2%) and Binh Thuan (19.5%) compared to the national poverty rate among the entire population. Ethnic minority poverty is particularly high in remote upland areas and in communes with higher rates of ethnic minority population.

The MTR notes that ethnic minority youth were identified as having needs in the IPPF (see page 22): "Ethnic minority youths see migration as an avenue to improve their status, learn new skills, and feel a sense of pride. Staying at home typically limits their access to land which is legally and traditionally under the possession of their parents, coupled with their role as unpaid farm workers rather than functioning as farmers. The main barriers to entering the wage labor market lie in their limited mobility and lower secondary education attainments"[63] So while they are identified here, the project did not include youth specifically in any activities or indicators.

3.3.8 Communications

Internal communication between stakeholders was observed to be quick and efficient, with several stakeholders using the Zalo chat group. Communication was said to be good between commune officials and the PPMU using this social media tool to share information as needed.

In terms of project outreach and public awareness, there have been some awareness raising activities, such as the excellent and impactful documentary on the SACCR project produced by the PPMU in Ninh Thuan, using financial resources from DARD. There is no budget for communications at the provincial level[64] to share information about the project and all communication outreach was by UNDP.

3.4 Sustainability

There are some mechanisms at play in the SACCR project that confers sustainability. These include:

1. Strong partnerships at the government level between Ministries (MARD, MPI) and between ministries and departments (MARD and DARD) and between the national, provincial, district and commune level governments. Government officials at all levels are working together and communicating to ensure the project has good progress and that activities are carried out. This relationship building provides a good foundation for knowledge retention for the rest of this project and subsequent ones.
2. A key partner in the SACCR project is the Agricultural Extension agents, who (with the exception of Dak Lak) are involved in ToT for the FFS training. As a result of this training, the AE agents have indicated they will use this methodology in their non-project work. For example, the knowledge products on CRA, soil and biomass management, etc will be used in other districts outside the project target area. In addition, the training manual developed by the consultant for CRA will be used by the MARD crop sector.
3. There is an indication that the government program on VAC[65] program in Bac Ai district learned from the SACCR project on pond development and FFS training, indicating that project innovations are spreading beyond project beneficiaries.
4. Farmers in drought-prone areas have traditionally been digging ponds to store water for irrigation, which means that the project did not introduce a completely new technology. Beneficiaries know that it is their interest to maintain the ponds well, because their farming productivity depends on it. Ponds are not a high-tech solution

[63] IPPF page 22
[64] PPMU interview
[65] V (Vuon for garden), A (Ao for pond) and C (Chuong for cattle shed).

that is beyond the farmer's capacity to maintain. The project introduced new features of pond management, for example planting grass and bushes to prevent bank's erosion or growing water species to reduce evaporation, but those features are relatively simple and within the farmers' capacity to follow.

5. With regard to shared ponds, there were concerns about management and benefit sharing mechanisms that impact the pond sustainability. The MTR finds that most of the shared ponds were set up based on familial bonds, for example three brothers agreed to dig a pond in a plot of land that belonged to one of them and this pond would supply water for three neighbouring fields. The familial ponds helped the users of the ponds reach and maintain rules regarding responsibilities and benefit sharing. Taken together, the MTR concluded that the pond component has high sustainability from structural and social perspectives.
6. The project has and continues to build the capacities of key mass organizations, such as the Farmers Union and the Women's Union, to understand and support FFS training. The use of Farmer champions as FFS facilitators, is also a way to ensure knowledge is retained in the community and scaled up to other activities related to climate-resilient agricultural practices.
7. The project has set out an exit strategy which is outlined in the original funding proposal (section D2 page 52/207).

3.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

1. The most significant risk to financial sustainability is the co-financing by the government and the WEIDAP project of the SACCR project. Since Activity 1.2 of the SACCR project is entirely dependent on the WEIDAP Activity 1.1 there is some risk. The MTR observed the long delay in the WEIDAP activity which has significantly delayed the SACCR project overall.
2. There is some question as to the sustainability of the voucher system (which will be in effect for two years), even though the vouchers provide only a small percentage of what the actual expenditures by farmers are. When materials are provided free to beneficiaries, there is often a dependency created and an expectation that these inputs will always be provided for free. Community ownership and buy in, and thus sustainability, is improved when beneficiaries are required to use their own resources for what they receive.

3.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

With regard to FFS, the evaluation noted a strong involvement of the local agricultural extension system in the training for farmers, which increased the buy-in and capacity of the extension system to integrate the FFS principles in mainstream extension activities. However, the evaluation also noted that the involvement was mostly in a support and facilitation role, and the main delivery role still belonged to institutions from outside. To increase sustainability prospects, the project should find ways to amplify the role of local extension agencies, and at the same time, decrease the role of outside institutions.

With regards to the provision of agricultural inputs through the performance-based voucher system, the evaluation finds that the beneficiaries are convinced about the benefits of sufficient investment to generate higher agricultural yields. However, the question of whether they continue sustaining this practice for better farming financial outcomes remains open. The reality is that poorer farmers underinvest in their agricultural production compared to those better-off, which results in less profit. The reason is not lack of understanding, but the pressure of the urgent often prevails the investment for the future. There is no easy solution for that, and the project strategy of combined training through FFS and provision of inputs is

moving in a right direction, but it might take time for the new farming practices to become sustainable.

Exit strategies have only started to be considered by the PPMU. These should be considered now along with the acceleration of activities, since the level of discouragement among beneficiaries is high. Some households in localities participating in the project had registered to participate in support activities but due to the long waiting period for adjusting the project location in Khanh Hoa (2022-2024), at the time of implementation, those households no longer needed it.

3.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

As mentioned above what is good for sustainability is the use of the Agricultural Extension (AE) units in each province. The MTR documented clear issues related to the level of effort project officers at the district and commune levels put into the project, without, in their view, adequate compensation. This may lead to apathy, and failure to perform project duties to the level of expectations. There is a lack of incentive to do the SACCR work so the PPMUs are short staffed as a result. “It is hard to recruit full-time staff for the project at the PPMU”[66].

According to current government regulations, local officials who receive salaries from the state budget are required to fulfill their duties within their respective localities and are not entitled to any additional expenses (this includes all officials receiving salaries from the state budget, both government and local officials). The project can only provide support through integrated activities when carrying out consulting tasks. The project has made great efforts to comply with these regulations, and therefore does not consider it a risk.

Due to these differences in point of view, more dialogue between the implementing agency and the project officers at the district and commune level is required.

3.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

The ESMP clearly and concisely outlines potential risks to the environment for Activities 1.2 and 1.3, those activities most likely to have an environmental impact. While the MTR only observed ponds that were completed and not under construction, there was no evidence of environmental impacts.

3.4.5 Country Ownership

While the project is required to follow the UNDP country programme, there are many reasons to conclude the project has high country ownership. The GCF grant requires MPI to request UNDP to have focal points, which are government agencies such as MARD, who is the implementing agency. Also UNDP worked closely with MPI as the NDA at the very beginning to ensure that the project was aligned with the country's priorities. In addition, UNDP didn’t arrive with a pre-conceived concept note and the project was conceived by MARD.

The main actors in the project are all government agencies, from the national, to provincial to district to commune level. Section 4.2.1 on relevance provides several examples of the government of Viet Nam policy that is strategically targeting climate change adaptation, which makes the SACCR project fall clearly within government ambitions.

3.5 Unexpected Results

There is one possible negative unexpected result, which is the level of difficulty experienced by PPMU and the time it takes for HH beneficiary selection for the last mile connection and pond construction.

[66] Interview with MARD

3.6 Replication and Scalability

Seems as though there are several examples of this potential to scale up SACCR activities:

1. The voucher system for agricultural inputs could potentially feed into the larger government poverty reduction program. However, this requires evidence from the field as to its utility.
2. There is good documentation on the voucher system and pond construction both of which are user-friendly. This documentation can be used in other provinces. The pond development guidelines could be updated for nationwide use (after being made into a legal document).
3. Project activities are often observed by people who are not involved in the project. They see the technical solutions undertaken by the project and, for those who can, they will adopt the innovations and ideas they see. In that way, the project is being scaled up to others outside the project.
4. The role of the WUs are to mobilize and convey information to their members – who in addition to beneficiary HH, include other non-poor HH, who will also gain project knowledge and possibly replicate activities from the project.
5. There is direct evidence from the Dak Lak PPMU, where they are proposing a new ADB project on CRA techniques used in the SACCR project
6. As mentioned above, a district level VAC project in Bac Ai District is using the pond design from the SACCR project
7. The project should be planning already on scaling up the irrigation potential since only 4% of the population has been reached and there are many more potential beneficiaries.

3.7 Cross Cutting Issues

3.7.1 Inclusion of Gender and Ethnic Minorities

The SACCR project produced a comprehensive Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2020 which was updated after the Restructuring Proposal and approved by GCF on 26 April 2024. The GAP provides the SACCR project with specific gender and social inclusion actions, with indicators and targets. The GAP indicates a significant commitment to the inclusion of gender issues and based on the experience in project evaluation by the MTR team, it is clearly not often that projects show this level of detail and commitment.

The project reliably collects disaggregated data on all activities. At the grassroots level, the proportion of female attendants of FFS training consistently surpasses 50%, according to the CPMU reports. Evidence collected by the MTR team confirms that in addition to women accounting for the majority of FFS members, they also actively play leadership roles.

The project has put people living in poverty, ethnic minorities and women at the centre. From the national down to the village level, the four criteria (poor, near-poor, ethnic minority, women-headed households) for selecting a household to be included as a project beneficiary are understood, known and adhered to.

The project has met or exceeded the GAP gender indicators for most of the Activities. Some examples include[67]

- Allocation of the number of ponds: In the five provinces it was 41.9 % female and 70.5% Ethnic Minority, which includes 306 female-headed and 515 EM households.
- The FFS training in soil and biomass yielded very high gender inclusion at 62.6% female and 76.5% EM people (GAP indicators are 35% and 20% respectively).

[67] From the mid-term Report June 2024

- For CRA training, it was 66.8% female and 91.9% EM people total and the gender indicators exceeded the GAP requirements.
- For activity 2.2.3, training on access to credit, the total was 63.7 % female and 38.9 % EM people, which again exceeded GAP requirements.

In addition, women have been used to champion and showcase the SACCR project[68]., A number of Women Champions who take up new initiatives of climate-resilient cropping systems and practices shared their experiences in learning platforms, FFS sessions and CRA learning sites. Also stories of Women Champions were captured and shared in the local media.

During MTR interviews with the WU and women farmers, it was stated that "women benefit by having a strong voice and role in production and they are the ones who have to water so the ponds really benefit them". "Women can easily attend the FFS trainings and they are very attentive to content and also more committed (than men)". "There is a very strong will for gender equality".

Challenges: The requirement of at least 30% female income earners as household heads in the pond packages in some provinces is difficult to achieve. In reality, there are not that many women-headed HH and not all female income earners are eligible or want to register for the pond package. For example, in Binh Thuan, out of 53 households registered for phase 1 ponds, only 4 female-headed households (only 7.5%) are eligible and participated in the pond packages.

The SACCR project is equally committed to the inclusion of Ethnic Minorities. Belonging to an identified ethnic minority is one of the four criteria for beneficiary selection. As indicated throughout this report, there are very high percentages of EM in most of the project activities and this inclusion exceeds project targets. Some examples include:

i) Consultation on pond location selection: 54.9% female and 39.9% EM took part in consultations.

ii) 441 ponds have been completed, including 350 individual ponds and 91 shared ponds with 731 beneficiary households, including 306 female-headed and 515 EM households, representing 41.9 % female and 70.5% EM people.

iii) It is understood that the ToT for CRA did not meet the target of 20% EM due to the small number of ethnic minority staff/specialists with relevant expertise.

3.7.2 Inclusion of other marginalized groups

Social inclusion also involves youth and people with disabilities. The SACCR project did not have any specific activities or indicators that included these sectors of the population. It is particularly important to include and encourage youth to continue in agriculture and to prevent the movement of youth to urban areas. This project could have a role in showing that there is good income to be made from planting high value trees as cash crops, such as durian and others.

People with disabilities are often overlooked in project design and implementation, although it is recognized that the GoV has separate policies governing People with Disabilities (PWD). Inclusion means integration and not separation and in keeping with the UNDP mandate of "leave no one behind" it is important for the SACCR project to consult with commune officials to see who in their communities have disabilities and would like to contribute to the project. This is empowering and provides an all too often overlooked skill set.

4 Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

[68] APR 2023

4.1 Conclusions

Despite the slow start of some SACCR activities due to delays with WEIDAP Activity 1.1, the new ODA decree that devolves more executing power to provincial governments, COVID-19 restrictions, the regulations and procedures from the GoV and GCF approval processes that the project is required to follow, there have been some significant achievements. These are achievements based on the activity being completed, as well as the success of the activity in terms of acceptance by and suitability for the beneficiaries as well as sustainability of that achievement.

Based on the analysis that has been completed, the MTR has identified factors that indicate the SACCR project has the potential for successful and sustainable completion of several project activities that can provide significant and much needed benefits to all beneficiaries and enhance the capacity for the government of Viet Nam to address the larger need within the targeted highland and coastal provinces:

Summary of Achievements: The most notable achievements at midterm are the rehabilitation and construction of ponds for irrigation and the Farmer Field Schools that reached thousands of farmers and facilitated the learning of new agricultural skills in soil nutrient and moisture retention and other Climate Resilient techniques as well as skills to enable greater access to credit and markets.

Another noteworthy accomplishment of the project at midterm is the inclusion of gender into project design, implementation and monitoring as well as the benefits accrued to several of Viet Nam 's ethnic minority populations. Most of the activities have exceeded the GAP targets for women and ethnic minorities. This represents a significant achievement.

Alignment with Government Climate Change Commitments: The SACCR project is well aligned with Viet Nam 's commitment to climate change adaptation, its NDCs and it is responding to a critical and identified need for water security and improved agricultural practices for climate change adaptation for smallholder farmers.

Project Innovation: The project represents innovation due to the linkage of smallholder marginalized farmers to large scale industrial irrigation, although that achievement has not yet materialized and is in progress at the time of the MTR. The paradigm shift that the project represents is the integrated, multi-stakeholder coordination of investments to increase smallholder agricultural production through climate-risk informed water management and agricultural practices, in consultation with the poor/near poor, ethnic minority and women-headed households to work with them on small scale adaptation options.

Project Design: The project design is suitable and the analysis of the SACCR project Theory of Change (ToC) demonstrates a logical framework that supports several appropriate activities that contribute to the two interlinked outputs. The project made efforts to include the perspectives of beneficiary farmers into project design through early consultations. Gender was effectively integrated into project design with the development of a set of indicators in a Gender Action Plan, which were continuously monitored and which served to ensure that women were well represented, sometimes above the target of 30-50% in all project activities. There is also evidence of good country ownership, since the idea began with the implementing agency, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is well aligned with Vietnam's commitments to climate change adaptation and it was developed in consultation with beneficiaries.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation: is thorough and efficient, with clear and measurable indicators, generating data regularly to ensure adaptive management is possible. The SACCR project has meticulously documented project activities, with indicators and progress measured against established targets, both for activities and the inclusion of gender and ethnic minorities. The project has also been thorough in the documentation of risks, at inception in the ProDoc, in the Restructuring Proposal Paper and the Environmental and Social Safeguards Management Framework.

Project Management: An effective project management structure is in place, including the large technical capacity of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), as well as the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the five provincial project management units (PPMUs).

Sustainability: Project sustainability is likely ensured due to the management framework that includes all levels of government working in partnership, the level of consultation with the target beneficiary population and the use of training techniques that will continue to be used by those trained in them.

While the achievements at midterm are many and notable, given the number of delays in the system the project works within, there remains a lot of work to be done before the end of the project in June 2026. With the commitment, dedication and energy, that was observed at midterm, in the large multi-level project management team, it may be possible to accelerate the remaining activities so that they can begin to have an impact, even reaching the targets and beneficiary numbers that were established at project inception.

4.2 Recommendations

There are several documented findings including successes and challenges to the SACCR project. Some of the challenges, but not all, have been followed up by recommendations in Table 23 below. The recommendations are ordered by: i) project management and implementation; ii) Financial management; iii) Beneficiary numbers and targets; iv) project sustainability.

Table 23. Recommendations of the MTR

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
Project Management and Implementation		
1. Collaborate with projects with similar interests in the provinces that emphasize biodiversity conservation, reforestation and watershed protection for groundwater conservation and recharge for improved water security.	PPMU, CPMU	Before end of project
2. The CPO and CPMU need to closely scrutinize possible significant delays (i.e Activity 1.2) and adjust project workplan accordingly, taking into consideration the potential risks.	CPO/CPMU	As soon as possible
3. Based on the WEIDAP MTR findings, assess the likely timeline required to complete Activities 1.1 and 1.2	UNDP, CPO/CPMU	Once WEIDAP MTR is available
4. Better inclusion of the youth and people with disabilities in subsequent trainings, including FFS.	DARD	For the next FFS training
5. Irrigation ponds (Activity 1.3) require committed contributions to ensure fencing for safety	PPMU	As soon as the pond is constructed
Financial Management		
6. Consider balancing (in total capital) the co-financing to compensate for costs incurred during the project management and implementation process.	GoV	

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
7. Address the increase in pond construction costs due to inflations. Options include increase the budget for an individual pond, and increasing the number of shared ponds to maximise the number of beneficiaries.	UNDP, CPO	As soon as possible
8. Careful financial decisions need to be made on how to manage activities where inflation has caused large increases in costs compared to the budget prepared at project inception.	UNDP, CPO, PPMU	As soon as possible
Beneficiary Numbers and Targets		
9. Streamline approval processes for changes to beneficiary numbers, the beneficiary selection criteria, targets and indicators based on the most updated data, country context and actual project implementation results.	CPO, UNDP	Next meeting with and PSC
10. Based on the most updated data, the number of beneficiaries for Activities 1.2 and 1.3 might not be fully achieved by the end of the project. There is also a mis-alignment between the project's fixed targets for beneficiary numbers and the demand-driven approach, which requires beneficiaries to request and register for support. In some cases, the number of beneficiaries registering will not reach the project target. The MTR suggests: • in order to reach out to more climate-vulnerable households, include those vulnerable families that have close proximity to the water points. • More awareness among beneficiaries may be needed so registration in activities increases. • Approve the participation in the last mile connections (LMC) for more climate-vulnerable households whose farms the LMCs pass through, recognizing that both the non-poor and poor HH are grouped together and both have access to the outlet. • Investigate the potential to use other water sources such as existing reservoirs and canals to extend beneficiary numbers beyond those eligible for last mile connections with WEIDAP.	CPMU, PPMU UNDP	As soon as possible
Project Sustainability		
11. Increase support for officers working on project at the commune level. Consider additional remuneration or other benefits in recognition of the project support they provide.	CPMU	As soon as possible

Recommendation	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeline
12. Mechanisms could be put into place so that communities can save some profits from their increased productivity from project CRA and inputs, to use in subsequent input purchases.	DPMU, DARD	Next monitoring report
13. The project should find ways to amplify the role of DARD's existing local extension agencies.	PPMU	Next training session and funding disbursement
14. Manage community expectations. During visits to communities by the PMU team, it is important to inform the community of potential delays so they are not discouraged by the time it takes for activities to be implemented.	Commune level heads of WU and FU	As soon as possible
15. The adoption of an adaptive project management strategy of a rapid acceleration of project activities to fully utilize the total approved budget, considering potential unsustainable outcomes.	UNDP, CPMU, PPMU	

4.3 Lessons Learned

At project mid-term, there are some lessons learned that could be applied to the remaining two years of the project:

1. Ninh Thuan may provide an example of best practices, since many of their activities are further ahead than in the other provinces. There were several reasons given for this: i) the provincial officer at DARD is very experienced and motivated; ii) the people are in great need of water so are more committed to the project; ii) the qualifications of the PPMU are well suited to this kind of project; iii) local people are very short of resources so are very willing to get on board with the project; and iv) the provincial leader is very committed so collaboration and coordination are very good.

2. There is a lot of repetition of data in project documents. For example, the ESMP overlaps with the ESMF; the APR overlaps with the mid-term report which overlaps with the MTR, and the Restructuring Proposal repeats much of what is in the original funding proposal. While project M&E and reporting are thorough and detailed, they may take resources away from other important activities.

3. Baseline data collected during project design and which may be included in the FP may not be a true reflection of the situation when the project is implemented. Provision to update baselines at project start-up should be included as part of project inception.

4. Several community members expressed some dissatisfaction with project delays. Therefore, to manage the expectations of community members regarding the project implementation process, communities should be made fully aware of the risks of project delays that are beyond the control of the project implementation team. It is advisable to hold regular public meetings to allow for information sharing and further discussion and understanding of project delays.

5. The beneficiary selection process for household-based activities is a complicated task involving many issues such as full and transparent selection of beneficiaries based on the four established selection criteria, the willingness of the household to participate, approval by the local Commune Peoples' Committee as well as environmental and social safeguard issues, including local geology for irrigation establishment. This has meant that beneficiary selection is a long process and has not provided a means to easily and accurately select the targeted number.

Appendix 1. Terms of Reference

SACCR Mid-term Review TOR

Appendix 2: Inception Report

https://pims.undp.org/attachments/6117/215904/1779832/1856830/Inception%20Report%20SACCR%20MTR.docx

Appendix 3: List of People Interviewed and Detailed Consultation Schedule

Name	Gender	Organization	Position
LAI Dao Xuan	Male	UNDP	Head of Climate Change, Environment and Energy Unit
YUSUKE Taishi	Male	UNDP	Regional Technical Advisor
PATRICK Haverman	Male	UNDP	Deputy Resident Representative
HAN Nguyen Thi Ngoc	Female	UNDP	Planning, M&E Analyst
NGOC Nguyen Manh	Male	CPMU	Director
ANH Nguyen Tuan	Male	CPMU	Vice-Director
KHANH Phan Vinh	Male	CPMU	Senior Technical Advisor
MANOHAR Shrestha	Male	CPMU	Senior Technical Advisor
DANG Tran	Male	CPMU	Coordinator
THUONG Pham Ngoc	Male	CPMU	Training Expert
TRUONG Vu Thai	Male	UNDP	Project Manager
LAN Nguyen Mai	Female	UNDP	Finance and Budget Executive
DUNG Le Ngoc	Male	UNDP	M&E Compliance & Safeguards Analyst
NHI Nguyen Mai	Female	UNDP	Project Assistant
MAU Nguyen Dang	Male	UNDP	Consultant on agro-climate information
MINH Bui Van	Male	UNDP	Agriculture Specialist - Component 2 Technical Lead
HUNG Duong Van	Male	UNDP	Component 1 Technical Lead
HOAI Nguyen An	Male	UNDP	Consultant - Hydraulic Engineering
DAM Nguyen Thanh	Male	UNDP	Vice-Director
HAI Nguyen Tu	Male	MARD - Department for International Cooperation	
THANH Pham Hong Viet	Female	MARD - Department of Cultivation	
DUY Doan Phuong	Male	MARD - Department of Irrigation	
MIEN Nguyen Duc	Male	MPI - NDA	Project Director
AN Nguyen Quang	Male	WEIDAP	Environmental Officer
KHANH Pham Duy	Male	WEIDAP	Project Officer
LAN Tran	Male	WEIDAP	Project Officer
YEN Pham Minh	Female	WEIDAP	Project Officer
NAM Pham Ngoc	Male	PMU Dak Lak	Vice-Director
HUNG Pham	Male	DARD Dak Lak - Division of Irrigation	Staff
SON Khuat Van	Male	WEIDAP - Dak Lak	Vice-Director
HOA Ninh Thi	Female	DARD Dak Lak - Division of Cultivation and Plant Protection	Vice-Director
LAI Ho Thi Cam	Female	Agricultural Extension Center - Ban Me Thuot City	Director
TUAN Bach Thanh	Male	Community Development Center	Director
NGOC Vo Thi	Female	Women's Union - Dak Lak	Vice-Chairwoman

Name	Gender	Organization	Position
CHIEN Le Dinh	Male	District People's Committee - Ea Kar District	Vice-Chair
VU Vo Dang	Male	Department of Agriculture - Ea Kar District	Director
GIANG Nguyen Thi Tam	Female	District Women's Union - Ea Kar District	Chairwoman
NGAN Nguyen Duy	Male	Department of Agriculture - Ea Kar District	Expert
TAM Hoang Van	Male	Office of the District People's Committee - Ea Kar District	Expert
KIEN Nguyen Van	Male	District Agricultural Extension - Ea Kar District	Director
THIN Van Dinh	Male	Commune People's Committee - Ea Sar Commune	Chair
HIEU Bui Khac	Male	Commune People's Committee - Ea Sar Commune	Agricultural Staff
NGAN Be Thi	Female	Women's Union - Ea Sar Commune	Chair
AM Tran Van	Male	Farmer Association - Ea Sar Commune	Chair
QUANG Nguyen Duy	Male	DARD Khanh Hoa/PMU Khanh Hoa	Director of DARD/PMU
THUYEN Huynh Quoc	Male	PMU Khanh Hoa	Vice-Director
NGAN Luong Kim	Female	PMU Khanh Hoa	Vice-Director
LONG Tran Quoc	Male	PMU Khanh Hoa	M&E & Planning Officer
THAO Nguyen Thi Minh	Female	PMU Khanh Hoa	Accountant
HA Nguyen Hoang Van	Female	PMU Khanh Hoa	Safeguards Officer
BINH Nguyen Van	Male	PMU Ninh Thuan	Director
OANH Vo Thi Yen	Female	PMU Ninh Thuan	Safeguards Officer
DUNG Pham	Male	DARD Ninh Thuan - Division of Cultivation	Chief Manager
DOANH Phan Ba	Male	DARD Ninh Thuan - Division of Cultivation	Manager of Cultivation Sector
TOAN Le Xuan	Male	WEIDAP PPMU - Ninh Thuan	Vice-Director
LE Huynh Thi Hong	Female	Women's Union - Ninh Thuan	Policy Manager
THUAN Nguyen Duc	Male	Agricultural Extension Center - Ninh Thuan	Director
HAI Bui Ngoc	Male	Agricultural Extension Center - Ninh Thuan	Expert
HANG Nguyen Thi Thanh	Female	PMU Ninh Thuan	Safeguards Officer
PHUONG Le Thi Thanh	Female	PMU Ninh Thuan	Expert
QUYEN Doan Thi	Female	PMU Ninh Thuan	Financial Division
TUAN Luu Quoc	Male	PMU Ninh Thuan	Vice-Director
NHAN Tran Huu	Male	Department of Agriculture - Ninh Hai District	Manager
NGHIA Nguyen	Male	Department of Agriculture - Ninh Hai District	Vice-Manager
DUYEN Phu Thi Hong	Female	Farmer's Union - Ninh Hai district	Chair
LICH Nguyen Thi	Female	Women's Union - Ninh Hai district	Vice-Chairwoman

Name	Gender	Organization	Position
TRI Nguyen Huu Minh	Male	Department of Agriculture - Ninh Hai District	Agricultural Staff
PHI Le Van	Male	Commune People's Committee - Nhon Hai Commune	Vice-Chair
DANG Nguyen Hai	Male	Farmer's Union - Nhon Hai commune	Chair
CAM Nguyen Tran Thi Linh	Female	Women's Union - Nhon Hai commune	Chairwoman
HOP Tran Thi Kim	Female	Commune People's Committee - Nhon Hai Commune	Agricultural Staff
VIET Le Van	Male	Department of Agriculture - Bac Ai District	Vice-Director
NO Pi Nang Thi	Female	Women's Union - Bac Ai District	Vice-Chairwoman
NGHIA Le Van	Male	Farmer's Union - Bac Ai District	Chair
SON Nguyen Ngoc Hoang	Male	Agricultural Extension - Bac Ai District	Expert
QUY Tran Van	Male	Plant Protection - Bac Ai District	Expert
DANG Hai Ho	Male	Commune People's Committee - Phuoc Tan Commune	Chair
TRIEU Nguyen Thi Bich	Female	Commune People's Committee - Phuoc Tan Commune	Agricultural Staff
PHUOC Pi Nang	Female	Women's Union - Phuoc Tan Commune	Chairwoman
HUAN Pi Nang	Male	Farmer's Union - Phuoc Tan Commune	Chair
Farmers in Ae Sar commune, Ae Kar district, Dak Lak	19 women and 7 men		
Farmers in Nhon Hai commune, Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan	12 women		
Farmers in Phuoc Tan commune, Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan	10 women and 2 men		

Appendix 4. Evaluation Schedule

Date	Task	Person(s) responsible
I. Evaluation Inception (inception meeting, start of desk review and development of Inception report)		
18 Apr	● Inception Meeting: Introductions	Consultants, UNDP
18-30 Apr	● Preparation and submission of Inception Report	Consultants
1-7 May	● Review of Inception Report by UNDP ● Introduction and interview requests sent out to stakeholders	UNDP, others
8 May	● Meeting with MARD (virtual for Ellen; in person for Nam)	UNDP, consultants, MARD
8 May – 9 June	● Online interviews with stakeholders (e.g., RTA in regional office)	TBC

Time	Description/ meeting	Venue/info	Name of person Interviewed
DAY 1: June 10			
9:00-10:00	Meeting with UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative and Country Office's M&E Analyst	UNDP	Patrick Haverman - DRR
10:00-12:00	Meeting with SACCR's project team (PM, Output 1 and Output 2's officers, M&E, procurement, finance) for introductory meeting and briefing about information.	UNDP	Project team
14:00-17:00	Meeting at CPMU ● SACCR CPMU ● SACCR Consultant team	CPMU office	CPMU team
DAY 2: June 11			
9:00-11:00	Meeting with MARD International Cooperation Department, with representatives from the Department of Crop Production (Cục Trồng trọt), and Department of Water Resources (Cục Thuỷ Lợi)	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, No.2 Ngoc Ha, Ba Dinh	
14:00-16:00	Meeting with the National Designated Agency (NDA) under MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment, No. 6 Hoang Dieu, Ba Dinh district	
DAY 3: June 12			

9:00-11:00	Meeting with ADB WEIDAP Project in Hanoi	Meeting room, 3rd floor, CPO office, 23 Hang Tre, Ly Thai To ward, Hoan Kiem district
16:15 – 18.00	Flight to Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak Province	
DAY 4: June 13		
8:00-11:30	Meeting with Dak Lak Provincial PMU and other involved agencies (Women Union, departments of DARD, local NGO) ● Discussion with the SACCR regional coordinator for the Central Highlands	Dak Lak Department of Agriculture and Rural Development 47 Nguyen Tat Thanh, Buon Me Thuot
11:30-13:00	Travel to Ea Kar district	
14:30-16:00	Meeting with the district PMU, including Women's Union and Farmer's Union	Ea Kar People Committee Office
DAY 5: June 14		
7:00-8:30	Travel to Ea Sar commune	
8:30-10:00	Meeting with commune leaders, agricultural officer, commune level WU and FU	Ea Sar people committee office
10:00-11:30	Visit one communal pond group	Ea Sar commune
13:00-15:30	Village meetings: E-de ethnic minority farmers participating in FFS	
15:30-16:30	Visit one individual household pond	
DAY 6: June 15		
12:00-17:00	Meeting with Khanh Hoa PPMU	DARD office, 4 Phan Chu Trinh, Xuong Huan ward, Nha Trang
DAY 7: June 17		

13.00-13.30 13.30-14.30 14:30-15:00 15:00-17:00	 Travel to Ninh Hai Meeting with Ninh Hai PMU ● 14.30 – 15.00 Travel to a commune in Ninh Hai Travel to a commune in Ninh Hai to discuss with farmers benefiting from last-mile connections Ninh Hai people committee office Site visits in one commune (Nhon Hai)	
Day 8: June 18		
6:30-8:00	Bac Ai District	Ninh Hai people committee office Site visits in one commune (Nhon Hai)
8:00-9:00	Discussion with Bac Ai PMU (Department of Agriculture)	Bac Ai people committee office Phuoc Tan people committee office Visit beneficiaries in Phuoc Tan commune
9:00-9:30	Travel to Phuoc Tan commune	
9:30-10:30	Meeting with commune leaders, agricultural extension officer, commune WU and FU	
10:30-11:30	visit a communal pond group	
13:00-16:00	Meeting with an FFS group and visit one individual pond	

Date	Task	Person(s) responsible
24-26 Jun	Preliminary data analysis and preparation of presentation	Consultants
28 Jun	Presentation of preliminary results (virtual for Ellen; in person for Nam	Consultants
V. Draft Evaluation Report		
8 Jul	Prepare draft Evaluation report. Submission to UNDP	Consultants
9-30 Jul	Translation and Review of draft report	UNDP, others
31 Jul – 3 Aug	Incorporation of comments and feedback on Draft 1	Consultants
VI. Final Evaluation Report		
5 Sep	**Submission of final report to UNDP**	Consultants

Appendix 5: List of Documents reviewed

1. Project documents:
    a. Project Document: “Strengthening the resilience of smallholder agriculture to climate change-induced water insecurity in the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam (SACCR Project)”
    b. Annual Performance Reports 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023
    c. Project Mid-term report, June 2024
    d. Water Assessment Report 23 December 2022
    e. Funding Proposal to GCF 2020
    f. Consideration of funding proposals - Addendum II Funding proposal package for FP125
    g. Project Baseline Assessment Report
    h. Impact Evaluation Baseline Report
    i. Environmental and Social Management Framework
    j. Environmental and Social Management Plan
    k. Project Inception Workshop Report
    l. Indigenous People’s Plan
    m. Indigenous People’s Planning Framework
    n. Project Restructuring Proposal
    o. Gender Action Plan
    p. Project manuals:
        i. Guidelines on participation in designing of small-scaled water reservoirs
        ii. Operation and management of small ponds for climate change adaptation
        iii. Guidelines on efficient and sustainable water usage for some plants in the project area
        iv. Framework of training content and program for TOT training
        v. Farmer’s Field School for soil and biomass management
        vi. Farmer’s Field School for climate resilient agriculture
        vii. Guidelines for the implementation of agricultural input and watering system provision through a performance-based voucher system
2. Policy documents
    a. Decision 134 of MOLISA publishing the results of the review of poor and near-poor households according to the multi-dimensional poverty criteria for the period 2022-2025
    b. Decision 896/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister “Approving the National Strategy for Climate Change until 2050”, dated July 26, 2022.
    c. Decision 337/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister “Approving the Master Plan for the Central Highlands Region for the Period 2021-2030, with Vision to 2050”, dated May 04, 2024.
    d. Decree 56/2020/ND-CP on management and use of official development assistance (ODA) and concessional loans granted by foreign donors.
3. External reports and documents
    a. The World Bank Group, Country Climate and Development Report, July 2022
    b. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations members in 2015
    c. ADB, Viet Nam: Water Efficiency Improvement in Drought-Affected Provinces Project (WEIDAP Project Document)
    d. WEIDAP Annual report 2022
    e. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, “Report National Adaptation Plan for the Period 2021-2030, with a Vision to 2050”

Appendix 6: Evaluation Matrix

Note: The evaluation matrix contains a list of Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) that were used as a guide to the semi-structured interviews and FGDs. It is generally the case that interviews move into various paths of questioning as they progress, based on the particular knowledge and opinions of the stakeholder. The nature of semi structured interviews and focus group discussions is to allow the discussion to be fluid and, in this way, more unplanned for avenues of discussion may emerge.

Each question has a designated stakeholder type, ranging from national level government official to a small holder farmer. The appropriate questions for each stakeholder are designated prior to the interviews/FGDs.

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
RELEVANCE: ***How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GCF Focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national level?***			
Project alignment: Q. To what extent are the project objectives and outcomes relevant to country priorities? For example, Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country? Q. Is the project relevant/appropriate/strategic in relation to SDG indicators, National indicators, GCF RMF/PMF indicators, AE indicators, or other goals? Q. To what extent are the project objectives and outcomes relevant and realistic to the situation on the ground? **Country Ownership**: Q. Is there country ownership of the project? Give examples. Q. How well is country ownership reflected in the project governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms or other consultations? Q. Does the project strategy provide the best way to achieve the intended results? Can you suggest a different strategy that might be better? Q. Were the activities appropriate to achieve the intended results? What could be done to improve that?	• Policies/strategies formulated/amended based on evidence of climate risks and disaster loss or damage. • Project objectives and activities related to objective of GEF focal area and priorities at national, local and regional level • Consistency and contribution to GEF focal area objectives and to national development strategies • Stakeholder views on project significance and potential impact related to the project objective • Kinds of activities conducted • Statements from stakeholders on the feeling of ownership	• Project documents, report vs GEF document and Government development plans • Interviews with authorities at different levels; with stakeholders at the farm/commune level Interview with MPI who is the NDA for the project	• Project report review in the light of GEF document and government's national development priorities • Interviews with relevant stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Theory of Change: Q. Were the context, problem, needs and priorities well analysed and reviewed during project design and inception? Q. Has the Theory of Change been a suitable basis for the SACCR initiative? What could be changed to make it more suitable? Q. Has the project overcome the barriers listed in the Theory of Change? **Commune Members/Farmers:** Q. Does the project suit your and your family's needs? Q. Were you consulted on your needs/or what was needed before the project began? (were the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?)			
COHERENCE:			
Q. Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with others who are working on climate change interventions? (PMU)	Similarities with other projects occurring in the same districts	Interviews with MPI and MARD	Document review Stakeholder interviews
EFFECTIVENESS: (Progress Towards Results) ***To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?***			
Q. How close is the project to its mid-term targets? (list each of the mid term targets (PMU) + (document review). Do you think that the final targets for the outputs and outcomes will be achieved by the end of the project? Q. What have been the main challenges to affect project progress (aside from the delay in Activity 1.1 and delays due to COVID) Q. What has been the main success(es) so far and what do you attribute that success to? Q. What are the best practices and success stories so far?	• Technical capacity of relevant institution and communities strengthened. • Improved level of awareness made activities sustainable. • Measurable improvements from baseline levels in technical knowledge and skills of targeted staff/other stakeholders (at mid-term) • Level of achievement of expected outputs or objectives to date • Participation of women in every activity of the project	• Project Reports • Interview with stakeholders. • Field Observations	• Review of project reports/documents. • Interaction with local to national level stakeholders. • Field observations

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. Were there any positive or negative unintended changes due to the project interventions? What can these unintended effects be attributed to? Q. Is the grievance mechanism used and satisfactory? Are any changes needed? Q. Was there enough support for the Project team to make any necessary visits to the districts and communes? **Training**: Q. Describe what project-related training you have received – how did it help you in your role in the project? Could training be improved in any way (different content, more often, refresher etc) Q. What national and local level capacities have been enhanced so far? What more is needed? Q. Are capacity development exchanges (training) inclusive, timely, accommodating to gender and with suitable frequency? **Partnerships:** Q. Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders? What could be improved? Q. Have partnerships (Universities, NGO, CSO, etc.) strengthened the project so far? How? Q. Comment on the capacity and commitment of the project partners. What could be improved? Q.What worked well and what were barriers to partnerships? **Commune Members/Farmers** Q. How have you benefitted from the project – (access to water for irrigaton, different crop varieties, access to inputs, climate information products/services etc.)	• Change in the ground situation observed. • Policies/strategies/ programs effectively implemented • Institutions strengthened		

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. How do project interventions affect your livelihood – in positive and negative ways? Q. How have the vouchers assisted you and will you be able to continue these activities when there are no more vouchers? Q. How have the trainings helped you? Will you apply what you have learned? Q. How could the project better suit your needs? Q. What have you learned from the training and will you continue to use the knowledge from training? Q. what knowledge have you applied to your agricultural activities? Q. Do you have access to a Grievance Mechanism and would you use it if you had to?			
EFFICIENCY: Was the project implemented efficiently in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
Q. What was the cause of any project delays (besides delay in Activity 1.1 and COVID) – others? How could these delays have been avoided? Q. Give all examples of how the project applied adaptive management in the face of these delays Q. Is the Risk register adequate and does it cover all the risks – could more be added now? Which risks? Q. Has the risk register been updated and shared? How? Q. Has the project been cost effective – are the financial resources being used efficiently and effectively and equitably? (PMU, MARD) Q. Due to the delays, are some activities fast tracked and is this impacting the activity in terms of effectiveness? **Monitoring**	• Reasonableness of the costs relative to scale of outputs generated • Efficiencies in project delivery modalities Consistency and contribution to GEF focal area objectives and to national development strategies • Changes in project circumstances that may have affected the project relevance and effectiveness	• Financial statements • Project structure and function • Project document and annual reports • Experience of project staffs and other relevant stakeholders	• Analysis of financial statements. • Analysis of project structure and functionalities • Analysis of project circumstances in project document (past and present) • Interaction with relevant stakeholders – i.e. national, PMU, Project Board

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. Is project level monitoring complete, regular enough? What could be improved? Q. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation and are these resources being used effectively? **Reporting** Q. Are GCF reporting requirements manageable, and would you suggest any changes? Q. How is information on project monitoring results documented and shared? (document review) Q. How are changes and lessons learned due to adaptive management reported and shared? **Communications**: Q. Are project communications effective in sharing project progress, outcomes – how is project information communicated? Q. Are there good lines of communication between MARD to DARD and between the national level and local levels? What could be improved? Q. Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds? (MARD, DARD, UNDP, PMU) Q. Is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans? Have the co-finance related conditions and covenants in the FAA been fulfilled? (PMU, MARD) Q. Are the project's governance mechanisms functioning efficiently? (i.e. project board or steering committee, the implementing agency etc). What could be improved?			

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
SUSTAINABILITY: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Financial: Q. If funding is not sustained or when the funding ends, will the benefits of the project continue? (consider infrastructure + voucher system) Q. Are other sources of funding being investigated such as public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other? **Institutional:** Q. Will the knowledge gained through training be sustained? What mechanisms are in place for the knowledge to be retained in gov't institutions, FFS in communes? Q. Are systems/mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer in place within national and local governments? **Socio-economic**: Q. Is stakeholder buy in and ownership enough to sustain project benefits? Q. Are there any political risks (change in government) or staff attrition? Q. Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Q. Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future? Q. Were communities consulted for their input on the project – was a needs assessment or a climate vulnerability analysis conducted? Q. What mechanism is in place to ensure that women, men, youth, continue with what the project is implementing?	• Degree to which outputs and outputs are embedded within the institutional framework (policy, laws, organizations, procedures) • Implementation of measures to assist financial sustainability of project results • Observable changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as a result of the project • Measurable improvements from baseline levels in knowledge and skills of targeted staffs.	• Project reports • Observation in the field • Interview with stakeholders – national, local level gov't, commune and farmers, PMU	• Review of project reports. • Observation in the field to see impact on the ground • Interaction with all stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. what indicators are there that commune members will continue with the knowledge they have gained and activities practiced? Q. which is more sustainable – household or communal ponds? Why? **Environmental** Q. Are there environmental risks such as depletion of ground water, biodiversity loss, what is being done to ensure that the environment is not being degraded, and that it is being enhanced? Q. does pond development have environmental impacts?			
GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS:			
Q. Is the project taking a human rights-based approach and including the most vulnerable (PWD, socially or economically marginalized people)? **PWD**: Q. Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation? Q. What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities? Q. What barriers to participation do persons with disabilities face? Q. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project? Could more be done? (we have sex disaggregation but not other variables) **Gender**: Q. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring (list the gender-relevant indicators) of the project?	• Number of PWD, women, youth, ethnic minorities involved in project activities and benefitting from project implementation • Level of consultation with marginalized people during project design • Do women feel they have agency in project implementation • Are women's livelihoods enhanced as a result of the SACCR project	• Project reports • Observation in the field • Interviews and FGDs with stakeholders – national, local level gov't, commune and farmers, PMU	• Review of project reports. • Observation in the field to see impact on the ground • Interaction with all stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. Is the gender marker assigned to this project (GE2) representative of reality? Q. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Does the project account for activities and planning for local gender dynamics and how project interventions affect women as beneficiaries? Q. Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups? Q. Are financial resources/project activities explicitly allocated to enable women to benefit from project interventions? Q. How do the results for women compare to those for men? (document review) Q. Does the project incorporate gender in its governance or staffing? How?			
PROJECT DESIGN			
Q. Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame? (PMU, MARD) Q. In your view, how well were gender issues incorporated into project design? Is there anything that could be done differently for the rest of the project? (PMU MARD, Prov gov't) Q. Are there exit strategies in place? What are they?	• Indicators that measure gender impacts • Data collected and analyzed is being disaggregated • Existence of exit strategy in ProDoc	• Interviews with PMU, MARD, MPI	• Project documents • Interviews
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION			
Q. Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Are agencies sufficiently staffed? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Can you recommend areas for improvement (PMU) Q. Is the Implementing Agency (or Executing Entity, EE) doing what it should be doing? Can you suggest anything to assist with improvement? (PMU)	• Clear lines of project governance and decision making • Project well supported by UNDP	• Progress reports of AE • Interviews with stakeholders (UNDP, CPMU, PPMUs, MARD, MPI)	• Project document review • Interviews with stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Q. How is the support from UNDP – are there any suggestions to strengthen this support? (MARD) Q. What role has the project played in the provision of “thought leadership”, “innovation”, or “unlocked additional climate finance” for climate change adaptation/mitigation in the project and country context? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.			

Appendix 7: Evaluation of SACCR Theory of Change

Analysis of the SACCR project ToC (**Figure 6.1**) has been undertaken through an assessment of Impact Drivers (ID) and Assumptions (A) shown in **Table 6,** which are based on SACCR project activities and their current or likely Intermediate State (IS) contributing to the long term goal following the methods and guidance provided in the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) Handbook (2009).

The qualitative assessment of the SACCR project ToC presented in Table 6.1 is based on desktop and remote interview investigations and follows guidance provided in the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) Handbook (2009).

The following ratings used in the impact assessment are based on the achievement of interim targets defined by the SACCR LogFrame, with consideration of the likely ability of the project to successfully complete activities supporting achievement towards the project's long-term goal.

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Table 7.1: Impact Assessment of the SACCR Theory of Change (ID = Impact Driver; A = Assumption; IS = Intermediate State)

Theory of Change Component	Qualitative Analysis	Rating[69]
Objective: To empower vulnerable smallholders in five provinces of the Central Highlands and South-Central Coast regions of Viet Nam – particularly women and ethnic minority farmers – to manage increasing climate risks to agricultural production (Fund level Impact)	• The SACCR project has engaged the GoV and target provinces and communities in activities intended to provide climate-resilient agricultural practices and enhanced access to water for irrigation.	**3**
Output 1: *Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts*	• Ponds have been constructed and re-habilitated in the five provinces, FFS training has been successful in training on water efficient technologies and soil and biomass conservation	**3**
ID: The establishment of last mile connections between WEIDAP irrigation infrastructure and the poor/near poor farms to help cope with increasing rainfall variability and drought	• Beneficiary selection criteria are challenging the achievement of the target number of beneficiaries for last mile connections and delays by WEIDAP in laying pipeline are causing delays in this activity (1.2) so the objective of coping with water scarcity are not yet realized.	**1**
ID: Enhance supplementary irrigation for rain fed smallholders to cope with rainfall variability and drought	• The establishment of ponds is well underway, with results already occurring for beneficiary farmers; Pond management groups were not observed to be operational or necessary especially since shared ponds were usually shared by a family unit	**3**
ID: Training to increase capacities of smallholder farmers to apply on-farm water efficient practices and technologies to maximize water productivity in coping with rainfall variability and drought	• The training in water efficient practices was effectively done in FFS format and famers testified that irrigation efficiency was a new and important skill for them. However, it is difficult for most farmers to afford the drip irrigation system for their farms and the project can't afford to provide these systems due to the increased costs of ponds due to inflation.	**2**
A: WEIDAP investments takes place without delay and change in scope; the demographic composition and socioeconomic conditions remain largely consistent throughout the course of the project; the demand for freshwater and assistance for climate resilient agricultural practices remain more or less the same throughout the course of the project	• There have been significant delays in WEIDAP activities, resulting in delays in Activity 1.2 of the SACCR project • The demand for water is especially high in 2024 with the extended dry season making the activities related to Output 1 very critical to farmers' livelihoods	**2**

[69] see description of rating scale provide

Table 7.1: Impact Assessment of the SACCR Theory of Change (ID = Impact Driver; A = Assumption; IS = Intermediate State)

Theory of Change Component	Qualitative Analysis	Rating[69]
A: Farming households who have been exposed to FFS training in water efficient technologies and who have access to irrigation ponds will apply what is learned and have the advantage of improved soil moisture conditions in the dry season.	• Farmers interviewed all testified that the FFS training was very helpful and suitable for them and the pond construction was to help them grow crops in the dry season as were efficient irrigation techniques • Increased yields are already being reported but that is likely due to fertilizer application (see output 2)	**3**
A: Access to modernized and supplementary irrigation by a farming household benefits all other family members	• This assumption was not tested during the MTR but appears to be sound as both women and men share household and agricultural duties and both will benefit from enhanced irrigation	**3**
A: Farmers are able to organize and apply in-kind contributions of labour to climate-proofed irrigation activities, including connectivity and operations and maintenance of storage systems.	• This assumption will be tested when the last mile connections are put into place	**`1**
IS: Beneficiary farming households have benefitted from irrigation from pond construction/rehabilitation and training on water efficient technologies and have the means to grow an additional crop during the dry season to enhance their livelihood and income.	• Beneficiary households are benefitting from pond construction/rehabilitation and have acknowledged the benefits of the FFS training on water-efficient irrigation technologies but do not have the financial means to purchase the systems themselves and depend on the project to provide them • WEIDAP delays are causing delays in the last mile connections and many beneficiary farmers are discouraged that they have not benefitted yet	**2**
Output 2: *Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture and access to climate information, finance, and markets*	• Beneficiary armers have benefitted from FFS training in CRA, and many farmers are using climate information generated through the project. Many farmers have previously established connections to markets and to finance though other non-project government programs	**2**
ID: Investments in inputs and capacities to scale up climate-resilient cropping systems and practices (soil, crop, land management) among smallholders through Farmer Field Schools	• This input driver (activity) has been very successful – the FFS methodology has been highly relevant to beneficiaries in terms of information relayed and the methods to deliver the information. The application of both chemical and organic fertilizers has improved, as has the practice of mulching,	**3**

Table 7.1: Impact Assessment of the SACCR Theory of Change (ID = Impact Driver; A = Assumption; IS = Intermediate State)

Theory of Change Component	Qualitative Analysis	Rating[69]
ID: Technical assistance for enhancing access to markets and credit for sustained climate-resilient agricultural investments by smallholders and value chain actor	• There was not a lot of evidence that training on market access or credit was widely implemented. Farmers interviewed reported that government programs (not related to the project) enabled access to credit and that access to markets for produce was already established. Additional training may take place between 2024 and 2026.	**1**
ID: Co-development and use of localized agro-climate advisories by smallholders to enhance climate-resilient agricultural production	• Farmers time their planting according to forecasts so they are dependent on climate information services. It is a practice that might be independent of the SACCR project	**3**
A: farmers see values of climate resilient techniques; application of climate-resilient agricultural practices/cropping systems by farmers will result in increased yields after year 2	• The assumption is correct, as farmers reported seeing the value of CRA especially with fertilizer application techniques and mulching. Increased yields are reported anecdotally and will be measured more accurately after the next growing season.	**3**
A: Completion of the FFS translates into heightened awareness	• There is heightened awareness by famers on the use of CRA practices	**3**
A: Downscaled forecasts are available at the provincial or district level	• There was some evidence that forecasts were provided by the district to the commune to the farmer; however there is evidence that forecasts are obtained through TV and the internet	**2**
IS: An intermediate state for output 2 is beneficiary farmers with heightened knowledge on CRA and market and credit access with increased awareness of climate change. Yields have started to increase due to agricultural inputs,	• Farmers trained through FFS have increased knowledge of climate resilient practices; there is less evidence of awareness of market and credit access due to project related training. While there is evidence of increased yields, productivity will be measured more accurately after subsequent growing seasons,	**2**
Overall project summary findings: • Despite the delay in the implementation of SACCR project activities, there is a solid foundation in place for project implementation over the remaining time of the project (June 2026) • With regard to the activities that have been initiated, there is very good evidence that the SACCR project can successfully implement all project activities that have the capacity to enhance water security and climate-resilient agricultural livelihoods to the poor/near poor, ethnic minority and women-headed households in the five provinces through improved irrigation and climate smart agricultural practices which will help adapt to the increasing severity of climate change induced water scarcity.		**2**

ROtI rating scale used in Table 7.1

Not achieved (0) - the ToC component was not explicitly or implicitly identified by the project, and/or very little progress has been made towards achieving the interim target of the ToC component, and the conditions for future progress are not in place.

Poorly achieved (1) very little progress has been made towards achieving the interim target of ToC component, but the conditions are in place for future progress should support be provided to complete this component.

Partially achieved (2) the ToC component is explicitly recognized and the mechanisms set out to achieve it are appropriate but insufficient to ensure successful completion and sustainability upon project closure and meaningful progress towards achievement of the long-term goal.

Fully achieved (3) the ToC component is explicitly recognized and appropriate activities are underway with interim targets achieved. Mechanisms are in place that show progress towards achievement of the ToC component and there is assurance of substantial contribution towards achievement of the long-term goal.

Appendix 8: Interim Evaluation of LogFrame Indicators using SMART criteria

(S=specific; M=measurable; A=achievable; R=reliable; T=time bound) (green=compliance on all 5 criteria; yellow= compliance on 3-4 criteria; red = compliance on 0-2 criteria)

Indicators	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	IE Review					IE Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
Paradigm Shift Objectives and Impacts at the Fund level								
Paradigm shift objectives								
GCF Paradigm shift objectives: Increased climate-resilient sustainable development								
Fund-Level Impact Indicators								
1. Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries	**Direct**: 39,550 males 39,550 Females 79,100 total beneficiaries **Indirect:** 68,106 males 68,106 females 136,212 total beneficiaries	**Direct:** 100,399 males 100,399 females 200,798 Total beneficiaries **Indirect**: 165,272 males 165,272 females 330,554 Total beneficiaries						This indicator is specific – but it may be too specific as the numbers could be rounded up or down since obtaining the exact numbers will be difficult – largely due to changes in activities of beneficiaries but also due to the specificity of the target number.
2. Number of beneficiaries relative to total population	4.0% of total population of 5 provinces	9.6% of total population of 5 provinces						Similar to Indicator 1, the percentage point could be a round number and not a decimal indicating an unnecessary level of specificity and therefore difficult to measure at that level of accuracy.
3. A1.2 Number of males and females benefiting from the adoption of diversified, climate- resilient livelihood options (including fisheries, agriculture, tourism, etc.)	Female: 10,186 Male: 10,186 Total: 20,372	Female: 25,473 Male: 25,473 Total: 50,946						Similar to indicators 1 and 2, measurability is questionable due to the specific numbers. This indicator also suggests other livelihood options were a part of the project, when the project was really limited to agriculture.

Indicators	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	IE Review					IE Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
4. A2.3 Number of males and females with year-round access to reliable and safe water supply despite climate shocks and stresses	Female: 39,550 Male: 39,550 Total: 79,100	Female: 100,399 Male: 100,399 Total: 200,798						Provision of access to a year-round supply of water is specific, measurable, relevant and time-bound. The target is achievable if methods are put into place to expand the beneficiary selection criteria so that the target number of beneficiaries can be reached and activities are on track.
Project Objective Indicators								
5. 6.2 Use of climate information products/services in decision-making in climate-sensitive sectors	All ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 1 10 ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 2 for all training events organized	All ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 3 Members of ACIS technical working groups score 80% for criteria 4 Members of ACIS technical working groups score 80% for criteria 5						
6. A7.1 Use by vulnerable households, communities, business and public-sector services of Fund supported tools, instruments, strategies and activities to respond to climate change and variability	On average, at least 6% increase from the baseline in crop productivity for both WEIDAP and GCF beneficiary farmers trained through the FFS	On average, at least 20% increase from the baseline in crop productivity for both WEIDAP and GCF beneficiary farmers trained through the FFSs						This indicator is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound – local agriculture extension officers routinely measure productivity and increases of 15% were already reported at Mid-term
7. 8.1 Number of males and females made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses	Female: 2,547 Male: 2,547 Total: 5,094	Female: 8,490 Male: 8,490 Total: 16,980						This indicator may be difficult to measure as people may say they are aware (subjective) but my not act on that awareness and alter practices.
Output 1 Indicators (**Output 1**: Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts)								
8. Number of irrigated hectares of farmland served by modernized irrigation systems	3,295 ha	13,180 ha						At mid-term it is not clear if this is achievable, given the number of challenges encountered by the project.

Indicators	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	IE Review					IE Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
9. Number of hectares of farmland climate proofed through last mile connections	448 ha	1,120 ha						The use of the term “climate proofed” is slightly vague and a term more specific could be used to refer to ”improved soil moisture through irrigation”. The term “climate proofed” can infer a broader set of variables at play in addition to irrigation.
10. Number of rain-fed hectares exhibiting water harvesting and conservation measures.	1,886 ha	5,074 ha						Indicator is specific and measurable. Development of methods to achieve it might be more challenging.
11. Application of water efficient techniques and practices by farmers	25% of smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to Micro-irrigation techniques (Drip or sprinkler systems) 25% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches	60% of smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to micro irrigation techniques (Drip or sprinkler systems) 60% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches.						At mid-term this indicator was shown to be difficult to achieve due to the costs of the water saving irrigation methods – costs that both the project and the farmer were finding it difficult to bear.
Output 2 Indicators (Output 2: .Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture and access to climate information, finance, and markets)								
12. % smallholder farmers adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories	25% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories	60% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories						This indicator may be difficult to measure when there are no climate advisories

Indicators	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	IE Review					IE Review Comments
			S	M	A	R	T	
13. % smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	25% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	60% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories						This indicator may be difficult to measure as farmers may switch crops for a variety of reasons, in addition to climate advisories. It also may be difficult to achieve, based on only one variable.
14. % Women participation and decision-making in CIPs	20%	50%						This indicator satisfies all of the criteria for a suitable indicator.

Appendix 9: Interim Evaluation of SACCR Funding Proposal Risk Ratings

Table 9.1 provides an analysis of risk ratings and mitigation measures at design stage (listed in both the Funding Proposal (FP) and the Restructuring Proposal) and at the time of Mid-Term Review. The risk ratings used in the FP were Low, Medium and High. Risk ratings used in the IE follow UNDP Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) 2019, and are based on a combined assessment of "likelihood" and "impact" to determine a rating of High, Substantial, Moderate or Low using the ERM Risk Matrix. Risk numbering and risk categories follow those in used in FP.

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk Category: Social and Environmental				
Risk 1: Farmers may be reluctant to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices and cropping systems due to perceived risk associated with application of new techniques, technologies, input	**Medium**	**Low**	357. Participatory vulnerability assessment and prioritization methodologies used in Farmer Field Schools will highlight farmer-identified needs and priorities, as well as traditional knowledge of their agro-ecosystems. Champion farmers – the most progressive and respected farmers in a commune – will be identified for FFS training-of-trainers to take place over the course of at least two years. Champion farmers will teach and mentor their peers regarding use of water efficient technologies, new agricultural practices, and climate-resilient cropping systems. The participatory development of agro-climate advisories will ensure that information vital to crop production reflects local knowledge, as well as information from the GOV's hydro-meteorological service and DARDs, and is disseminated through farmer-driven networks. Farmers will receive training and support for the development of business plans and will have access for two years to the inputs and materials they need for climate-resilient production through vouchers they receive upon satisfactory completion of training. Farmers will also receive training and mentoring on access to markets for surplus production. DARD extensionists will be trained to support poor and near-poor farmers in all aspects of climate-resilient production and commercialization. **These measures maintain this risk at Medium**	***Likelihood****: Low (2)*. Farmers were very positive about the FFS training received and had applied CRA techniques to their farms. ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact* (2) with potential adverse impacts on households if CRA is not adopted ***Mitigation Measures***: Participatory development of climate advisories; the use of respected farmers as trainers and the FFS methodology will all assist in lowering risks.

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk 2: Champion farmers could capture the benefits of partnerships with the private sector or otherwise neglect mentoring and capacity building of neighboring farmers	**Medium**	**Low**	358. Champion farmers will be selected by their peers from among the most respected and successful farmers in each participating commune at project initiation workshops in each province. Training and mentoring by champion farmers will be supervised/monitored by PMU and DARD staff, and commune farmers will be encouraged to provide feedback on what they are learning and doing. M&E visits by project and institutional staff will also provide a source of information on the success of the champion farmer model. **With this framework, this risk remains at Medium**	***Likelihood:*** *(not likely, 1)* very low chance of materializing as all ToT's and FFS were very effective ***Impact:*** *(*Intermediate, 3*)* potential adverse impacts on livelihoods if the training did not occur ***Mitigation Measures:*** Mitigation measures identified in the FP are adequate to mitigate the risk
Risk 3: Poor and near-poor farmers may perceive credit as too risky, thus reducing the likelihood of their possessing sufficient financial resources to sustain re-investment in the climate resilience of their production assets	**Medium**	**Moderate**	359. Poor/near-poor farmers may be more risk averse than their more well-off counterparts given uncertainty regarding production methods, markets, weather and other factors. This project will teach farmers to identify and understand the climate vulnerability of their agro-ecosystems and to co-develop potential solutions that increase both productivity and climate resilience. Farmers will build their capacities in Farmer Field Schools to apply agricultural practices and cropping systems that are both productive and climate-resilient; as part of FFS, champion farmers will continue their mentoring relationships with farmers participating in the project while receiving institutional and NGO support. Through their participation in FFS and multi-stakeholder platforms, farmers will be able to analyze market trends, demand for specific products, obstacles to production and marketing of climate-resilient commodities, and other factors, together with buyers, creditors, institutional and NGO representatives and other stakeholders; cooperation between farmers and other actors will reduce marketing risk. The participatory production of agro-climate advisories will deliver a high degree of confidence in the information provided, helping to reduce the perception of risk by poor/near-poor farmers. By ensuring water accessibility through irrigation and storage, the project will reduce the risk to farmers of increasing rainfall variability and extreme events. **Given this overall strategy of reducing risk, this risk is considered as Medium.**	***Likelihood:*** *Moderately Likely* (3). The ranking will be similar to the ranking in the FP due to low level of activities related to credit ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact* (3) on livelihoods if farmers are not willing to take the risk and receive credit ***Mitigation Measures:*** The mitigation measures proposed in the FP can reduce this risk if fully implemented

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk 4: Private sector entrepreneurs perceive risks to participating on multi-stakeholder Climate Innovation platforms in terms of potential insufficient or negative cost-benefit and cooperation is low	**Medium**	**Moderate**	360. Private sector entrepreneurs are expected to look favorably on participation on multi-stakeholder platforms given their economic interests tied to commodity production and commercialization processes. It is expected that the private sector will be interested in increased production of climate-resilient agricultural products for the potential profits it could bring them. As no single private sector player controls the entire process of production and commercialization, cooperation among entrepreneurs is critical. At the same time, by reducing the risks to production through the capacity building and investment in irrigation that this project provides, entrepreneurs can be relatively certain of sufficient volumes and quality of production, which will strengthen their interest in providing inputs, credit, marketing and other services. By working closely with farmers on multi-stakeholder platforms, private sector entrepreneurs can enter into direct partnerships or contractual relationships with producers and producers' organizations. The project will invite a wide variety of private sector entities to each provincial project initiation workshop to confirm their interest in participating on the platforms. With engagement of the private sector at an early stage of project preparation and implementation, **this risk is Medium**.	***Likelihood:*** *Moderately likely* (3). The ranking will be similar to the ranking in the FP due to low level of activities related to establishing CIP ***Impact****: Intermediate impact* (3) on establishing CIP if private sector is risk adverse ***Mitigation Measures****:* The mitigation measures identified in the FP are adequate. Proper implementation of the mitigation measures identified should be ensured.
Risk 5: WEIDAP operations are poorly run resulting in insufficient water at critical times of the production cycle.	**Low**	**Low**	361. As WEIDAP will provide access to farmers of a fundamental resource vital to one of the country's most significant economic sectors, the Government of Viet Nam will prioritize the fully effective operations and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure. The ADB loan to build and operate WEIDAP will finance extensive capacity development of the institutions responsible for WEIDAP operations and maintenance. Given the importance of WEIDAP to the national economy, the risk to poor/near-poor farmers is negligible of poor performance by institutions charged with WEIDAP infrastructure operations and maintenance. As such, **this risk is considered to be Low**.	***Likelihood:*** *low (as predicted in the FP)* – this rating is kept the same at Mid-term since there were no last mile connections to evaluate ***Impact:*** High (>20% of project value) (as predicted in the FP) – this rating is kept the same at Mid-term since there were no last mile connections to evaluate ***Mitigation Measures*****:** the emphasis is on the priorities of the GoV for efficient and effective irrigation infrastructure and the need for water as a fundamental resource.

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk 6: Poor/near-poor farmers may assess the time needed to establish fully productive agroforestry systems (3-4 years) to be too long and therefore unfavorable economically given alternative subsistence land uses with annual crops (e.g. maize, rice)	**Low**	**Low**	362. In establishing plantation agroforestry systems, there is ample space between tree seedlings to grow annual subsistence crops. Project staff, champion farmers and cooperating institutions and organizations will assist farmers to plan and manage their production plots through training and input support. As part of input support, farmers successfully completing specific training on agricultural production and water efficient technologies will receive vouchers for inputs to their production system, thereby reducing their costs and financial risk over the first two years of their participation. By assisting poor/near-poor farmers to plan and manage the establishment of agroforestry systems with annual crop varieties, as well as providing input support, it is expected that farmers will be willing to establish agroforestry systems on their plots. **This risk is considered to be low.**	***Likelihood:*** *Low (2)* since farmers appear to be interested in planting trees as cash crops and their traditional practices include inter-cropping so agroforestry is not an entirely new concept ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact* (3) could be observed to livelihoods if farmers fail to plant trees with their annual crops ***Mitigation Measures:*** Regular monitoring of the use of inputs and farmers attitudes towards growing trees on their small farms will help to ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.
Risk 7: Ethnic minority and women farmers may feel that project implementing parties are insufficiently sensitive to their specific needs in terms of language, cultural factors and gender norms, thus affecting their participation.	**Medium**	**Moderate**	363. Project implementing parties will receive training and awareness raising regarding ethnic minority and women farmers' potential sensitivities and cultural requirements and how to involve them fully and respectfully. Participation by these farm populations will be closely monitored, and grievance recourse mechanism to receive and address complaints will be established. Given existing awareness of potential conflicts and insensitivities, as well as pro-active measures to avoid them in this project, **this risk is rated at Medium.**	***Likelihood:*** *Low likelihood* (2) since the project targets women and ethnic minorities and ensures the FFS are well attended (>30%) by women. ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact* (3) on gender integration in FFS and overall participation in FFS for the enhancement of agricultural skills. ***Mitigation Measures:*** The mitigation measures identified in the FP are adequate. Proper implementation of the mitigation measures should be ensured.
Risk Category: Technical and Operational				

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk 8: Delays in co-financing fund flows under the WEIDAP project resulting in slow progress that may impact the GCF project.	**Low**	**Moderate**	364. Given the importance of WEIDAP to the national economy, the Government of Viet Nam will prioritize the execution of the modernization of irrigation infrastructure to be fully effective, including operations and maintenance. Further, the legally binding ADB concessional loan agreements have been fully negotiated and signed, after extensive vetting and due diligence, with the GoV and the PPCs responsible for implementation. UNDP will, in compliance with the GCF reporting requirements, continue to monitor and report on co-financing realized during project implementation. As such, **this risk is considered to be Low.**	***Likelihood:*** *Highly Likely* (4) since WEIDAP has experienced significant delays, evident at Mid-term ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact* (3) on Activity 1.2 of the GCF which causes delays in disbursements for other activities. ***Mitigation Measures:*** The mitigation measures identified in the FP are adequate. Proper implementation of the mitigation measures should be ensured.
Risk Category: Other				
Other Potential Risk: Over the long-term, climate change is expected to continue to evolve with increasing climate variability and extreme events as likely periodic outcomes. This project is aimed at adapting farmers' agro-ecosystems to climate change and building their capacities to assess their vulnerability on an on-going basis and define adaptive measures. By empowering poor/near-poor farmers with the required knowledge, information and methodologies, they will be able to pro-actively address emerging climate risks and hazards.	**Medium**	**Moderate**	Not defined in the FP	***Likelihood:*** *Moderately likely (3).* Since beneficiaries could be adversely affected by climate change events (drought) and ponds could dry up causing their dry season crop to fail ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact (3)* could be observed due farmer invesements being lost ***Mitigation Measures:*** Strengthen knowledge, information and methodologies for poor/near-poor farmers

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Other Potential Risk: Markets for agroforestry commodities are reasonably stable, but given the time required for establishment and initiation of production, rapid response to sudden changes in the market for a specific commodity are difficult. Market trends are monitored by a number of institutions, including MARD, and strategic guidance will be provided to project implementing parties, as well as others, to avoid market risk and take advantage of economic opportunities .	**Low**	**Low**	Not defined in the FP	***Likelihood:*** *Low likelihood (2).* Most crops have a fixed buyer ***Impact:****Minor impact (2*) could be observed if markets are unable to buy produce ***Mitigation Measures:*** **N/A**
Risk 11[70]: Revised construction costs might be increased during the course of the project	**Low**	**Moderate**	The government and the project team will assess topographical, environmental and social conditions of construction sites in the proposed two districts (in Khanh Hoa) once the RP is approved. In the new districts, there is a plan to increase the number of communal ponds to replace some individual ponds and increase the number of upgraded ponds in order to maintain the number of beneficiaries agreed to. A discussion is also ongoing to find additional co-financing from Government of Viet Nam to match the budget shortfall if needed.	***Likelihood:*** *Highly Likely* (4) due to the rise in inflation in the four year period from the start of the project until the mid-term review. ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact (3)*: increased costs would affect the number of ponds established. ***Mitigation Measures:*** Additional co-financing as a mitigation measure is needed, however, at the time of the MTR, these funds were not obtained.

[70] Risks 11- are additional risks identified in the Restructuring proposal, 22 Aug 2023

Analysis of Funding Proposal Risk Ratings and Mitigation Measures at Design Stage and at the time of Interim Evaluation.				
Risks Identified in FP	**FP**	**IE**	**Mitigation Measures Indentified in FP**	**Interim Evaluation Comments**
Risk 12: WEIDAP's co-financing does not fully materialize in the remaining provinces, for example due to a change in long-term provincial priorities for the project locations.	**Medium**	**Moderate**	The project team will continue to monitor this risk together with relevant government agencies, WEIDAP's CPMU and PPMUs and through discussions with ADB (see Annex 4 on current status of WEIDAP's implementation). The likelihood of this risk eventuating is considered low in the remaining provinces based on consultations with relevant government agencies, WEIDAP's CPMU and PPMUs and with ADB and the continued commitment they express. Nonetheless the risk could still materialize in the context of a major unexpected change in policy by the Viet Nam ese government and/or ADB, and therefore mitigation actions described here would not be expected to lower the probability of this risk occurring. In case that WEIDAP's co-financing cannot be fully materialized, the project team will explore other potential irrigation works to link to and/or construct additional ponds from cost savings in order to ensure project's outcomes.	***Likelihood:****Low likelihood (2)* ***Impact:*** *Intermediate impact (3)* with all beneficiaries of Activity1.2 without a water supply. over a relatively small area associated with construction could be observed if erosion control sediment plan failed ***Mitigation Measures:*** The mitigation measure identified in the RP of exploring other potential irrigation works would be effective in mitigating the impact.

Appendix 10: Interim Evaluation of Fund Level and Program Level Indicators and Activities

H.1.1. Paradigm Shift Objectives and Impacts at the Fund level

Paradigm shift objectives	
Paradigm shift objectives of GCF: Increased climate-resilient sustainable development	This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal: Goal 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts This project will contribute to the following country outcome included in the Country Program Document/UNDAF: UNDAF Outcome 2.1. Low-carbon, climate and disaster resilient development: By 2021, Viet Nam has accelerated its transition to sustainable development and green growth towards a low-carbon economy and enhanced its adaptation and resilience to climate change and natural disasters, with a focus on empowering the poor and vulnerable groups. Outcome 2.2: Sustainable management of natural resources and the environment: By 2021, Viet Nam has enhanced sustainable management of natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystem services and improved the quality of the environment, while contributing to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. Country Program Document Outcome 2: Low-carbon, resilience and environmentally sustainable development

Expected Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target		MTR Assessment[71]	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
			Mid-term	Final			
Fund-level impacts							

[71] From the mid-term report, June 30, 2024

Choose appropriate expected results	Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries	**Direct: 0** **Indirect: 0**	**Direct**: **79,100** (39,550 males / 39,550 females) **Indirect: 136,212** (68,106 males / 68,106 females)	**Direct: 200,798** (100,399 males / 100,399 females) **Indirect: 330,554** (165,272 males // 165,272 females)	1. **Direct beneficiaries: 63,088** (equivalent to 15,722 households) (31,544 males and 31,544 females) 2**. Indirect beneficiaries: 195,160** (97,285 males and 97,285 females)		The number of direct beneficiaries reached at mid-term is 79.8% and the number of indirect beneficiaries reached exceeds the target set for mid-term. However, there were not equal numbers of women and men direct beneficiaries and that needs to be re-calculated
Choose appropriate expected results	Number of beneficiaries relative to total population	0% of total population for 5 provinces	4.0% of total population for 5 provinces	9.6% of total population for 5 provinces	Number of beneficiaries relative to total population: Accumulation: 4.67 %		Number of beneficiaries relative to total population at mid-term is surpassed
Fund-level Impacts							
A1.0 Increased resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most	A1.2 Number of males and females benefiting from the adoption of diversified, climate- resilient livelihood options (including fisheries, agriculture, tourism, etc.)	Female: 0 Male: 0 Total: 0	**Total: 20,372** F: 10,186	**Total: 50,946** F: 25,473	Not assessed at mid-term		

vulnerable people, communities and regions			M: 10,186	M: 25,473			
A2.0 Increased resilience of health and well-being, and food and water security	A2.3 Number of males and females with year-round access to reliable and safe water supply despite climate shocks and stresses	Female: 0 Male: 0 Total: 0	**Total: 79,100** F: 39,550 M: 39,550	**Total: 200,798** F: 100,399 M: 100,399	The project has **731 households** benefiting from the recently completed 441 ponds, which will contribute to creating a safe and reliable water source for irrigating **499.7 ha** of crops, reducing water-related stress due to climate change. - When the modern irrigation pipeline system of the WEIDAP Project is completed, the number of households with year-round access to reliable and safe water supply despite climate shocks and stresses will		Assuming 731 HH = 2,924 individual beneficiaries, the activity reached 3,7 % of the mid term target. Due to the rapid progress of pond construction since June 2023,and the likelihood of planned last mile connections, it is anticipated that this outcome will be achieved

					increase significantly.		

H.1.2. Outcomes, Outputs, Activities and Inputs at Project level

Expected Result	Indicators	Baseline	Target		MTR Assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for Rating
			Mid-term	Final			
A6.0 Increased generation and use of climate information in decision-making	6.2. Use of climate information products/services in decision-making in climate-sensitive sectors	0	All ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 1 10 ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 2 for all training events organized	All ACIS technical working groups meet criteria 3 Members of ACIS technical working groups score 80% for criteria 4 Members of ACIS technical working groups score 80% for criteria 5	Formation of ACIS groups: 20 ACIS groups have been formed for the whole project (Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Dak Lak, and Dak Nong) With 286 members (including 93 females and 53 ethnic minorities) The groups have started kick-off meetings and exchanged information.		Despite progress and formation of ACIS groups, this knowledge has not been transferred to farmers for their use

A7.0 Strengthened adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks	A7.1 Use by vulnerable households, communities, business and public-sector services of Fund supported tools, instruments, strategies and activities to respond to climate change and variability	TBD	On average, at least 6% increase from the baseline in crop productivity for both WEIDAP and GCF beneficiary farmers trained through the FFSs	On average, at least 20% increase from the baseline in crop productivity for both WEIDAP and GCF beneficiary farmers trained through the FFSs	Estimated from random field visits and monitoring documents. Secondary data (e.g. provincial and commune agriculture report) showed the increasing common trend for main crops (e.g. coffee, pepper, durian, avocado) compared to 2022. The average yields increased from 15 to 30%	Crop yields have shown an increase by mid-term, although it is anecdotal and not formally documented as of yet
A8.0 Strengthened awareness of climate threats and risk-reduction processes	8.1 Number of males and females made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses	Female: 0 Male: 0 Total: 0	**Total: 5,094** F: 2,547 M: 2,547	**Total: 16,980** F: 8,490 M: 8,490	The establishment of 865 FFS group with 15,722 farmer members has helped raise awareness	Discussions with farmers has revealed that their knowledge of climate change

							related hazards is limited
Project Performance Measurements							
1. Enhanced water security for agricultural production for vulnerable smallholder farmers in the face of climate-induced rainfall variability and droughts	Number of irrigated hectares of farmland served by modernized irrigation systems	0 ha	**3,295 ha**	13,180 ha	The SACCR project has completed mobilizing contractors to design last mile connections linked to the irrigation systems with the main pipelines installed by WEIDAP project and completed surveying 882 beneficiary households. The main pipeline of 38.7 km in length has been finished installation.		No last mile connections were established at the time of the MTR, despite designs in place
	Number of hectares of farmland climate-proofed through last mile connections	0 ha	448 ha	1,120 ha	Undertaking		
	Number of rain-fed hectares exhibiting water harvesting and conservation measures.	0 ha	1,886 ha	5,074 ha	2,362 ha are irrigated by of		This is considered

				441 ponds[72] and applications from trained farmers which is 46.6% of the mid-term target		almost on target
Application of water efficient techniques and practices by farmers		0%	25% of smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to Micro-irrigation techniques (Drip or sprinkler systems) 25% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches.	60% of smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to micro-irrigation techniques (Drip or sprinkler systems) 60% of rain-fed smallholder farmers trained through FFSs report switching to scheduling technique, cover crops and mulches.	48 smart/water saving irrigation models designed in 68 communes are ready for handover and training on use for farmers to apply	Interviews with farmers at mid-term indicated that they have knowledge of water saving techniques from FFS training

[72] The mid term report (June 30 2024) reported 929.7 ha irrigated without clear justification so the MTR analysis was used

2. Increased resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods through climate-resilient agriculture and access to climate information, finance, and markets	% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories	0% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting time based on climate advisories	25% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting time based on climate advisories	60% smallholder farmers adjusting their planting time based on climate advisories	Undertaking		This activity is not fully implemented as of yet
	% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	0% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	25% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	60% smallholder farmers switching to climate resilient crop varieties and/or diversifying crop portfolio based on climate advisories	Undertaking		
	% Women participation and decision-making in CIPs	0% of smallholders adjusting their planting times based on climate advisories	25% of smallholders adjusting their planting times based	60% of smallholders adjusting their planting times based	Undertaking		

		on climate advisories	on climate advisories		

Activities	Sub-activities	Deliverables	MTR Assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Activity 1.1 Establish largescale irrigation infrastructure to bring irrigation water to eight farming areas across the target regions	146.5 km of new pipe systems taking water from canals or reservoirs, and supplying hydrants located at a reasonable distance from a farmer's field. 13,180 ha served through modernization of main system including canal lining, control structure, balancing storage and installation of flow control and measurement devices with remote monitoring Provision of new and improved weirs replacing farmer constructed temporary weirs, permanent ponds/storage for irrigating HVCs, and upgrades of upstream storage and supply systems.	146.5 km of new pipe systems 13,180 ha served through modernization of main system	38.7 km of the main irrigation pipelines have been completed by the co-donor of WEIDAP project (29.4 km in Ninh Thuan, and 9.3 km in Binh Thuan)		
Activity 1.2. Establish last-mile connections between WEIDAP irrigation infrastructure and the poor and near poor	1.2.1 Design and construct 3,733 connection and distribution systems including installation and maintenance of irrigation equipment to cope with climate variability on 1,120 hectares 1.2.2 Train 3,733 poor and near-poor farmers (one connection/distribution system per farmer) on climate-risk	3,733 last mile connections and distribution systems (one connection/distribution system per farmer) - Training of 3,733 poor and near-poor irrigated farmers	38.7 km of the main irrigation pipelines have been completed by the co-donor of WEIDAP project (29.4 km in Ninh Thuan, and 9.3 km in Binh Thuan).		

farmer lands to help cope with increasing rainfall variability and drought	informed utilization of irrigation equipment and system maintenance	- Establishment of approximately 36 Water User Groups (on average at least one WUG in each of the 36 communes targeted for last mile connections)	Connection sites have been surveyed for 882 households (480 in Dak Nong and 402 in Ninh Thuan). Dak Lak is inviting bidders for last-mile connection design. The bidding is expected to be completed in Quarter 1 of 2024. Undertaking		
Activity 1.3 Enhance supplementary irrigation for rain fed smallholders to cope with rainfall variability and drought	.1.3.1 Construct or upgrade 1,507 climate-resilient ponds (based on site-specific designs construct 849 new ponds and upgrade 658 existing ponds) 1.3.2 Train approximate 17,000 poor and near-poor farmer beneficiaries in	- Construction of 849 new ponds. - Upgrade 658 existing ponds. - Training of 16,915 poor and near-poor rain-fed farmers.	441 climate-resilient ponds have been completed digging out of 1507 targeted.		

	climate resilient water resource management to enhance supply 1.3.3 Establish 202 pond management groups for O&M, including structures and agreements on potential funding mechanisms	- Establish 218 pond management groups for O&M.	1.3.2: Training of farmer households 7,872 out of 17,495 households have been trained, reaching 45%, 131 out of 202 groups have been established. achieving 65%.		
Activity 1.4 Increase smallholder capacities to apply on-farm water efficient practices and technologies to maximize	1.4.1 Train 30 DARD staff and champion farmers in 15 districts (one course in years 2, 4 and 6) to support farmers' groups in co-design, costing and O&M of climate-resilient, water efficient technologies.	- Training of 30 DARD extension staff and champion farmers in 15 districts - Conduct 900 FFSs and train 21,228 poor and near-poor small-holder farmers	60 out of 420 staff have been trained. Achieving 14% (mid term target is 25%)		Very high achievement of the FFS training

water productivity in coping with rainfall variability and drought		Installation of on-farm water efficiency systems for 8,621 poor/near-poor smallholders			
	1.4.2 Train over 21,200 farmers through 900 Farmer Field Schools on soil and biomass management to enhance moisture-holding capacity, recharge of groundwater, and water productivity to cope with evolving climate risks on water security (in conjunction with Activity 2.1)		15,722 out of 21,228 farmers (74%) have been trained.		
	1.4.3 Install on-farm water efficiency systems for 8,621 poor/near-poor smallholders linked to performance-based vouchers (linked to Activity 2.1)				
	1.4.4 Train smallholder farmers in five provinces on climate-risk informed O&M of water efficiency technologies				
Activity 2.1 Investments in inputs and capacities to scale up climate-	2.1.1 Sensitize smallholders to establish/re-activate 900 Farmer Field Schools.	Conduct 15 provincial level workshops for 30 DARD staff	2.1.1. Establishment of FFS groups with CRA practices: 865 out of 900 groups (96%)		

resilient cropping systems and practices (soil, crop, land management) among smallholders through Farmer Field Schools			have been established		
	2.1.2 Train DARD personnel and lead (champion) farmers, as well as other interested parties (NGOs, Farmers and Women's Unions, etc.) to build a cadre of farmer champions to galvanize adoption and application of CRA packages (15 provincial level workshops for 30 DARD staff in years 2,4 and 6; 28 district and 136 commune level trainings for 30 lead farmers in years 2 and 6)	Conduct 30 district and 136 commune level trainings for 30 lead farmers	Training on finance and credit: 2833 participants Training on access to market: 255 participants		
	2.1.3 Train over 21,200 farmers and value chain actors – particularly private sector input providers, buyers, processors, transporters - through 900 FFS on scaling up of climate resilient cropping systems and practices. (Each FFS will conduct 1-day trainings twice per year)	Provide 8,621 targeted poor/near poor supported with CRA investments	2.1.3 7,456 farmer households in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces have been trained - Ninh Thuan: 6,402 households, including 4,281 females and 6,183 EM people - Binh Thuan: 1,054		

			households, including 690 females and 670 EM people		
	2.1.4 Investment support to 8,621 targeted poor/near poor smallholders to acquire inputs and technologies for implementation of the CRA packages through performance-based vouchers.	Conduct 900 FFSs and train 21,228 poor and near-poor small-holder farmers.	2.1.4 Beneficiaries of agricultural materials (voucher system): 6423 out of 8621 households		
	2.1.5 Participatory auditing of implementation of voucher systems for climate resilient cropping systems and practices (One 1-day meeting for 100 participants in each of the 68 communes in years 2, 4, and 6)	Conduct one 1-day Participatory auditing meeting for 100 participants in each of the 68 communes.			
Activity 2.2 Technical assistance for enhancing access to markets and credit for sustained	2.2.1 Establish and operationalize multistakeholder Climate Innovation Platforms (CIP) in each province and at the level of agro-ecological zones (Annual stakeholder meetings organized once every two years in each of the 5 provinces)	Establish and operationalize multi-stakeholder Climate Innovation Platforms (CIP) in the 5 provinces. .			

climate-resilient agricultural investments by smallholders and value chain actors.	2.2.2 Provide technical assistance and training to enable market linkages with input, information and technology providers and buyers for climate-resilient agricultural production (two trainings, two networking workshops and three trade fairs in each of the 15 districts over four years)	Conduct two trainings, two networking workshops and three trade fairs in each of the 15 districts	Training on access to market has been organized 2 sessions in Ninh Thuan and 1 session in Binh Thuan. Besides, in each province, the consultants also organized an online training session on social network sale skills for all provinces with 89 participants, including 57 females and 3 EM people.		
	2.2.3 Provide technical assistance and train farmers to enable access to credit through financial intermediaries (One workshop in each of the 68 communes in years 2 and 4	Conduct one workshop in each of the 68 communes.			
Activity 2.3 Co-development and use of localized agro-climate advisories by	2.3.1 Train 50 hydromet and DARD staff on generating and interpreting down-scaled forecasts for use in agricultural planning (eight training over four years for 50 participants)	- 50 hydromet and DARD staff trained. - Training provided to the 15 ACISs in 15 project districts.	Formation of ACIS groups: 20 ACIS groups have been formed for the whole project		

smallholders to enhance climate-resilient agricultural production.	2.3.2 Provide technical assistance for the formation ACIS technical groups and training of 450 participants at district level (1-day workshops for 30 participants in each of the 15 districts)	Consulting and disseminating climate advisories to 132,836 household in 68 communes	(Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Dak Lak, and Dak Nong) With 286 members (including 93 females and 53 ethnic minorities) The groups have started kick-off meetings and exchanged information.		
	2.3.3 Co-develop, through Participatory, Scenario Planning (PSP) of seasonal and 10-day/15-day agro-climate advisories with smallholder farmers (20 provincial level trainings for 30 staff and 60 district level trainings for 60 participants over four years				
	2.3.4 Disseminate advisories to 132,836 households in the 68 communes				

Appendix 11: Interim Evaluation Ratings for Achievement Summary Table

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

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

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

Appendix 12: UNEG Code of Conduct

Evaluators/Consultants:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

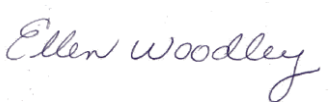
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: **Ellen Woodley**

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

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

Signed at **Fergus, Ontario Canada** *(Place) on* **4 August, 2024** *(Date)*

Signature: 

Appendix 13: MTR Audit Trail

Appendix 14. Photos taken during Field Consultations

Appendix 15: Interim Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Interim Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____