



Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development project

PIMS 6441, GEF ID 10409

Mid-Term Review

**Final Report
01 November 2024**

Country:	Thailand
Region:	Asia
Focal Area:	GEF-7: Biodiversity
GEF Agency:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Executing Agency:	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO)

PROJECT DETAILS:

Project Name:	Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development, PIMS 6441	
Project ID:	UNDP PIMS: 6441	GEF Project ID: 10409
Country:	Thailand	
Region:	Asia	
Focal Area:	GEF-7: Biodiversity	
Focal Area Objectives:	BD-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sector	
Funding Source:	GEF Trust Fund (GEF 7)	
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme	
Implementation Modality:	National Implementation	
Executing Agency:	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO)	

FINANCIALS:

Project Preparation Grant:	US\$ 109,500
GEF Project Grant:	US\$ 2,639,726
Co-financing Total:	US\$ 20,817,134
GEF Agency Fees:	US\$ 250,774
Total Cost:	US\$ 23,817,134

PROJECT TIMELINE

Received by GEF:	10 October 2019
Preparation Grant Approved:	20 November 2019
Concepted Approved:	19 December 2019
Project Approved for Implementation:	07 April 2022
Start Date:	09 December 2022
Closing Date (Planned):	09 September 2026

MIDTERM REVIEW DETAILS:

Mid-Term Review Timeframe:	August - September 2024
MTR Consultants:	Francis Hurst and Phansiri Winichagoon
MTR Reporting Language:	English

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Document Sign-off

This Mid-Term Review Final Report, dated 1 November 2024, for the UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Full-Size Project “Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development ”, (PIMS 6441), has been reviewed and approved by the following signatories.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATTA	Association of Thai Travel Agents
BEDO	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance
BPPS	Bureau of Policy and Programme Support
CBT	Community-based tourism
CBTA	Community based tourism Association
CDD	Community Development Department
CE	Critically Endangered
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DASTA	Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism
DEQP	Department of Environmental Quality Protection
DMCR	Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
DNP	Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
DoT	Department of Tourism
DWR	Department of Water Resources
ED-DLA	Environment Division Department of Local Administration
ESG	Environmental and Social Governance
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSP	Full Sized Project
FTI	Federation of Thai Industries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRM	Grievance redress mechanism
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
GWP	Global Wildlife Program
Ha	Hectares
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
IBA	Important Bird Area
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area

km	Kilometre
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LGO	Local Government Organisation
MCRA	Marine and Coastal Resources Administration
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoID	Ministry of Industry
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOTS	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Medium Sized Project
MTR	Mid-term Review
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCA	Natural Capital Assessment
NESDC	National Economic and Social Development Council
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NP	National Park
NTPC	National Tourism Policy Committee
OECD	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures
ONEP	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
OTA	Online Travel Agents
PA	Protected Area
PAC	Protected Area Committees
PAO	Provincial Administration Organisation
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	GEF Project Implementation Report
PKK	Prachuap Khiri Khan
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PTI	Provincial Tourism Association
PTPC	Provincial Tourism Policy Committee
RFD	Royal Forest Department
RTA	Regional Technical Adviser

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SES	Social and Environmental Standards
SESP	UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening Procedure
SRF	Strategic Results Framework (Log Frame)
STAP	GEF Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
TAO	Tambon Administration Organisation
TAP	Tourism Association of Prachuap Khiri Khan
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TCBTIF	Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute Foundation
TCC	Thai Chamber of Commerce
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TEATA	Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism Association
THB	Baht
TOC	Theory of Change
TRTA	Thai Responsible Tourism Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VUMF	Visitor Use Management Framework
WWF	World Wild Fund for Nature

1. Executive Summary
Project Information Table

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development	PIF Approval Date	19/12/1019
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	6441	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	07/04/2022
GEF Project ID:	10409	ProDoc Signature: Date:	09/12/2022
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	Award ID: 00122804 Project ID: 00118268	Date Project Manager hired	02/02/2023
Country/Countries:	Thailand	Inception Workshop:	23/03/2023
Region:	Asia	Expected Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	09/12/2024
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Expected Terminal Evaluation date:	09/09/2026
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives:	BD-1, Biodiversity	Planned Operational Closure Date:	09/09/2026
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust fund		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO)		
Development Agency	UNDP		
NGOs/CBOs involvement	WWF Contracted: Wetland Foundation and Rak Thai Foundation Coordinating with the existing local NGOs working in sites: Sueb Foundation, Bring Elephants Home Foundation, Panthera Thailand.		
Private sector involvement	PTT Public Company Limited (Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Centre in Prachuap Khiri Khan under the PTT Restoration and Ecology Institute		
Geospatial coordinates of project sites: Kuiburi National Park Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park Pranburi Estuary (including Sam Roi Yot Coastal area and Sam Roi Yot Wetland Area (outside the RAMSAR)	12° 3' 6" N 99° 33' 26" E 12° 12' 17" N 99° 56' 22" E 12° 23' 40.03" N 99° 58' 52.16" E & 12° 12' 38.88" N 99° 54' 4.39" E		

Project Financing	At CEO endorsement (US\$)	At Midterm Review (US\$) ¹
[1] GEF financing	2,639,726	318,930
[2] UNDP contribution:	200	-
[3] Government:	22,480,799	996,953
[4] Other partners:	336,325	-
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3 + 4]:	23,017,124	996,953
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	25,656,850	1,315,883

¹ From June 2024 PIR

Project Description

1. The Project Strategy is summarized in the Project Document as one of mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector and enabling local communities to benefit from biodiversity-based tourism in order to motivate its conservation management. To address the serious threats to biodiversity in Thailand arising from unsustainable tourism practices, the project would mainstream biodiversity and environmental protection into the tourism sector and enable local communities to benefit from biodiversity-based tourism products and services so that they benefit from biodiversity-based livelihoods, value biodiversity, and contribute to its conservation and monitoring. The project would address challenges of pollution, climate change, and over-tourism which will collectively help to prevent and mitigate threats to biodiversity from tourism development. In turn, the benefits will offset impacts of Human Wildlife Conflict and lead to reduced poaching. The project outcomes include strengthened and harmonized policies and standards that mainstream biodiversity into tourism; more sustainable and biodiversity-friendly management of tourism across the Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape; and increased awareness of biodiversity-friendly tourism and improved management of knowledge, and improved market access for biodiversity-based tourism products. Global environmental benefits are expected to include improved management of terrestrial and marine protected areas and high biodiversity landscapes under improved practices, and beneficiaries from biodiversity-based tourism including women and youth.
2. The project strategy and objectives are closely aligned with the national policy direction and objectives including using market-based approaches and building social and environmental resilience into the tourism sector as well as a number of goals and targets contained in the Kunming-Montreal GBF and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).
3. The project is implemented through a full National Implementation Modality (NIM) arrangement with the UNDP providing project assurance and oversight. The PMU is established within the BEDO, a Public Organization under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) which aims to promote the management of biodiversity resources utilization for economic purposes, to encourage sustainable conservation of biodiversity and to spread local wisdom at community to national level.
4. The project's strategy is intended to address four barriers to conserving biodiversity, ensuring that there is ecosystem resilience and developing tourism as a driver for economic growth:
 - Barrier 1:** Fragmented policy framework and institutional coordination that prevents the harmonization of biodiversity conservation with tourism development.
 - Barrier 2:** Lack of technical tools and methodologies to identify and monitor the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism and support the replication and upscaling of biodiversity-based tourism.
 - Barrier 3:** Inadequate financing and incentive mechanisms.
 - Barrier 4:** Limited awareness and capacity across government and local communities on managing over-tourism and developing biodiversity-based tourism

Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

5. The UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies and procedures require all UNDP-implemented and GEF-funded full-sized projects (FSP) to undergo a Mid-Term Review (MTR) upon reaching the halfway point of the project's implementation. Therefore, UNDP has commissioned the MTR by contracting an independent evaluation team consisting of a National Consultant and an International Consultant. The MTR will be conducted following the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and facilitated by the commissioning office, the UNDP Country Office, Bangkok.
6. The MTR is primarily a monitoring and adaptive management tool to identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The primary output/deliverable of this MTR process is the MTR report. The MTR report will provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.
7. The review focuses primarily on assessing the performance of the project in light of the accomplished outcomes, objectives and effects using the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact², as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported and GEF-financed Projects³.

² The MTR is not tasked with rating the impact

³ https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

8. Using these evaluation criteria, the MTR covers all activities supported by UNDP-GEF and completed by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Government agencies as well as activities that other collaborating partners including beneficiaries who are participating in project activities.
9. The temporal scope of the MTR covers all activities of the project beginning with the Project Identification Form (PIF) dated 10 November 2019 through to the current period of implementation evaluation in mid 2024.
10. The MTR utilizes the following sources of primary data and information and secondary data;
 - Desk review: the documentation covering project design, implementation progress, monitoring and review studies, local and national development plans, policies and regulatory instruments including the Social and Environmental Screening Process during the project's development and subsequent safeguarding measures developed.
 - Interviews, stakeholder consultations and field missions: additional information collection and validation took place through remote and face-to-face consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (Annex 4), using "semi-structured interviews" with a key set of questions in a conversational format. Key informants were selected according to their involvement in the project's implementation, or as project beneficiaries. These included: the GEF Agency, government ministries and departments, academics, civil society associations, non-governmental organizations and community members and representatives from the private sector. The MTR endeavors to ensure that the views and opinions of women, youth and disadvantaged groups are solicited and included in the analysis.
 - Site visits to the project area and interviews with project partners: The information collected was disaggregated to reflect the different stakeholders (e.g. Implementing Agency – Executing Agency – PMU – implementing partners – beneficiaries as well as gender). Information from the interviews was then collated and analyzed to provide evidence-based conclusions on the overall performance, progress towards impact and achievements of the project as well as any crosscutting issues.
 - The review adopted a systematic methodological approach to analysis, ensuring validity and transparency in the relationship between findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Findings from diverse evidence streams were consolidated through an evaluation triangulation grid that cross-referenced the findings from various sources (interviews, documentation, etc.) against the questions in the evaluation matrix. The MTR Team confirmed and debated emerging findings from the five GEF evaluation criteria at the analysis stage within the Team, and with stakeholders during online meetings, face to face consultations and during the field visits.
 - Due to the delayed nature of the implementation the Theory of Change (TOC) developed during the project's preparation remains untested and was, despite its quality of design being evaluated as being of good quality, of little utility during the review because the project has not gained sufficient momentum yet to produce the outputs and provide early signs of outcomes. These are likely to appear during the third year of implementation.
 - Similarly, more detailed analysis of outcomes⁴ and the strategy at the midterm were not possible in part due to some of these methodologies needing more continuous data points⁵ but largely because with only approximately 13% of the GEF budget delivery and 5% of the co-financing delivery, such methodologies would be largely speculative with a risk of large margins of error. Therefore, the MTR mostly utilized the standard M&E tools such as the principal M&E tool in GEF projects, the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), and was limited in the manner in which it could apply the TOC.
11. The MTR assess the progress towards results using the project's SRF and the objective and outcome indicators against their forecast achievement by the mid-term to determine the mid-term status of the project to make objective statements regarding the project's progress (Table 2). Similarly, the MTR assesses and rates (using the 6-point Rating Scale, Table 5) the project's progress towards its results (objective), the performance of the outcomes, the efficiency and effectiveness of the project's implementation and adaptive management and the likelihood of the outcomes being sustained after the end of the GEF project grant.

⁴ For instance: Contribution Analysis, Realist Evaluation, Outcome Mapping, Outcome Harvesting, Most Significant Change.

⁵ The project only produced its first PIR during the period of the MTR.

Table 1 Project Strategy

Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity- based tourism	
Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism	<p>Output 1.1: National biodiversity-based tourism strategy developed, adopted and integrated into government processes and reporting of MONRE and MOTS and improved agency coordination mechanisms</p> <p>Output 1.2: Operational policies on biodiversity financing solutions for tourist destinations developed and adopted.</p> <p>Output 1.3: Practical, standardized methodologies for tourism’s ecological, social and economic impact assessment and monitoring developed for biodiversity-based tourism in PAs and high-biodiversity sites across Thailand.</p> <p>Output 1.4: Biodiversity conservation integrated into existing national tourism standards and certifications, strengthening sustainability of tourism</p> <p>Output 1.5: Capacity development program for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within tourism planning, development and operations institutionalized within key national and provincial government agencies.</p>
Outcome 2: More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across the ecologically important Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape	<p>Output 2.1: Provincial, multi-sector sustainable tourism platforms strengthened and implementation of provincial tourism plans and strategies informed by strategic environmental and social assessment and biodiversity-based tourism strategy action plan</p> <p>Output 2.2: Visitor management plans and revenue generation models that improve METT scores are implemented at project sites.</p> <p>Output 2.3: Sustainable biodiversity-based tourism products and experiences developed and strengthened with local communities to raise engagement in biodiversity conservation and generate livelihood benefits, including for women and youth.</p>
Outcome 3: Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-based tourism across Thailand is supported by raised awareness, improved market access and knowledge management	<p>Output 3.1: Improved access to e-marketplaces for biodiversity-based tourism providers.</p> <p>Output 3.2: Targeted outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism delivered to tourism industry, CSOs, and domestic and international tourists.</p> <p>Output 3.3: Knowledge exchange system established for the sharing of experiences between communities and PAs, and for replication and upscaling of best practices across Thailand.</p> <p>Output 3.4: M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.</p>

Project Progress Summary

12. The project experienced a number of delays following its startup and although the project has taken a number of steps, including a workplan and budget revision, to accelerate the delivery of outputs, at the midterm the project is not on track. The low budget burn rate can be attributed to the delay in putting a PMU in place, the political situation and government transition and procurement challenges.
13. According to the June 2024 PIR, the cumulative delivery against the total GEF Grant, as of July 2024 is 12.08% (\$318,930 of the total GEF grant \$ 2,639,726) and the 2024 cumulative delivery at the time of the MTR (as of end August 2024) is 27.60% (\$ 357,130 of \$ 1,293,828).
14. Notably, when the current Workplan and Budget are considered against the committed fund, the delivery forecast in 2024 has to include a considerable amount of the Outcome 2 budget which is already committed to the various Contractual Services that are already underway and will be disbursed in Q3 and Q4.
15. Co-financing has only been provided to the level of 5% (\$ 996,953 of the committed \$ 19,817,134 at CEO Endorsement stage). Possible reasons for this may be the low GEF budget execution.
16. The PMU has considerable internal strengths and there is a very clear commitment and ownership by BEDO of the project and its outcomes. However, it is also clear that the PMU has struggled to meet the UNDP GEF M&E and reporting requirements. This makes the project vulnerable to the same risks identified during the project preparation as well as making it difficult for the MTR to precisely understand where the project’s status with regards to its delivery of expected results.
17. UNDP project assurance has been insufficient to address these challenges although there are some positive signs that steps are being taken by UNDP and the Implementing Partner to accelerate implementation. However, with only two years remaining before the scheduled close of the project this creates a new risk that expedience and the delivery of outputs diminishes the process and achieving the expected outcomes and objective.
18. Due to the nature of the project, tourism, rural communities, women in the economic sphere and indigenous minorities, there are possible, but significant, social and environmental risks. These have been

correctly identified in the Project Document, but it is very important that these risks are carefully monitored and that sufficient safeguards are developed and implemented, especially in relation to the ethnic minorities and the tourism developments, including ensuring that there is a clear FPIC.

19. At the midterm the progress towards results is worryingly behind schedule. The Implementing Partner and UNDP have taken a number of corrective actions. Most of the expected outputs are still under development meaning that the MTR cannot forecast the success and quality of the outputs. However, BEDO's experience and capacities in market-based biodiversity conservation mechanisms, its expert understanding of the strategic aspects of the project design and the sector *per se* alongside the clear commitment and ownership by BEDO, give the MTR a degree of confidence that the project can achieve its outcomes and objectives to a high quality within the remaining project timeframe.

Table 2 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A at MTR	The MTR is not required to rate the project's strategy. However, it is worth mentioning that the Project Document, the primary strategy document for a GEF project is of remarkably good technical quality in all aspects.
Progress Towards Results	Objective MU	Of the 16 indicators with sub-indicators, only six are on track, three could not be assessed and seven are not on track, although the MTR recognises that this situation should change in the last quarter 2024 and first quarter 2025. The presentations made by the teams carrying out the studies indicate that the outputs will be good quality, however, there are still considerable challenges which need to be addressed before these activities can be brought together to provide the expected outcomes. The project has embarked on an acceleration process, but there are considerable risks involved in this and the MTR considers that without support the PMU will struggle to bring the project to a successful conclusion. However, with targeted support to address these few weaknesses it is quite possible for the project to reach a successful conclusion and recommendations are provided in section 5.2 for this purpose.
Outcome 1:	MS	The project has made a number of advances in integrating biodiversity into other institutional mandates and agendas. The Capacity Development Scorecard has not been completed at the time of the MTR.
Outcome 2:	MU	Three of the four indicators are not on track. However, the MTR recommends that one of the indicators (Outcome 2, Indicator 3) is dropped or replaced by an index figure. The bulk of the activities and subsequent outputs which will contribute to this outcome are now in progress and it is likely that by the end of 2024 a higher achievement rating will be registered.
Outcome 3:	MU	The social and Environmental safeguarding measures need to be tightened up and the project has not yet generated the sort of experience necessary to generate knowledge sharing. The appointment of a Monitoring & Knowledge Management Officer to the PMU is a very promising development, however, the MTR has concerns that this position is under-resourced and will need considerable support from the UNDP and the MTR has concerns that the GRM, FPIC and KAP need to be reviewed and strengthened.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	MU	The project has experienced significant delays in the first half and is struggling with the M&E and reporting. It is only now addressing these weaknesses in the implementation (e.g. by strengthening the PMU) and the UNDP support to the PMU needs to be increased to assist them with meeting the UNDP-GEF M&E and reporting procedures. Many of the activities are currently in progress, whereas the design expectation was that these would have been completed by the mid-term. There needs to be greater collaboration between Implementing Partner and UNDP CO to ensure that the GEF requirements are met, but the MTR recognizes that there are resource challenges to support this under the NIM arrangements and that the delays have affected aspects of the project such as the co-financing. The Implementing Partner is committed to the project and the PMU has a number of admirable strengths which allow the MTR the confidence to state that the project can still achieve its expected outcomes and objective to a high standard if it makes some adjustments to the implementation. On a programmatic point of view, the adaptive management should also include UNDP comparative advantage in leveraging the project's demonstration and results to the global recognition, via accessing the available global funding and alignment with the global framework. However, the MTR cautions against rushing to deliver the remaining activities and outcomes at the expense of embedding the process and changes and ensuring that all the outputs are coordinated towards the objective.
Sustainability	ML	The project results are all considered moderately sustainable in terms of the financial, socio-economic, institutional framework and governance and environmental criteria. However, risk monitoring within the project needs to be strengthened with more attention to the SESP, FPIC and ensuring that the indigenous minorities within the project area are integrated into the project activities and outcomes in a way that ensures their internal controls over their resources, cultural resources and identity and that they are capacitated to be able to negotiate with external interests in a secure and level market place.

Concise summary of conclusions

20. The MTR identifies four barriers to a successful conclusion.
21. **Barrier 1: Implementation Agency and Execution Agency working relationship.** GEF projects, because of their transformational expectations, carry with them considerable uncertainty which does not sit well with the necessary bureaucratic and administrative needs of managing a small, medium or large grant. The NIM approach while reasonable in terms of national ownership and building national capacity does not efficiently allow the focusing of both the national government, and the UNDP-GEF's strengths on solving the inevitable challenges that arise in any GEF project. Arguably, joining these two organizations to focus on the project allows each organization to use its strengths in achieving the best results in an extremely short project timeframe.
22. **Barrier 2: A lack of overall technical coordination:** While the project design is of very high quality, there is an inherent assumption that everything will come together by the end of the project. This is a risky assumption and could have been avoided by the inclusion of a substantive Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). This technical oversight and the need to comply with UNDP-GEF M&E and reporting protocols can place a considerable burden on the PMU and in particular, the PM.
23. **Barrier 3: Absence of Innovative Agency Coordination Platform:** With the complex institutional setting - vertically from the national level down to the provincial and lowest administrative levels, and horizontally with partnership of government, private stakeholders, and community enterprises, it is challenging for the project to respond to the needs of all stakeholders and convince all of them that they have mutual benefits; not only the economic development but also socio-environmental resilience. The existing sub-committees and working groups are cumbersome and discontinuous in bringing along all parties to achieve the desirable targets. The Project Document indicates the needs for the "Agency Coordination Platform" to be established.
24. **Barrier 4: Inadequate Result-based demonstration:** At the midterm of the project, it appears that most project activities are aimed at the strategic policy and planning in mainstreaming "Biodiversity-based Tourism". All contracting services work on the standard, quality verification tools, and tourism promotion. The tourism products and services are identified. However, it is rather unclear if the prototype works in reality and whether all the inputs via GEF resources can fill the gap in initiating the prototype and leave the legacy to BEDO to continue. The remaining two years will be crucial to start demonstrating on the ground how to weave all the elements together and make the biodiversity-based Tourism happen in reality.

Project design, strategy and M&E framework.

- The MBT project is well-designed and the Project Document sets out a clear strategic pathway of changes to the policy, regulatory and institutional framework necessary to mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector with is a good-quality and comprehensive M&E framework for measuring performance and impact of the intervention
- The project strategy and objectives are closely aligned with the national policy direction and objectives including using market-based approaches and building social and environmental resilience into the tourism sector as well as a number of goals and targets contained in the Kunming-Montreal GBF and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

Implementation.

- The project experienced a number of delays following its startup and although the project has taken a number of steps, including a workplan and budget revision, to accelerate the delivery of outputs, at the midterm the project is not on track.
- The PMU has considerable internal strengths and there is a very clear commitment and ownership by BEDO of the project and its outcomes. However, it is also clear that the PMU has struggled to meet the UNDP GEF M&E and reporting requirements.
- UNDP project assurance has been insufficient to address these challenges although there are some positive signs that steps are being taken by UNDP and the Implementing Partner to accelerate implementation.
- The rate of budget execution is low, but an acceleration plan is in place and expenditure is expected to increase by the end of this year.

Risks and vulnerabilities.

- The project is vulnerable to the same risks identified during the project preparation as well as making it difficult for project Partners and the MTR to precisely understand what the project's status with is regard to the delivery of expected results.

- With only two years remaining before the scheduled close of the project the accelerated budget expenditure creates a new risk that expedience and the delivery of outputs diminishes the process and achieving the expected outcomes and objective.
- Due to the nature of the project, tourism, rural communities, women in the economic sphere and indigenous minorities, there are possible, but significant, social and environmental risks. These have been correctly identified in the Project Document. It is very important that these risks are carefully monitored and that sufficient safeguards are developed and implemented, especially in relation to the ethnic minorities and the tourism developments, including ensuring that there is a clear FPIC.
- BEDO already has considerable experience in working with women and women's groups through its existing programmes and this includes working with women in rural communities in developing sustainable biodiversity-based income generating opportunities and enterprises. However, whether this translates into ensuring there are adequate safeguards, checks and balances necessary for the policy and planning shifts that the project will bring, is less clear. A comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Plan (Annex 9b, Project Document) was prepared with a detailed Gender Action Plan which recommended an annual Gender Programme Auditing on each of the three project Components and a comprehensive M&E plan including 21 activities (5 – 10 - 6 per Component). The PMU is responsible for ensuring these are carried out and the UNDP CO is responsible for ensuring that this happens and providing sufficient support to this process.

Progress towards results.

- At the midterm the progress towards results is worryingly behind schedule. However, the Implementing Partner and UNDP have taken a number of corrective actions. Most of the expected outputs are still under development meaning that the MTR cannot forecast the success and quality of the outputs. However, BEDO's experience and capacities in market-based biodiversity conservation mechanisms, its expert understanding of the strategic aspects of the project design and the sector per se alongside the clear commitment and ownership by BEDO, give the MTR a degree of confidence that the project can achieve its outcomes and objectives to a high quality within the remaining project timeframe.

Corrective actions to achieve the outcomes and objective.

- The PMU already has considerable strengths, but the MTR believes there is a very strong case to provide additional support to the PMU in recognition of the considerable challenges a GEF project creates and that this would allow each party to capitalize on their strengths in implementing the project to a successful conclusion. Appointing a substantive Chief Technical Adviser (with UNDP-GEF project experience) on a part-time basis would be one way of achieving this without going down the supported NIM route.
- The UNDP CO should have the capacity to support the project, however, this will need closer collaboration and efforts than appear to have taken place in the first half of the project. The UNDP-GEF approach to gender balance and equality and the safeguarding protocols are very specific, as are the different party's tolerance of risk. These protocols are addressed through the Gender Action Plan providing due diligence cover and assurance to a level of the party which can tolerate the least risk. The PMU will need close support and training from the UNDP CO to implement the action plan it.
- Recommendations are made in Table 3 to address these shortcomings. Recommendations A.1 to D.3 are targeted at one or more of the four specific barriers identified by the MTR. Barriers D.4 and D.5 are addressing weaknesses in the principal M&E tool, the SRF, and are made in order to make life easier for the M&E and also provide greater accuracy in the indicator fit to the outcome.

Table 3 Recommendation Summary Table

Rec #	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Project implementation		

A.1	UNDP CO to provide training and mentoring on the UNDP-GEF results-based monitoring to the PMU , in particular the recently appointed Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer. This should include an orientation and development of a project cycle reporting periods chart for the PMU to follow. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 1</u>	UNDP CO	Immediate
A.2	Engage a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) to bridge the gap between the PMU’s skills and the specificities of the UNDP-GEF results-based management requirements. A CTA would be a “quick win” solution to provide coverage of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Monitoring & Knowledge Management Officer UNDP-GEF and improve the M&E and reporting • Ensure that the SES and Safeguarding vulnerabilities of the project are addressed • Support the PMU in bringing together all of the outputs into coherent outcomes <u>Addresses MTR Barriers 1, 2 & 4</u>	BEDO, PMU & SC	Immediate
A.3	Make a qualified decision on the project GRM. The MTR is not able to assess the relative merits of the two systems and rule on one or the other. However, the project is vulnerable if it does not have a transparent system in place through which grievances can be registered and addressed in a transparent way. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 1</u>	UNDP & PMU	Immediate
B	Category 2: Operational		
B.1	Prepare a Legacy Plan to bridge the gap between the end of the GEF-funded project and the provincial government planning cycle (approximately one year between 2026 and 2027) to ensure that the project outputs, particularly the Master Plan, are included in the provincial planning tools and financing instruments. <u>Addresses MTR Barriers 3 & 4</u>	PMU	Q2 2026
C	Category 3: Financial		
C.1	Ensure there is sufficient support and resources for the recently appointed Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer and if necessary elevate the position. It is unreasonable to expect this position to become confident with the intricacies of UNDP-GEF Results-based Management procedures without significant support and mentoring by the UNDP CO. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 2</u>	PMU	Immediate
D	Category 4: Technical		
D.1	PMU to organise a “mock up” of the biodiversity route within the project area as a demonstration. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate to high-level decision-makers, important players and partners in the tourism sector and donor agencies and country representatives (e.g. Embassy staff, etc.) the Thai Biodiversity Product. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 4</u>	PMU, UNDP to support	Q2 2026
D.2	Establish an Agency Coordination Platform. The existing sub-committees and working groups are cumbersome and discontinuous in bringing along all parties to achieve the desirable targets. The project document indicates the needs for the “Agency Coordination Platform” to be established. From MTR interview and meetings, the government is now investing in the development of Government 4.0, but no details of such development were available. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 3</u>	PMU	Q4 2024
D.3	Elect or appoint a civil society representative from the Provincial Committee level to represent those interests at the PSC raising local issues and concerns with the PSC and reporting back to provincial stakeholders. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 3</u>	PMU	Immediate
D.4	Revise the project SRF and remove Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6 (Greenhouse gas). The MTR questions the utility of this indicator in this instance. Under other circumstances the indicator would be SMART, but in the body of this project it is important to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attribution – of any change in carbon storage to the activities in the project. • Cost effectiveness – of obtaining the data. If the data has already been collected then it would be reasonable even with the weak attribution. However, to go out and actually obtain the data is beyond the resource envelop of the project. 	PSC	At next PIR

D.5	<p>Replace Outcome 2, Indicator 3 with a proxy indicator. Biological indicators in a four-year project are unrealistic and attributing and change (+/-) to a project intervention when there are so many other variables would be spurious. Furthermore, if this is by survey then the methodology and confidence limits would need to be included and likely these would be greater than the change predicted.⁶ A proxy indicator (e.g. monitoring “threat” reduction) would provide real-time measurements of project impact and performance. There are a number of tools which could be utilized and retrofitted to the baseline (e.g. a Threat reduction Assessment (TRA⁷) tool).</p>	PMU, PSC & RTA	Immediate and reported in the 2 nd PIR
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⁶ For the avoidance of doubt, long term monitoring of biological indicators is a legitimate output/outcome of a project, the point made is that they lack utility in terms of measuring project performance and impact because of the challenge of surveys and biological timeframes. In the case of water birds this would also include variables external to the project area such as breeding success in the northern breeding grounds or southern wintering grounds which are impossible for the project to predict. Monitoring the Water birds is an important activity and there are global flyway methodologies and even financial support for national annual surveys, but not as a project indicator.

⁷ Is Our Project Succeeding? A Guide to Threat Reduction Assessment for Conservation. Richard Margoluis and Nick Salafsky, Biodiversity Support Programme, Washington DC.

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

25. The UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies and procedures require all UNDP-implemented and GEF-funded full-sized projects (FSP) to undergo a Mid-Term Review (MTR) upon reaching the halfway point of the project's implementation. Therefore, UNDP has commissioned the MTR by contracting an independent evaluation team consisting of a National Consultant and an International Consultant. The MTR will be conducted following the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and facilitated by the commissioning office, the UNDP Country Office, Bangkok.
26. The purpose of the "Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development"⁸ Project MTR as per the MTR Terms of Reference (TORs, Annex 1), is to assess the achievement of project results and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of the benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP and Government programming.
27. The MTR is primarily a monitoring and adaptive management tool to identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The primary output/deliverable of this MTR process is the MTR report. The MTR report will provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

2.2 Scope & Methodology

2.2.1 Scope of the MTR

28. The review was carried out between 1st August and 31st October 2024. It focuses primarily on assessing the performance of the project in light of the accomplished outcomes, objectives and effects using the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported and GEF-financed Projects⁹. These are:

Relevance: assesses how the project relates to the development priorities at the local, regional and national levels for climate change and is coherent with the main objectives of GEF focal areas. It also assesses whether the project addressed the needs of targeted beneficiaries at the local, regional and national levels.

Effectiveness: measures the extent to which the project is achieving the expected outcomes and objectives, how risks and risk mitigation are being managed, and what lessons can be drawn to improve the impact and for other similar projects in the future.

Efficiency: the measure of how economically resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. It also examines how efficient are the partnership arrangements (linkages between institutions / organizations) for the project.

Impact: examines the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. It looks at whether the project has achieved the intended changes or improvements (technical, economic, social, cultural, political, and ecological). In GEF terms, impact / results include direct project outputs, short to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other local effects including on communities¹⁰.

Sustainability: is the ability of the project interventions to continue delivering benefits for an extended time after completion; it examines the project's sustainability in financial, socio-political, institutional framework and governance, environmental terms.

29. Using these evaluation criteria, the MTR covers all activities supported by UNDP-GEF and completed by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Government agencies as well as activities that other collaborating partners including beneficiaries who are participating in project activities.
30. The temporal scope of the MTR covers all activities of the project beginning with the Project Identification Form (PIF) dated 10 November 2019 through to the current period of implementation evaluation in mid 2024.
31. The review is conducted in an ethical and participatory manner and in order to provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

⁸ Henceforth referred to as the "MBT" project or "the project".

⁹ https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

¹⁰ The MTR is not expected to rate the impact.

2.2.2 Approach and Methodology

32. The MTR utilizes three sources of primary data and information and secondary data (listed in the TOR):
33. **Desk review:** the documentation covering project design, implementation progress, monitoring and review studies, local and national development plans, policies and regulatory instruments. This will cover and elaborate on the documents listed in the UNDP TOR, a list of which is presented in Annex 5.
34. **Interviews, stakeholder consultations and field missions:** additional information collection and validation took place through remote and face-to-face consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (Annex 4), using “semi-structured interviews” with a key set of questions in a conversational format. Key informants were selected according to their involvement in the project’s implementation, or as project beneficiaries. These included: the GEF Agency, government ministries and departments, academics, civil society associations, non-governmental organizations and community members and representatives from the private sector. The MTR endeavors to ensure that the views and opinions of women, youth and disadvantaged groups are solicited and included in the analysis. This was accompanied by site visits to the project area/sites. The questions asked aim to provide answers to the points listed in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2. The initial list of generic questions was refined according to specific stakeholder interviews during the field mission and any follow up by Skype/Zoom, WhatsApp, etc., calls as necessary. Interviews were mostly confidential and the information used discreetly without accreditation. Information from interviews was triangulated and validated, where necessary, before inclusion in the analysis and reporting. Interviews started with an introduction about the aims and nature of the evaluation and informing the interviewee that they have the right not to respond if they so wish.
35. Interviews and the information collected was disaggregated to reflect the different stakeholders (e.g. Implementing Agency – Executing Agency – PMU – implementing partners – beneficiaries as well as gender). Information from the interviews was then collated and analyzed to provide evidence-based conclusions on the overall performance, progress towards impact and achievements of the project as well as any crosscutting issues.
36. **Direct observations of project results and activities:** were made wherever possible from the project area including consultations with local government and local agencies, local community representatives, project partners, CSOs and participants in field activities. The MTR visited a range of pilot sites (Annex 3) as indicated in the ToR with a view to identifying project achievements and challenges.
37. The review adopted a systematic methodological approach to analysis, ensuring validity and transparency in the relationship between findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Findings from diverse evidence streams were consolidated through an evaluation triangulation grid that cross-referenced the findings from various sources (interviews, documentation, etc.) against the questions in the evaluation matrix. The MTR Team confirmed and debated emerging findings from the five GEF evaluation criteria at the analysis stage within the Team, and with stakeholders during online meetings, face to face consultations and during the field visits.
38. **The MTR reviewed the Theory of Change** to the project’s strategy prepared during the project’s formulation. There were limitations on the utility of the TOC¹¹ for assessing project results because of the status of implementation at the midterm (see section 2.2.3).
39. Gender equality and women’s empowerment was assessed where possible through collecting gender-disaggregated results arising from project activities, inclusion of women participants and relevant women’s groups in the evaluation interviews and specific questions regarding the extent to which they were included in project’s design and implementation and/or benefiting from the project. Gender and disadvantaged groups were included in all appropriate questions and crosschecked against specific questions related to these issues. Specific attention was given to analyzing examples, best practices and lessons learned regarding women’s empowerment arising through the project’s scope of activities.
40. A total of 38 individuals spoke with the MTR Team at a ratio of male to female: 1:7, 1:2, 4:3, 2:1 and 5:12. Some community meetings were attended by larger numbers of stakeholders than were recorded through signatures and may not have spoken directly with the Reviewers.
41. Following the data collection phase, the MTR analyzed the information according to the MTR guidelines and the ToR in order to draw conclusions and propose recommendations. A draft MTR Report was circulated to key stakeholders for comment and feedback. Feedback and comments were recorded in the Audit trail (attached to the Final Report as a separate annex to the Final Report).
42. Key aspects of the MTR approach include:

¹¹ For the avoidance of doubt, these limitations are not due to the quality of the TOC but relate to the stage of implementation, that is, it would be implausible to detect any change with the level of budget execution at this point in time.

Defining the scope of the Review's focus: through discussions with the PMU and UNDP and partner agencies, the areas and extent of inquiry to be defined.

Emphasis on constructive analytical dialogue: with the project partners; providing the project participants with an opportunity to explain the strategies applied to date, the challenges that have been faced and the inevitable nuances that affect a project. In this way the MTR was able to deepen the partner's conceptual understanding of the key issues underlying the project and the driving forces that have shaped, and continue, shaping events.

Critical analysis of the project design: the original design and strategic approach was challenged against best practices and in light of the project's experience to consider whether there were flaws in its logic and approach or whether there were assumptions, known or unknown, that have not proven correct.

Critical reflection on the measures of project success: measuring progress and performance against the indicators provided in the project's SRF with the participation of the project partners and reflecting on their relevance and adequacy.

Assessment of the project's performance and impact to date: analysing the performance and progress against the indicators and reasonably expected impacts of the project's implementation.

An examination of process: critically examining the project's actions and activities to ensure that there has been sufficient effort in ensuring that elements of capacity building and participation, establishing processes and mechanisms, that will enable the targets to be achieved in the longer term rather than being expedient.

Synthesizing plausible future impacts: using analytical methods to identify plausible future outcomes resulting from the impact of the project in the future and how these might affect the project's Theory of Change (ToC).

Jointly defining the conclusions and recommendations with the PMU and UNDP: ensuring that there is a common understanding of any weaknesses or shortcomings in the project's implementation and an understanding of the reasons for, and the appropriate detail of, any recommended actions that might be necessary in order to strengthen the ownership of any recommendations made.

43. The findings of the MTR are rated against the criteria listed in Table 5 and according to the UNDP-GEF MTR Guidelines.

Table 4 MTR Rating Criteria

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight, Execution, Relevance	Sustainability ratings:
<p>6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS): exceeds expectations and/or no shortcomings</p> <p>5 = Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings</p> <p>4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS): more or less meets expectations and/or some shortcomings</p> <p>3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations and/or significant shortcomings</p> <p>2 = Unsatisfactory (U): substantially below expectations and/or major shortcomings</p> <p>1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment</p>	<p>4 = Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>3 = Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks to sustainability</p> <p>2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks to sustainability</p> <p>1 = Unlikely (U): severe risks to sustainability</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability</p>

2.2.3 Constraints of the MTR

44. The M&E Plan and Budget provided in the Project Document¹² does not reflect the size and complexity of the project itself. The time allocated for the MTR is 25 days each for the National and International Consultant including a ten-day country mission which in the experience of the Reviewers is less than is needed to assess and identify the strengths and weaknesses of a project such as this in order to make reasonable adjustments if necessary. Many of the accompanying project documents are not in English

¹² Project Document, p. 77, Table 14

meaning that without extensive translation only one member of the MTR team has primary access to them. The first PIR was unavailable to the MTR until the final drafting of the first draft MTR Report and the METTs were only available a few days before completion of the first draft suggesting that there was insufficient preparation for the MTR and the review itself was premature. The MTR Team was only able to meet the UNDP through remote means. A member of the PMU provided translation during the meetings and the MTR monitored this to ensure impartiality. For the avoidance of doubt none was found. Due to the shortness of time available for the MTR the Team utilized its time as efficiently as possible and where possible it restricted itself to the strategic and operational issues in order to provide useful recommendations.

45. Due to the delayed nature of the implementation the Theory of Change (TOC) developed during the project's preparation remains untested and was, despite its quality of design being evaluated as being of good quality, of little utility during the review because the project has not gained sufficient momentum yet to produce the outputs and provide early signs of outcomes. These are likely to appear during the third year of implementation.
46. Similarly, more detailed analysis of outcomes¹³ and the strategy at the midterm were not possible in part due to some of these methodologies needing more continuous data points¹⁴ but largely because with only approximately 13% of the GEF budget delivery and 5% of the co-financing delivery, such methodologies would be largely speculative with a risk of large margins of error. Therefore, the MTR mostly utilized the standard M&E tools such as the principal M&E tool in GEF projects, the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), and was limited in the way it could apply the TOC.

2.3 Structure of the MTR report

47. This report is structured in line with the guidance given on conducting MTRs of UNDP-GEF projects and in accordance with the MTR ToR provided in Annex 1:

Section 1 provides an executive summary which gives basic information on the project, a brief description of the project and its progress to date, the MTR ratings and achievement table, summary of conclusions and recommendations.

Section 2 provides a description of the review process and methodology.

Section 3 describes the background and context of the Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development project including the problems that the project sought to address, the objectives, outcomes and means of monitoring and evaluation, the implementation arrangements, a timeline and key milestones as well as a summary of project stakeholders.

Section 4 presents the main findings of the MTR on all aspects including the project's strategy, its progress towards results, the performance of its implementation and efficiency of adaptive management as well as assessing the likely sustainability of the project outcomes and the MTR.

Section 5 presents the main conclusions, recommendations and main lessons from the MTR.

3. Project Description and Background Context

3.1 Development context

48. Thailand is one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in Southeast Asia. Thailand has 555 threatened species, including 118 mammal, 168 birds, 49 reptile, 18 amphibian, and 202 fish species. The project's demonstration landscape of Prachuap Khiri Khan in southern Thailand is home to globally significant biodiversity. The landscape includes the Kui Buri National Park (NP), the Khao-Sam-Roi-Yot NP, and the Pran Buri Estuary which includes significant habitats and mangroves. The Ban Koh Mon-Koh Pai Ramsar site spans Kui Buri and Sam Roi Yot NPs and forms a significant area of important habitat.
49. However, threats to biodiversity in Thailand include illegal hunting, deforestation, livestock overgrazing, destructive fishing practices, overfishing, disturbance caused by tourism activities, infrastructure development, environmental pollution, degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems such as coral bleaching and the loss of wetlands. Barriers to addressing these threats include a fragmented policy framework and institutional coordination; a lack of technical tools and methods to support sustainable and biodiversity-based tourism; inadequate financing mechanisms for conservation; and limited awareness and capacity across government and local communities to manage over tourism and develop biodiversity-based tourism. The 2020 – 2021 COVID-19 pandemic compounded these barriers with a steep decline in international tourism and new visitor management requirements.

¹³ For instance: Contribution Analysis, Realist Evaluation, Outcome Mapping, Outcome Harvesting, Most Significant Change.

¹⁴ The project only produced its first PIR during the period of the MTR.

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted

50. The Project Document makes a compelling, and well researched, argument for the necessity of a GEF project intervention¹⁵. According to the Project document, the growing tourism sector is of particular concern as a source of threats to biodiversity in Thailand. Tourism is a major driver of economic development bringing in jobs and revenues, it relies on Thailand's biodiversity assets for some of this economic potential, and yet it is a threat to the same asset base if not managed responsibly. Thailand offers a diverse range of experiences for international tourists, including archaeological sites, Buddhist temples, modern cities, beaches and resort areas, mountain forests, tribal villages, interesting cultural artefacts and wildlife interactions.¹⁶
51. The Project Document identifies that biodiversity is not well-understood and that while the sector itself poses a threat to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, it also contributes to the degradation of an, as yet, untapped component of the tourism sector which could provide low impact and volume, high value tourism. The threats identified in the Project Document, one of which is repeated here in its fullness for its clarity of analysis, are:

"Ecosystems have become degraded and polluted, in part due to tourism. Unsustainable levels of tourism visitation and poor controls over tourism are resulting in substantial damage to critical ecosystems and valuable tourism sites. For example, up to two-thirds of the coral reef at the Thai resort of Phuket has been damaged or destroyed as a result of tourism, fisheries, and debris from building work,¹⁷ and coral reefs in Pattaya have been damaged by boat anchors and by people walking on them.¹⁸ Ecosystems located near popular tourist attractions are also threatened by plastic pollution, wastewater discharge, over-use of water resources in dry seasons, and coastal erosion intensified by development.¹⁹ In the project landscape of Prachuap Khiri Khan, globally significant biodiversity is impacted by transformation of land, including the expansion of shrimp farms and land reclamation into the Khao Sam Roi Yot wetland, and associated impacts on water quality and flow into wetlands. Environmental degradation is observed at popular tourist destinations such as Khao Yai NP, Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi NP and Tarutao NP, where protected area managers have to deal with increasing volumes of waste, negative effects on wildlife, and visitor management issues related to COVID-19. To illustrate, a case study of the Thab Lan National Park World Heritage Site found that the popularity of tourism especially in Wan Nam Khiew district (which is 80% inside the WHS) has led to large scale encroachment, infrastructure development, waste management problem and competing agenda between economic development and conservation under the World Heritage category.²⁰

Strong demand for beachfront accommodation is driving illegal construction on sensitive beach dune systems. Some natural areas have been closed to visitors to provide time for their biodiversity to recover, such as Maya Bay²¹, and despite some livelihood diversification this has resulted in lower incomes for people within tourism value chains".²²

52. **Unsustainable and illegal use of wildlife connected to the tourist industry** is also cited linking the international trade in illegal wildlife products with increased tourism activity which is relevant, but is arguably peripheral to the much greater development pressures on habitats taking place as a result of tourism development.
53. **Climate change** is also recognized as both a threat to the tourism sector and those aspects of the ecosystem which have value and utility for tourism, but also, and somewhat under-emphasized, is the emerging understanding that socio-ecosystems already under stress due to over-exploitation are already highly vulnerable to climate change. The effect on coral reefs being a case in point.
54. The **Covid-19 pandemic** is identified as a threat and the MTR considers that this was included, very reasonably at the time, however, the lessons and nuanced impact of a catastrophic and stochastic event

¹⁵ Project Document, pp. 10 - 13

¹⁶ Rittichainuwat, B., Scott, N., and Laws, E. (2021) Drivers of elephant tourism in Thailand, In Laws, E., Scott, N., Font, X. and Koldowski, J. (eds) The elephant tourism business. CAB International, pp 51 -63

¹⁷ CABI (2004) [Growing tourism damages Phuket's reef](#). CABI.

¹⁸ Agrwal, R., Kariapl, T, and Pienchob, N. (2019) [Positive and negative impacts of tourism on environment: A case study of Pattaya City, Thailand](#). Sripatum Review of Humanities and Social Sciences, 19 (1)

¹⁹ Bunluesilp, N. (2011) [Thailand's famed Pattaya beach in danger of vanishing](#). Reuters. 1 February 2011.

²⁰ Phumsathan, S. et al. (2015) Impacts of Tourism on a Natural World Heritage Sites: A Case Study of Thab Lan NP. Thailand Research Fund and National Research Council of Thailand.

²¹ Ellis-Petersen, H. (2018) [Thailand bay made famous by The Beach closes indefinitely](#), The Guardian, 3 October 2018

²² Project Document, pp. 10 – 11, para. 7 - 8

were probably not fully understood at the time and the lessons are only now being understood and translated into policy and risk management.

3.3 Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites

55. The Project Strategy is summarised in the Project Document as one of mainstreaming biodiversity into the tourism sector and enabling local communities to benefit from biodiversity-based tourism in order to motivate its conservation management. Therefore, to address the serious threats to biodiversity in Thailand arising from unsustainable tourism practices, the project would mainstream biodiversity and environmental protection into the tourism sector and enable local communities to benefit from biodiversity-based tourism products and services so that they benefit from biodiversity-based livelihoods, value biodiversity, and contribute to its conservation and monitoring. The project would address challenges of pollution, climate change, and over-tourism which will collectively help to prevent and mitigate threats to biodiversity from tourism development. In turn, the benefits will offset impacts of Human Wildlife Conflict and lead to reduced poaching. The project outcomes include strengthened and harmonised policies and standards that mainstream biodiversity into tourism; more sustainable and biodiversity-friendly management of tourism across the Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape; and increased awareness of biodiversity-friendly tourism and improved management of knowledge, and improved market access for biodiversity-based tourism products. Global environmental benefits are expected to include improved management of terrestrial and marine protected areas and high biodiversity landscapes under improved practices, and beneficiaries from biodiversity-based tourism including women and youth.

56. The project's strategy is intended to address four barriers to conserving biodiversity, ensuring that there is ecosystem resilience and developing tourism as a driver for economic growth:

Barrier 1: Fragmented policy framework and institutional coordination that prevents the harmonization of biodiversity conservation with tourism development.

Barrier 2: Lack of technical tools and methodologies to identify and monitor the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism and support the replication and upscaling of biodiversity-based tourism.

Barrier 3: Inadequate financing and incentive mechanisms.

Barrier 4: Limited awareness and capacity across government and local communities on managing over-tourism and developing biodiversity-based tourism

57. This is to be achieved through three Outcomes contributing to the Objective represented in Table 2.

3.3.1 Project Theory of Change

58. The essential distinctive elements of Theory of Change compared to other approaches in project planning and management²³ are to:

- identify specific causal links among outputs and outcomes, with evidence;
- describe the causal pathways by which interventions are expected to have effect, and identify indicators to test their validity over time;
- be explicit about assumptions about these causal pathways, which includes an analysis of barriers and enablers as well as indicators of success.

59. The TOC is useful, in this sense, because it sets out the causal pathways from intervention through to the long-term impacts. A more detailed account of its use is given in the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) guidelines.

60. The project's TOC (Fig. 1 below) provides a very reasonable and well-thought through description of the project causal pathways and is very professionally linked to the risks²⁴ and assumptions including, critically, a number of operational risks (risks 14 – 23) which might disrupt the performance of the project's implementation.

61. Possibly the most immediate observation from an evaluation perspective is that it represents a very comprehensive strategy to mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector but translating that into a project's operation, financial and human resources envelope as well as the project-imposed time constraints would be extremely challenging.

²³ Theory of Change Primer A STAP document, December 2019

²⁴ Project Document, Annex 6, pp. 159 - 177

Table 5 Project Objective, Outcomes and Indicators

Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity-based tourism

Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism

Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 1:

of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

(GEF-7 Core indicator 1.1)

(a) Total

(b) People living in the demonstration landscape

(c) Private sector personnel: Formal and community-based

Government officials: National, Provincial, and District

Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 2:

Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see **Annex 11a**)

(GEF-7 Core indicator 1.2)

(a) Total hectares

(b) METT score total

Specific METT item related to be able to improve sustainable PAs management are: PA Design and planning (item 5, 7a); Training/education awareness (item 10, 14, 20); Conservation habitat & management (item 21a, 21b.); Local communities & commercial tourism operator involvement (item 24, 24a., 24b.); economic benefit (item 25, 27, 28)

Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 3:

Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see **Annex 11a**)

(GEF-7 Core indicator 2.2)

Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4:

Area of **landscapes under improved practices** (excluding protected areas) (Hectares)

(GEF-7 Core indicator 4.1)

Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6:

Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated as a result of improved management effectiveness of estimated 113,085 ha of forests (99,518 ha within Kui Buri NP, 13,566 ha in Khao Sam Roi Yot NP) and improved landscape management of estimated 17,208 ha of Pran Buri Estuary, totalling 130,293 ha (Expected tCO₂e):

(GEF Core Indicator 6.1)

Outcome 1, Indicator 1: Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted and integrated into work plans of agencies within the National Tourism Policy Committee

Output 1.1: National biodiversity-based tourism strategy developed, adopted and integrated into government processes and reporting of MONRE and MOTs and improved agency coordination mechanisms

Output 1.2: Operational policies on biodiversity financing solutions for tourist destinations developed and adopted.

Output 1.3: Practical, standardized methodologies for tourism's ecological, social and economic impact assessment and monitoring developed for biodiversity-based tourism in PAs and high-biodiversity sites across Thailand.

Output 1.4: Biodiversity conservation integrated into existing national tourism standards and certifications, strengthening sustainability of tourism

Output 1.5: Capacity development program for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within tourism planning, development and operations institutionalized within key national and provincial government agencies.

Outcome 2: More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across the ecologically important Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape

Output 2.1: Provincial, multi-sector sustainable tourism platforms strengthened and implementation of provincial tourism plans and strategies informed by strategic environmental and social assessment and biodiversity-based tourism strategy action plan.

Output 2.2: Visitor management plans and revenue generation models that improve METT scores are implemented at project sites.

Output 2.3: Sustainable biodiversity-based tourism products and experiences developed and strengthened with local communities to raise engagement in biodiversity conservation and generate livelihood benefits, including for women and youth.

Outcome 1, Indicator 2: National conservation, social and economic impact monitoring methodologies used at project sites

- (a) Total
- (b) METT (Conservation)
- (c) Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) (Social)
- (d) Visitors Count! (Economic)
- (e) Natural Capital Accounting (Economic)
- (f) Payment for Ecosystem Services (Economic)

Outcome 1, Indicator 3: # of tourism standards integrating biodiversity conservation

Business and Biodiversity Check (BB Check)

Green Hotel standard

Green National Park

Homestay Standard Thailand

Thailand Tourism Activity Standard

Sustainable Tourism Management Standard

Criteria for Thailand's Community-Based Tourism Development

Outcome 1, Indicator 4:

Improved institutional capacity for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism planning, management and monitoring, measured by UNDP capacity development scorecard

Outcome 2, Indicator 1:

Strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA), tourism masterplan, and gender-responsive biodiversity-based tourism action plan finalized.

- (a) Total
- (b) SESA for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape
- (c) Tourism masterplan for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape
- (d) Biodiversity-based tourism action plan Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape

Outcome 2, Indicator 2:

Visitor management plans finalized for project sites: Kui Buri NP; Khao Sam Roi Yot KNP; Pran Buri Estuary

Outcome 2, Indicator 3

Improvements in biodiversity, waste management and human wildlife conflict in the project landscape

- (a) # Fishing cats
- (b) # waterbird species in Khao Sam Roi Yot wetland
- (b1) # Individual bird count of Manchurian Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus tangorum*)
- (b2) # Individual bird count of Malay Plover (*Charadrius peronii*)
- (c) # reports HWC with fishing cat
- (d) # reports HWC with elephant

Outcome 2, Indicator 4:

of certified tourism ventures that are supporting biodiversity criteria in the project sites.

- (a) Total
- (b) Homestay/ CBT
- (c) # Hotel/resorts
- (d) # tour operators

Outcome 3: Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-based tourism across Thailand is supported by raised awareness, improved market access and knowledge management

Output 3.1: Improved access to e-marketplaces for biodiversity-based tourism providers.

Output 3.2: Targeted outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism delivered to tourism industry, CSOs, and domestic and international tourists.

Output 3.3: Knowledge exchange system established for the sharing of experiences between communities and PAs, and for replication and upscaling of best practices across Thailand.

Output 3.4: M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.

Outcome 3, Indicator 1: Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of tourism industry, communities and tourists for the importance of biodiversity to tourism improved, as measured by the KAP survey score

Outcome 3, Indicator 2:

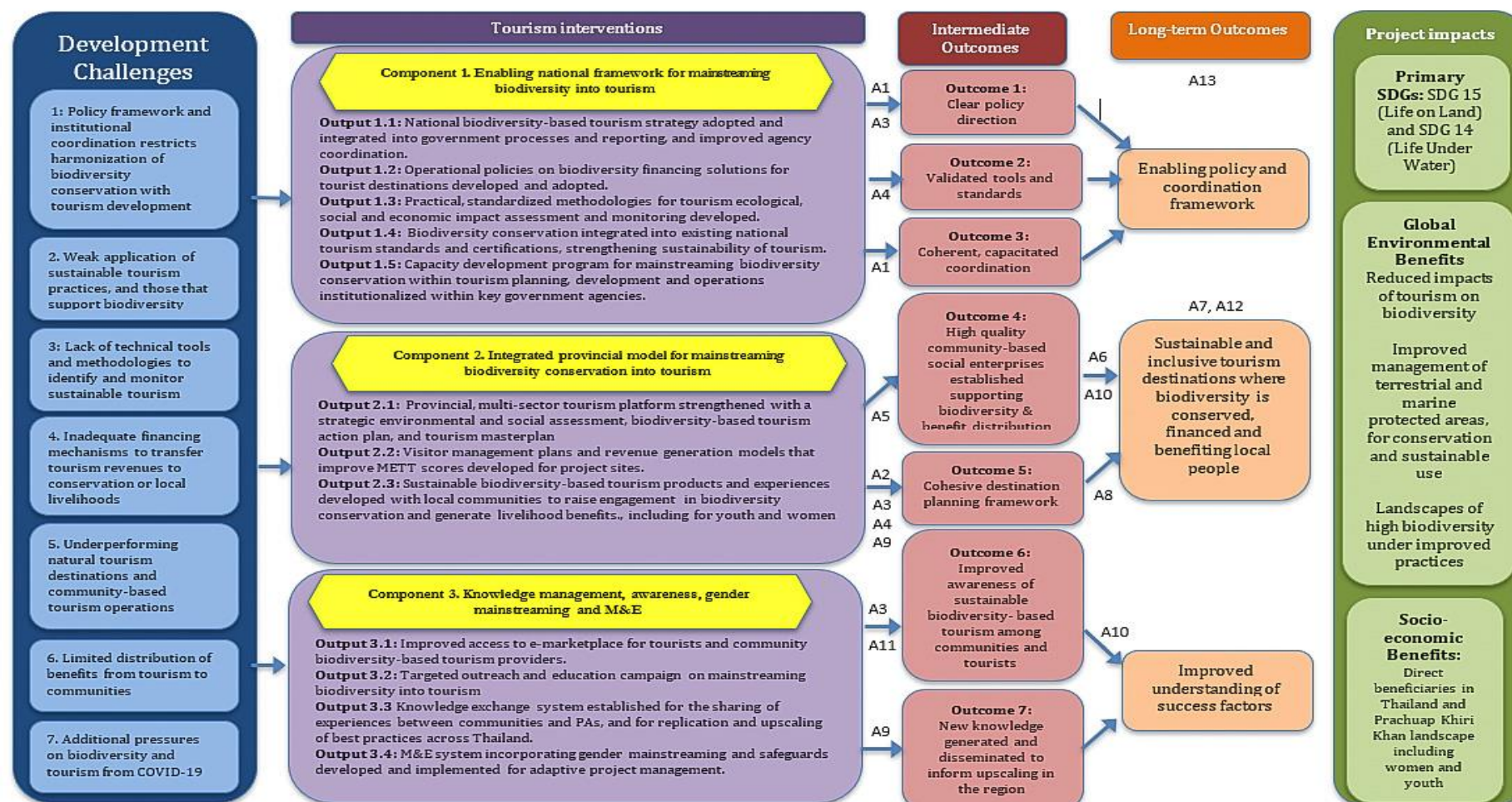
of biodiversity-based tourism products on Online Travel Agent platforms and in tour operator itineraries

Outcome 3, Indicator 3:

best practices and lessons learned developed, disseminated and used including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of tourism:

- (a) Total
- (b) Best practices and lessons learned developed and disseminated
- (c) Knowledge system established and operational

Figure 1 Project Theory of Change



62. The project's demonstration landscape of Prachuap Khiri Khan in southern Thailand is home to globally significant biodiversity (Table 7). The landscape includes the Kui Buri National Park (NP), the Khao Sam Roi Yot NP, and the Pran Buri Estuary which includes significant habitats and mangroves. The Ban Koh Mon-Koh Pai Ramsar site spans Kui Buri and Sam Roi Yot NPs. The two NP sites are already receiving significant protection through their designation as National Parks. The Pran Buri Estuary is a more complex socio-ecosystem with significant development pressures and a mix of different land tenure and land uses and is while protection through prohibition may be necessary in specific areas, a more integrated biodiversity conservation approach is necessary, ideally through what are now known as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) in which biodiversity is recognized and utilized to strengthen the resilience of a production landscape.

Table 6 Project Sites Description

Project site	Significance for biodiversity conservation
Kui Buri National Park 96,900 hectares (ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by dry and moist evergreen forest in the Tenasserim Hills adjacent to Myanmar. • Recognized as the Kui Buri Key Biodiversity Area (KBA: 23508) based on the presence of significant populations of globally threatened species. • 54 large mammals²⁵, 250 species of birds²⁶, 44 reptiles, 22 amphibian groups and 240 insect groups²⁷ • Home to threatened species including: Sunda pangolin (<i>Manis javanica</i>) is critically endangered (CR), while several species of large mammals are endangered species (EN) such as Tiger (<i>Panthera tigris</i>), Malayan Tapir (<i>Tapirus indicus</i>), Asiatic wild dog (<i>Cuon alpinus</i>), Gibbon (<i>Hylobates lar</i>), and Fishing cat (<i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i>). Has one of the biggest populations of gaurs (<i>Bos javanicus</i>: EN) in Thailand. Contains threatened plants <i>Hopea ferrea</i> (EN), <i>Shorea roxburghii</i> (VU), <i>Dipterocarpus gracilis</i> (VU), and <i>Burretiodendron esquirolii</i> (VU). • Kuiburi National Park is part of the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex which was announced as the UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2021.
Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park 9,808 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes diverse range of terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats with 10 distinct habitat zones. • Forms part of Khao Sam Roi Yot (IBA)/KBA (15115). Most important site in Thailand for the Manchurian/White-browed Reed Warbler (VU) and habitat for several other globally-threatened bird species. • Home to threatened species including: Sunda pangolin (<i>Manis javanica</i>: CR); Irrawaddy dolphin (<i>Orcaella brevirostris</i>: EN); Fishing cat (<i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i>: VU); Hawksbill turtle (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>: CR); Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>: EN); Elongated tortoise (<i>Indotestudo elongate</i>: CR); Spotted Greenshank (<i>Tringa guttifer</i>: EN); Greater Adjutant (<i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>: EN); Great Knot (<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>: EN); and Nordmann's Greenshank (<i>Tringa guttifer</i>: EN).
Pran Buri River and Estuary 1,000 ha core area of significant mangroves and coastal habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The river basin originates from Kui Buri National Park and runs through the terrain of Pran Buri landscape reaching the Gulf of Thailand at Pran Buri Estuary, providing important ecosystem services. • Significant mangrove forest areas. • Pran Buri Estuary supports very high species diversity of plants (344 species of flora, 273 genera and 105 families). There are 12 species of mammals, 68 species of birds, 15 species of reptiles, and 7 species of amphibians, and 158 species of fish. • The regionally unique representation of agricultural and human settlement landscapes intermixed with mangrove forest, alluvial flood plain, sandy beach, coastal, and marine habitats are not protected by any legal status.

²⁵ Wildlife Biodiversity Study Report in ASEAN Heritage Area: Kuiburi National Park found total of 54 species of mammals were found the following categories: 4 species of Wild Animal Protection list under Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act, BE 2535: Malayan Tapir (*Tapirus indicus*), fea's muntjac (*Muntiacus feae*), Serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*), Marbled cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*), and 40 of wild animal protection species; wildlife animal species under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix I found 13 species and Appendix II found 14 species such as elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*), etc.

²⁶ Bird group has total 250 species which is 167 species are wild animal reservation list under the Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act, and 21 species are in CITES list.

Source: <https://www.thainationalparks.com/kui-buri-national-park>
<https://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/checklist.jsp?region=TH01pk03&list=howardmoore>

²⁷ 1) Fifteen of total 44 species of reptiles group are wild animal reservation under Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act. And twelve species are in the CITES list.

2) Total of twenty-two species in amphibian group found in Kui Buri National Park which 3 species in this group are wild animal reservation species under the Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act.

3) Total 240 of insect species found in the PAs which is 4 species are wild animal reservation species under the Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act. Four species of the total is reserved species, two species is in the CITES list. There are 27 species of insect group are illegal to import-export. The most population distribution area of insect found is in Phreak Trakro waterfall in the north of Kui Buri national park. Insect species is a group with high biodiversity. Some species do not yet have ecological information. As a result, the IUCN status has not been assessed.

3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements

63. Implementation is through full National Implementation Modality (NIM). The Implementing Partner is BEDO, entrusted by the UNDP Administrator with the implementation of UNDP assistance as set out in the Project Document and assumes full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs as set out in the Project Document.
64. The implementing Partners is responsible for: executing the project including:
 - Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
 - Risk management as outlined in the Project Document.
 - Procurement of goods and services, including human resources.
 - Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets.
 - Approving and signing the multi-year workplan.
 - Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year.
 - Signing the Financial Report or the Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures.
65. There are no Responsible Parties and BEDO will Contract collaborating partners to support activities and to work with local partners.
66. Project stakeholders and partners are the central government agencies that have the national-level programmatic, policy and administrative mandates related to policies, strategies and plans for sustainable biodiversity-based tourism, financing for biodiversity and reduction of biodiversity threats and are engaged in Components 1 and 2 and national agencies under the MONRE and MOTs. Table 9 below provides a comprehensive list of these entities and their roles in the project.
67. UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of the project including, oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is also responsible for the Project Assurance role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). UNDP CO staff from the Programme Team, and from M&E (Programme Specialist/ Team Leader, Programme Associate and RBM Analyst) will provide oversight under the supervision of the CO Senior Manager (Resident Representative and Deputy Resident representative). Oversight will be provided from the regional level where programmatic oversight will be conducted and guidance on adherence to GEF policies will be provided by the Regional Technical Adviser (RTA), supported (as appropriate) by Global Head of Ecosystems, Bureau of Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) at UNDP Headquarters.
68. The Project Steering Committee (also known as the Project Executive Board) is responsible for taking action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project Board's decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international cooperation.
69. In case consensus cannot be reached within the PSC, the UNDP Resident Representative (or their designate) will mediate to find consensus and, if this cannot be found, will take the final decision to ensure project implementation is not unduly delayed.
70. The specific responsibilities of the PSC include:
 - a. Providing overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints.
 - b. Addressing project issues as raised by the Project Manager.
 - c. Providing guidance on new project risks, and ageing on possible mitigation and management actions to address these risks.
 - d. Agreeing on project manager's tolerances as required, within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF, and providing direction and advice for exceptional situations when the Project Manager's tolerances are exceeded.
 - e. Advising on major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF.
 - f. Ensuring coordination between various donors and government-funded projects and programmes.

- g. Ensuring coordination with various government agencies and their participation in project activities.
 - h. Tracking and monitoring co-financing for the project.
 - i. Reviewing the project progress, assessing performance, and appraising the Annual Work Plan for the following year and the multi-year Work Plan.
 - j. Appraising the annual PIR, including the quality assessment rating report.
 - k. Ensuring commitment of human resources to support project implementation, arbitrating in any issues within the project.
 - l. Reviewing Combined delivery Reports (CDR) prior to Certification by the Implementing Partner.
 - m. Providing direction and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily according to plans.
 - n. Addressing project-level grievances.
 - o. Approving the project Inception report, MTR and Terminal Evaluation reports and corresponding Management Responses.
 - p. Reviewing the final project report package during an end-of-project review meeting to discuss lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up.
 - q. Ensuring the highest levels of transparency and take all measures to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest.
71. The PSC comprises the Project Executive representing ownership of the project and Chairing the PSC, this is the Executive Director of BEDO.
72. The Beneficiary representatives (see Table 9) are individuals or groups representing the interests of those ultimately benefitting from the project. Their primary function within the PSC is to ensure the realization of the project's results from the perspective of those beneficiaries. The Beneficiary Representatives are: MONRE (Office of the Permanent Secretary), ONEP, DNP, DMCR, RFD, MOTS (Office of the Permanent Secretary), DOT, TAT, DASTA, MOI-CDD (Deputy Governor of PKK Province), PTT Plc., TRTA, ATTA, TEATA and TCBTIF (see Table 9 below).
73. The Development Partner is the UNDP Resident Representative and represents the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding and/ or technical expertise to the project.
74. Project Assurance is provided by the UNDP and ensures quality assurance and supports the PSC and PMU by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. The Project assurance role is to ensure that project milestones are managed and completed in a timely manner. The PSC cannot delegate any of its quality assurance responsibilities to the Project Manager. UNDP provides a three-tier oversight service involving the CO and the UNDP at regional headquarters. Project Assurance is completely independent of the Project Management functions.

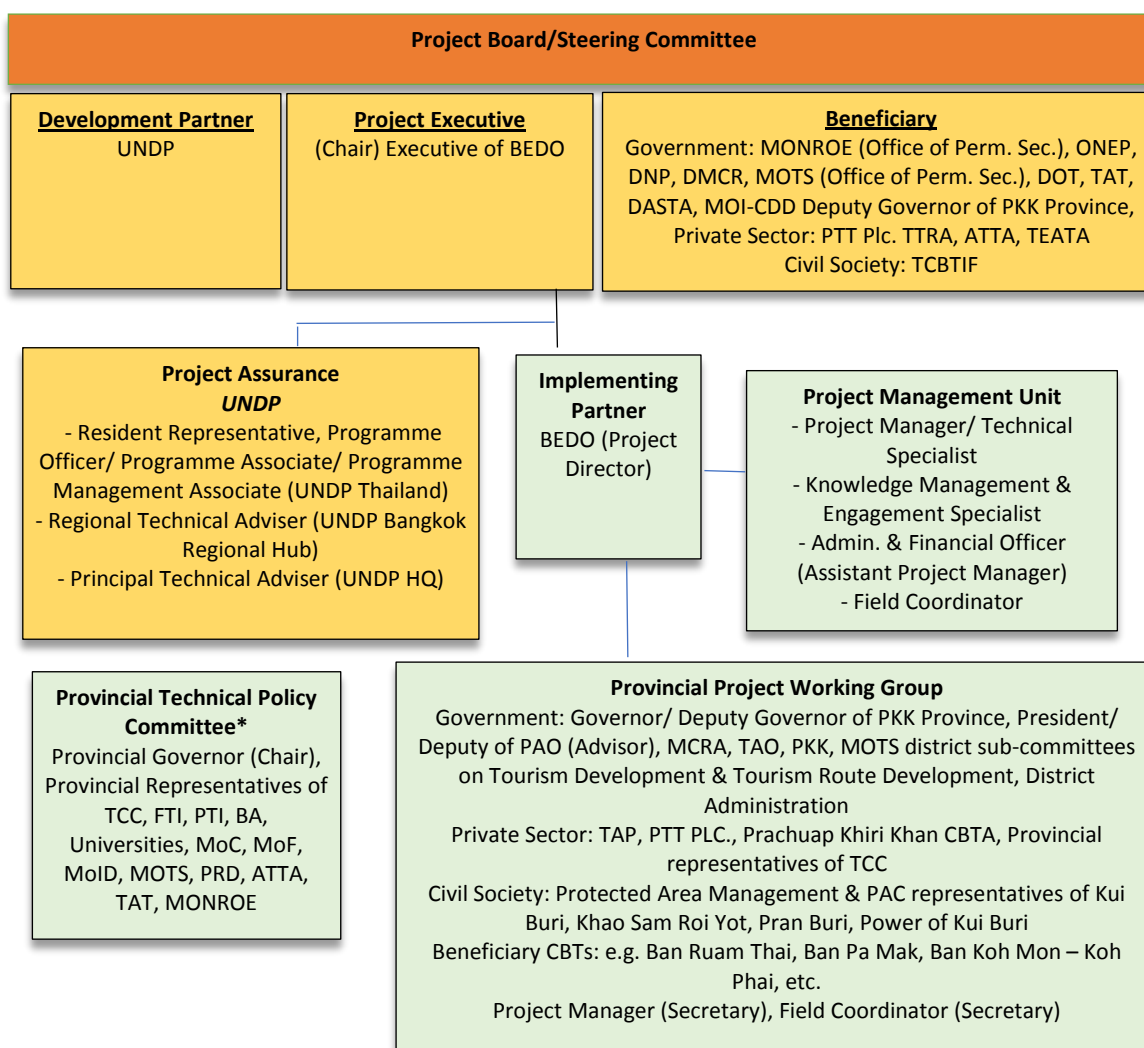
3.5 Project timing and milestones

Table 7 Project Milestones

Milestone	Date
PIF Approval	19/12/1019
CEO Endorsement	07/04/2022
UNDP Project document signed	12/12/2018
Project start date	07/10/ 2022
Inception Workshop	23/03/2023
Project Manager appointed	02/02/2023
MTR mission	08 – 09/2024
Expected Terminal Evaluation	07/07/2026
Projected EOP	07/10/2026

Figure 2 Project Implementation Arrangements

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²⁸ The Provincial Tourism Policy Committee (PTPC) is an existing Committee not created by the project. The project would liaise closely with the Committee to advance the project in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.

3.6 Main stakeholders

Table 8 Stakeholder Summary

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in project
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT		
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)		
Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO)	Responsible for promoting conservation of biodiversity in production landscapes, improving local community knowledge of best practice for sustainable production and enhancing biodiversity-based economic development. Owner of the BB Check standard	Implementing partner. Central role in coordination within MONRE, relevant agencies under MOTs, and stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels. Responsible for effective implementation of project activities. All Components
Office of Permanent Secretary	Division of Planning and Strategy. Division of Foreign Affairs (as GEF Operational Focal Point in Thailand)	Ensure alignment of plans and activities with respective strategy within MONRE. Ensure compliance with GEF requirements and coordinated effort with relevant GEF projects
Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)	Responsible for environmental policy and planning in Thailand, CBD National Focal Point and the reporting agency to the Ramsar Convention.	Member of the Project Steering Committee Components 1&2
Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)	Responsible for all protected area management in Thailand including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, forest parks, non-hunting areas. DNP is in charge of enforcing the National Parks Act and Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act. In PKK, DNP is responsible for the management of the Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park and Kui Buri National Park, and Pran Buri Forest Park.	Implementation of sustainable tourism standards in National Parks and potential scaling up to other protected areas in Thailand All Components
Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR)	Responsible for the management of sensitive coastal habitats, including mangrove areas, beaches, marine species and resource utilization.	Implementation of sustainable tourism standards in marine and coastal areas, esp. Sirinart Rajni Ecosystem Learning Center. Components 1 & 2
Royal Forest Department (RFD) ²⁹	Responsible for monitoring of forests including Pran Buri Forest Park, encouraging community forest management and conservation of forest land. Working with PTT and DMCR on mangrove conservation in the Pran Buri estuary	Member of Project Steering Committee and Provincial Project Working Group. Components 1&2
Department of Environmental Quality Protection (DEQP)	Owner of the Green Hotel Standard and Homestay Standard Thailand.	Member of Project Steering Committee. Components 1&2
Ministry of Tourism and Sports		
Office of the Permanent Secretary	Responsible for tourism policy and planning and budgeting of the whole country.	Member of the Project Steering Committee. Component 1
Department of Tourism (DOT)	Department under MOTs responsible for standardization of tourism (e.g. Thailand Tourism Standard) and recreation activities (e.g. nature-based activities, campground services, homestays etc.).	Member of the Project Steering Committee. Provide advice and input on project potential to revise, update, broaden and pilot standards at project sites and landscape. Components 1&2

²⁹ The difference between DNP and RFD is that RFD manage the less restricted forest which allows economic activities/ sustainable use of forest resources.

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in project
Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)	Responsible for overall Thailand's tourism promotion and market development	Member of the Project Steering Committee. Integrate biodiversity mainstreaming, COVID-19 measures, and visitor awareness raising into marketing communication. Also, conduct training with tourism stakeholders in the project landscape. All Components
Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA)	Public organization under the supervision of MOTS that develops and tests sustainable tourism standards. Undertaking capacity building assessments of communities through Community-based Tourism Thailand Guideline.	Member of Project Steering Committee, and Provincial Project Working Group. Integration of biodiversity into existing standards and implementation with CBTs; coordination CBT training Outputs 1.5 & 2.3
Ministry of Interior (MOI)		
Community Development Department (CDD)	Responsible for community development and increasing attention on community development through tourism in accordance with government priorities. Role in environmental management and waste control and developing green tourism management curriculum and handbook for the tourism industry.	Coordination on community tourism product development and training materials developed on biodiversity-based tourism. Components 1&2
Provincial and Local Government		
Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Office	The provincial office is responsible for the 5-year provincial development plan with the secured budgeting and authorization to integrate sectoral base policies, plans and projects within the Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape.	Oversee tourism development and integration with respective agencies in the province; lead implementation of central-level tourism strategies/plans. The Governor chairs the multi-stakeholders Provincial Tourism Committee. Components 1&2
Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Office of Tourism and Sport	Representative of MOTS in Prachuap Khiri Khan. Responsible for integration of tourism into provincial development, as well as integration of sectorial policy, plans and projects into tourism industry within Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape (including the Thailand Riviera Masterplan).	Serves as secretary of the Provincial Tourism Committee. Member of Provincial Project Working Group Component 2
Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment	Representative of MONRE in Prachuap Khiri Khan. Responsible for provincial level's environmental strategy and planning.	A member of the Provincial Tourism Committee and also Provincial Project Working Group. Ensure implementation of MONRE's strategy and plans in the provincial level. Component 2
Marine and Coastal Resources Administration Office No. 3 Phetchaburi, DMCR	Responsible for marine and coastal resources in Prachuap Khiri Khan including mangrove area in Pran Buri estuary.	A member of Provincial Project Working Group. Component 2
District Administrations	Support implementation of local development plans in the districts (Pran Buri, Sam Roi Yot, and Kui Buri district)	Support implementation of activities in the districts. Member of the Provincial Project Working Group. Component 2
Local government administrations (Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) and Tambon Administration Organization (TAO))	Coordinate project activities with local government strategies and activities. These local elected bodies have their own budget from local taxation, approximately 10-20% of the decentralized budget from the central government.	Participate in Provincial Project Working Group. Advise on project design, needs and contexts at a site level, with roles in site-level execution and monitoring. Component 2

Stakeholder	Mandate/responsibility	Role in project
Private sector & civil society		
PTT Plc.	Operates the Sirinart Rajini Ecosystem Learning Center (the main coordinator in Pran Buri estuary and Pran Buri Conservation Network).	Member of Provincial Project Working Group. Support implementation of project activities in the area through the SRE Learning Center and other related programmes within PTT. All Components
Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC)	Thai private social enterprises providing sustainable tourism offerings that generate a positive social impact, and designs and curates travel experiences in local communities across Thailand and Southeast Asia. Matches tourists with local communities and responsible tour operators to strengthen community-based tourism and community development	Member of the Provincial Project Working Group. Potential collaborator through its 'Happy Model' sustainable tourism programme. All Components
Protected Area Committees (PAC) of Kui Buri National Park, Khao Sam Roi Yot National park, and Pran Buri	PAC play an important role for advisory board and joint decision-making of the PAs management	Member of the Provincial Project Working Group. Support outreach to communities. Components 2&3
Tourism Association of Prachuap Khiri Khan (TAP)	Membership association representing private sector tourism enterprises, Tourism Council of Thailand	Member of the Provincial Project Working Group. Support implementation of activities. All Components
Prachuap Khiri Khan Community-Based Tourism Association	A new association focused on Membership organization of 37 SMEs and CBT enterprises including homestays in the Prachuap Khiri Khan area	Member of the Provincial Project Working Group. All Components
Public Private Partnership Offering for Wildlife and Ecosystem Resilience (POWER - Kui Buri)	Network of 13 organizations collaborating on HWC. Government, NGOs, and private sector.	Member of Provincial Project Working Group. Components 2&3
WWF Thailand	Has a field office in Ban Ruam Thai, Kui Buri. They focus on elephant and tiger conservation and wildlife research. Work closely with Kui Buri National Park and Ban Ruam Thai community. A member of Kui Buri PAC.	Advisor to the Provincial Project Working Group. Components 2&3
Thai Responsible Tourism Association (TRTA)	An association promoting and developing the concept of Responsible Tourism (RT) for the tourist industry. 16 members including tour operators, accommodation providers, restaurants, tourist guides, local communities, and academics.	Advisor to the local tour operators and mentor, member of Provincial Project Working Group. All Components
Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism Association (TEATA)	There are 53 members from tour operators, resorts, and CBTs. TEATA has focused on network building, collaborating with professionals, and partnership linking across the members and public for sustainable tourism.	Advisor to the local tour operators and mentor. Member of Provincial Project Working Group All Components
Beneficiary local and ethnic minority communities practising CBT (e.g. Ban Ruam Thai, Ban Pa Mak, Ban Koh Mon - Koh Phai, etc.)	Develop business model and tourism products in PAs. Provide tourism services/ products on site.	Member of Provincial Project Working Group Components 2&3
Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute Foundation (TCBTIP)	Pioneer of CBT in Thailand.	Member of the Project Steering Committee Component 1

4. Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1 Project Design

75. The Project Document identifies the baseline scenario as: coordination and capacity limitations, inadequate financing for conservation, inequitable and uneven distribution of tourism's benefits, degradation of ecosystems, over-tourism and overcrowding in popular tourism destinations, unsustainable and illegal use of wildlife, and marginalized community involvement which undermine Thailand's ability to safeguard areas of high biodiversity and generate resilient benefits to the people living around protected areas.
76. The GEF-supported Project Alternative responds to the development challenge by systematically addressing the barriers described above, namely:
 - a fragmented policy framework and institutional coordination;
 - a lack of technical tools and methodologies to support sustainable biodiversity-based tourism;
 - inadequate financing and incentives mechanisms for conservation with the tourism sector; and,
 - limited awareness and capacity across government and local communities on managing tourism sustainably.
77. The project proposes an alternative scenario for tourism in areas of high biodiversity in Thailand, which is established at the community level and contributes to the conservation and monitoring of globally significant biodiversity. It also seeks to mainstream biodiversity conservation considerations into tourism planning in order to reduce the impacts of unsustainable tourism. Under the alternative scenario, sustainable and inclusive tourism destinations are established where biodiversity is conserved, financed, and provides net benefits to local people, and the negative impacts of tourism on biodiversity are reduced.
78. The project strategy, as set out in the Project Document, is remarkable for the clarity of purpose. It presents a well thought through strategy and it is noteworthy that it is able to analyze the situation, context, threats, barriers and risks and then transcribe this into the national policy and planning framework and the political-administrative planning structures and framework. It then relates this to the structure and function of a GEF project intervention. This is no easy task and the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) has done a remarkably good job in achieving this suggesting that the design team had a very good knowledge of the issues and subject matter as well as understanding the role of a GEF project in bringing about transformational change and the need to demonstrate GEF additionality³⁰.
79. The strategy, and the implementation arrangements, are complex (not complicated) with a relatively large number of actively involved partners and stakeholders reflecting the national, provincial and local administrative and organizational arrangements. Furthermore, it is very ambitious given the scale of changes and the expected transformational nature of the approach and it is reasonable to state that there was an underestimation of the time envelope available given that, in the experience of the MTR Team, the first year of any GEF project is invariably taken up with establishing the project's operational capacity and unforeseen delays, for whatever reasons, are almost inevitable. This can become cumulative when there is a complex sequencing of activities necessary to achieve the objective.
80. The intervention does rely heavily on a number of discreet studies to be carried out by Consultants which exposes a weakness in the design in as much as it would rely on the Project Manager (PM) to bring these all together in a coherent final plan. The MTR argues that the project should have included a substantive Chief Technical Assistant (CTA) with planning experience to coordinate these different studies and ensure that they contribute to the eventual plan in a coherent manner.
81. The MTR agrees with the statement in the Project Document that *"the project rationale and approach is fully consistent with broader government planning and policy at national and provincial level. The overall intent of the project is strategically aligned with national policy ranging from the bio-economy philosophy of Thailand's national development reform, through to the Thailand Tourism Strategy"*³¹. The projects strategy is closely aligned with a suite of policy and normative documents including, *inter alia*, Thailand's *Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management 2015-2021*³², the *Action Plan for Biodiversity Management (2017-2021)*³³ and the GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) strategy (2021 – 2026) with an emphasis on ecosystem resilience through (1) balancing conservation and use, (2)

³⁰ Project Document, Table 6, pp. 23 - 27

³¹ Project Document, p. 31, para. 38

³² ONEP. 2015. Master Plan for Integrated Biodiversity Management 2015-2021. MONRE. ONEP. Bangkok 82 pp.

³³ ONEP. 2017. Action Plan for Biodiversity Management 2017-2021. ONEP. Bangkok. 120 pp.

- emphasizing ‘high value, low impact’, and (3) developing community and local economy with natural resources emphasizing biodiversity and cultural diversity to add value to the supply chain.
82. The project approach matches closely with the market-based approaches to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience favored by the government of Thailand. The MTR also notes that the project strategy aligns with the recent (2024) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Kunming-Montreal GBF) commitments which are incorporated into the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2030 – 2050). Critically, the Kunming-Montreal GBF requires countries to recognize that the ecosystem damage and subsequent loss of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience is an existential threat which cannot be isolated from climate change, social and economic development which has particular significance to one of the project’s sites in the Pranburi Estuary (including Sam Roi Yot Coastal area and Sam Roi Yot Wetland Area (outside the RAMSAR) and any future plans to develop a OECM approach.
 83. Annex 11j of the Project Document provides a number of lessons from international best practices which are integrated into the project’s strategy including, *inter alia*: the need for adequate controls on tourism through planning in order to avoid harm to the natural environment, local culture or community life, the economic impact and financial sustainability of protected area is a concept that is poorly understood resulting in output 1.3 (Visitor Counting), the need to address visitor overcrowding in protected areas (Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF)), supporting market-based approaches to biodiversity conservation with internationally recognized standards and certification.
 84. According to the Project Document the strategy was cognizant of six previous GEF projects: GEF-4 Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Thailand’s Production Landscape project, implemented by BEDO with support of UNDP, GEF-5 Strengthening Capacity and Incentives for Wildlife Conservation in the Western Forest Complex project, implemented by DNP with support of UNDP, GEF-5 Conserving Habitats for Globally Important Flora and Fauna in Production Landscapes project, implemented by ONEP and the Zoological Park Organization (ZPO) under MONRE, GEF-5 Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand project, was implemented by BEDO with support of UNDP, GEF-6 Integration of Natural Capital accounting in public and private sector policy and decision-making for sustainable landscapes, implemented by ONEP with support of UN Environment and GEF-6 Combatting Illegal Wildlife Trade, focusing on Ivory, Rhino Horn, Tiger and Pangolins in Thailand project, implemented by DNP with support of UNDP.
 85. An important facet of several of these previous projects was the involvement of project partners, including BEDO and sustainable management of biodiversity which sought to establish high-value market for biodiversity-based tourism internationally and domestically, provide scalable models for community-based social enterprises engaged in commercial supply chains for biodiversity-based products (that can be applied to biodiversity-based tourism development) and the involvement of rural communities in line with a market-based conservation approach.
 86. The project strategy was supported by a thorough and comprehensive Social and Environmental Screening Process (SESP). The Project Document identified gender inequalities and disparities³⁴ such as un-equal childcare roles affecting access to employment, wage disparities, over-reliance on the informal sector and low job security and welfare and noted that these disparities are further exacerbated for ethnic minority women, women migrants, and women living in border areas, who are discriminated against and have unequal access to resources and social services.
 87. The gender analysis also identified a lack of gender awareness amongst the targeted communities and a “startling” gender inequality in these communities especially in relation to access to benefits.
 88. To address this, a comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Plan (Annex 9b, Project Document) was prepared with a detailed Gender Action Plan which recommended an annual Gender Programme Auditing on each of the three project Components and a comprehensive M&E plan including 21 activities (5 – 10 -6 per Component).
 89. Within the projects SRF the gender indicators are largely targeted and not qualitative, however, a specific Output (3.4) calls for a *M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management*. US\$ 5,400 and US\$ 5,600 was allocated in the M&E plan for gender and safeguarding respectively, suggesting that the intentions were not necessarily equal to the resources available (or allocated).

³⁴ Project Document, pp. 65 - 67

90. Arguably, the Project's strategic approach addresses gender as much as is possible within the design because through the Gender Mainstreaming Plan it should ensure that the gender was mainstreamed other Contracted outputs of the project (e.g. *Activity 1.1 Mainstreaming gender and its connection to biodiversity tourism into the national biodiversity-based tourism strategy*). However, as mentioned above, the MTR is not convinced this is reflected in the human and financial resources available in the project.
91. The design does not appear to consider the challenges of a NIM. There are two points worth considering in relation to the design and the implementation modality:
- GEF projects, because of their transformational expectations, carry with them considerable uncertainty which does not sit well with the necessary bureaucratic and administrative needs of managing a small, medium or large grant. While the UNDP-GEF reporting requirements can sometimes feel cumbersome, there is a purpose behind them as it ensures the administrative-bureaucratic grant accountability with the need to change tactics and even strategy in a fast-moving environment. This combination of risk management and uncertainty management creates a dissonance between the need to get things done, the need to be flexible and innovative and the need for accountability to the GEF for the fund provided. The UNDP-GEF reporting protocol, can appear un-necessarily burdensome on project management, however, it is the product of considerable experience in marrying accountability and adaptive management within the construct of a project gained from many years and projects. It is not ideal, but it is necessary and normally projects will engage a CTA specifically for this purpose; to ensure that the reporting is adequate, timely and provides the GEF Agency with the assurance that the project is on track given that it has ultimate responsibility to the GEF CEO for the grant.
 - Any GEF project is bringing three distinct bureaucratic and organizational structures – GEF, UNDP, national Government - together within the framework of a project and for a single purpose. Each has its own administrative processes, budgeting timeframes, reporting procedures, M&E processes and operational procedures. This is extremely challenging and can act as a drag on a project if this is not explicitly recognized in the Project Document.
92. The project design was understandably heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for restrictions on movements and gathering. The pandemic had a profound effect on the sector, for instance: *"The new National Parks Act (2019) gives provision to share benefits from tourism fees with local authorities through a new Thailand Tourism Development Fund, but these funds are yet to be used to implement projects that benefit local people. Due to the drop in tourism caused by COVID-19 the fund has not received much revenue yet, and has not yet allocated funds to communities"*³⁵.

4.1.2 Results Framework/ Log Frame

93. The SRF is the primary M&E tool in GEF-financed projects setting out the metrics for measuring both performance and impact of the project and describing the logical hierarchy from outputs to outcomes and how these contribute to achieving the objective.
94. The project's SRF is of particularly good quality with a clear logical hierarchy from activities, outputs, outcomes to objective (see Table 1) which is coherently aligned with the TOC (see Fig. 1).
95. In the experience of the MTR the SRF is unusually good quality with just a few redundant features (see Table 10). The table only includes the indicators which the MTR challenges. The critical issue with the redundant indicators is that they will need to be measured through comprehensive survey or census and even then; the confidence limits would militate against their usefulness as well as the attribution of any change of status to the project intervention given the external variable which can affect the indicator and the biological timeframes necessary to detect and understand trends in biological populations.
96. Of particular interest is Outcome 3, Indicator 1: *Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of tourism industry, communities and tourists for the importance of biodiversity to tourism improved, as measured by the KAP survey score*. The inclusion of a KAP is, in itself, an indication of the quality of the Project Document and SRF. A KAP is a comprehensive methodology to measure attitudinal terms and remove the subjectivity often found in GEF projects SRFs which include an indicator on changes in attitude without any means of empirical measurement. The one caveat is that a KAP is expensive, although this is reflected in the budget.
97. Selected GEF-7 Core Indicators are included in the project's SRF as Objective indicators and separately the GEF-8 Core Indicators are also monitored (Table 10).

³⁵ Project Document, p. 17, para. 28

98. Table 10, below provides the MTR analysis of the weak or problematic indicators in the SRF. All other indicators are assessed as meeting the SMART³⁶ criteria. Those marked with Q are questionable in terms of meeting the criteria.

³⁶ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, relevant and Time-bound

Table 9 Indicator Analysis

99. Only indicators considered not compliant are included in Table 10.

Indicator	Baseline	MTR	End of Project	SMART Analysis					MTR comment
Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity-based tourism				s	m	a	r	t	
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated as a result of improved management effectiveness of estimated 113, 085 ha of forests (99,518 ha within Kui Buri NP, 13,566 ha in Khao Sam Roi Yot NP) and improved landscape management of estimated 17,208 ha of Pran Buri Estuary, totaling 130,293 ha (Expected tCO ₂ e): (GEF Core Indicator 6.1)	0	800,000 tCO ₂ e	2,265,238 tCO ₂ e	✓	Q	Q	Q	Q	The MTR questions the utility of this indicator in this instance. Under other circumstances the indicator would be SMART, but in the body of this project it is important to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attribution – of any change in carbon storage to the activities in the project. Cost effectiveness – of obtaining the data. If the data is already been collected then it would be reasonable even with the weak attribution. However, to go out and actually obtain the data is beyond the resource envelop of the project.
Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism									
Outcome 2, indicator 3: Improvements in biodiversity, waste management and human wildlife conflict in the project landscape (a) # Fishing cats	(a) 33	(a) 35	(a) 37	✓	Q	Q	Q	Q	Biological indicators in a four-year project are unrealistic and attributing and change (+/-) to a project intervention when there are so many other variables would be spurious. Furthermore, if this is by survey then the methodology and confidence limits would need to be included and likely these would greater than the change predicted. ³⁷
(b) # waterbird species in Khao Sam Roi Yot wetland	(b) 157	(b) All stable – as baseline or improved	(b) All stable – as baseline or improved	✓	Q	Q	Q	Q	As above
(b1) # Individual bird count of Manchurian Reed Warbler (Acrocephalus tangorum)	(b1) 63	(b1) All stable – as baseline or improved	(b1) All stable – as baseline or improved	✓	Q	Q	Q	Q	As above
(b2) # Individual bird count of Malay Plover (Charadrius peronii)	(b2) 60	(b2) All stable – as baseline or improved	(b2) All stable – as baseline or improved	✓	Q	Q	Q	Q	As above
(c) # reports HWC with fishing cat	(c) 115	(c) 100	(c) 50	Q	✓	✓	✓	✓	Targets could also be achieved/ or influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A decrease in population size. ii. A rise increase in population creating more incidents.
(d) # reports HWC with elephant	(d) 25	(d) 15	(d) 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-

³⁷ For the avoidance of doubt, long term monitoring of biological indicators is a legitimate output/outcome of a project, the point made is that they lack utility in terms of measuring project performance and impact because of the challenge of surveys and biological timeframes. In the case of water birds this would also include variables external to the project area such as breeding success in the northern breeding grounds or southern wintering grounds which are impossible for the project to predict. Monitoring the Water birds is an important activity and there are global flyway methodologies and even financial support for national annual surveys, but not as a project indicator.

4.2 Progress Towards Results

Table 10 MTR Ratings Progress Towards Results

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Progress Towards Results	MU	Of the 16 indicators with sub-indicators, only five are on track, three could not be assessed and seven are not on track, although the MTR recognises that this situation should change in the last quarter 2024 and first quarter 2025. The presentations made by the teams carrying out the studies indicate that the outputs will be good quality, however, there are still considerable challenges which need to be addressed before these activities can be brought together to provide the expected outcomes. The project has embarked on an acceleration process, but there are considerable risks involved in this and the MTR considers that without support the PMU will struggle to bring the project to a successful conclusion. However, with targeted support to address these few weaknesses it is quite possible for the project to reach a successful conclusion and recommendations are provided in section 5.2 for this purpose.

Table 11 GEF-8 Core Indicators

GEF-8 Land Degradation Results Framework ³⁸							
Programme	Indicator	Expected		Reported	METT Score		
		PIF	Endorsement	MTR ³⁹	PIF	Endorsement	MTR
Conserving & Sustainably Using Biodiversity.	Core Indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management.	104,620	113,085	113,085			
	Indicator 1.2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness.	24,500	113,085	113,085	-	113 ⁴⁰	203
	Core Indicator 2: Marine protected areas created or under improved management.	2,081	2,281	2,281			
	Indicator 2.2: Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness.	2,081	2,281	2,281	-	67	100
	Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices.	1,000	17,208	6,512			
Reducing GHG Emissions.	Indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity.	1,000	17,208	6,512			
	Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emission mitigated.	Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (6.1 + 6.2)					
	6: 6. Greenhouse gas emission mitigated (direct + indirect) (6.1+6.2).	N/A	2265238	-			
	6.1 Greenhouse gas emission mitigated in the AFOLU sector (direct + indirect) (6.5 + 6.6)	N/A	2265238	-			
Cross-cutting Strategic Areas	Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investment.						
	Female	2,150	2,470	920			
	Male	2,150	2,760	882			
	Total	4,300	5,230	1,802			

³⁸ Note that the GEF Core Indicator now in use is the GEF-8 but the Project Document uses the GEF-7

³⁹ Reported by PMU

⁴⁰ Endorsement & MTR are an aggregation of two scores, Kuri Buri NP and Khao Sam Roi Yot NP.

4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

100.A number of factors have meant that the project's results at the MTR are hard to define. These include: the slow start to the project, a misunderstanding in the use of the indicators and reporting (e.g. the project only has one PIR which was being prepared at the time of the MTR)⁴¹. The reasons for this are discussed in subsequent sections (Section 4.3) and recommendations to address these weaknesses and capture the project's achievements are provided in Section 5.2 of this report.

Table 12 Progress Towards Results Objective

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity-based tourism.								
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 1: # of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (GEF-7 Core indicator 11)	(a) 0 people (b) 0 people (c) 0 people (d) 0 people	This target is on track. (a) 604 people (330 female) (b) 489 people (280 female) (c) 35 people (20 female) (d) 80 people (30 female)	a) 2,500 people (1,200 female) (b) 350 people (195 female) (c) 1,500 people (855 female) (d) 650 people (150 female)	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 5,230 people (2,470 female) (b) 700 people (390 female) (c) 3,150 people (1,760 female) (d) 1,380 people (320 female)	Not on Track	MU	The PIR reports a total of 1,208 (660 women). MTR target is 2,500. Furthermore, given the project's short operational time thus far, while there is clearly a broad participation and enthusiasm of potential beneficiaries, it would be premature to actually claim benefit at this point in time/
(a) Total (b) People living in the demonstration landscape (c) Private sector personnel: Formal and community-based (d) Government officials: National, Provincial, and District		Direct beneficiary data has been collected from registration forms for the meetings. Since BEDO commenced the project in January 2023 (Q1/2023), the results of the mid-term implementation are anticipated to meet the target by the end of 2024 (December 2024). Uploaded File: 1. 2024 Q2 Progress Report 2. GEF 8 Core Indicator Reporting 3. Map 3 pilot sites						
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see Annex 11a) (GEF-7 Core indicator 1.2)	(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: (a) Total hectares (b) METT score total	This target is on track. (a) 113,085 hectares covered by the project, as per MT expectations, with 99,518.74 ha in Kui Buri National Park and 13,566.28 ha in Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. (b) the METT score baselines have been set as 64 for Kui Buri National Park and 67 for Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. The METT scores have not been provided as of June 2024 but will be assessed before the MTR.	(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: (b) 68	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: 99,518 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National:	On Track	MS	Change from METT 3 to 4 although METT 3 equivalent appears to show an improvement in KSRYP (BL 67, MT 79) and a

⁴¹ The PIR was available only following the MTR field mission.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Specific METT item related to be able to improve sustainable PAs management are: PA Design and planning (item 5, 7a); Training/education awareness (item 10, 14, 20); Conservation habitat & management (item 21a, 21b.); Local communities & commercial tourism operator involvement (item 24, 24a., 24b.); economic benefit (item 25, 27, 28)	Khao Sam Roi Yot National 13,566 hectares (b) 67	The preliminary report of METT in Kui Buri and Samroi Yot is available in Thai only. The English version will be provided after finalization and will be ready in September 2024. Uploaded File: Map 3 pilot sites V1	Khao Sam Roi Yot National 13,566 hectares (b) 71		13,566 hectares (b) 76			KNP (BL 64, MT 83).
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 3: Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (see Annex 11a) (GEF-7 Core indicator 2.2)	2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 67)	This target is on track. with a) 2,281 hectares in the Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park covered and b) a METT baseline score established at 67, which will be assessed prior to the MTR. Note: METT is planned to be conducted in August 2024 using METT (V. 4) 1) 18 METT4 Samroi Yot (Thai v.) 2) 19 METT4 Kui Buri (Thai V.)	2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 76)	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	, 2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 71)	Unable to assess	Unable to assess	Unable to assess
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares) (GEF-7 Core indicator 4.1)	0 hectares Pran Buri Estuary (including Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas)	It is on track. It stands currently at 6,512 ha of the Pran Buri Estuary (including Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas), out of the 7,000-ha expected at MTR.	7,000 hectares Pran Buri Estuary (including Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas)	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	17,208 hectares Pran Buri Estuary (including Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas)	On Track	S	There has been considerable field work carried out in the Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas. However, this is a complex and challenging system with a multiplicity of issues (abandoned shrimp farms, private land, urbanisation, etc..) and more concrete development of Other Effective Area-based Conservation

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated as a result of improved management effectiveness of estimated 113, 085 ha of forests (99,518 ha within Kui Buri NP, 13,566 ha in Khao Sam Roi Yot NP) and improved landscape management of estimated 17,208 ha of Pran Buri Estuary, totaling 130,293 ha (Expected tCO2e): (GEF Core Indicator 6.1)	0	It is off track, with no mitigation reported as opposed to 800,000 tCO2e expected at MTR stage.	800,000 tCO2e	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	2,265,238 tCO2e	Unable to assess	Unable to assess	Measures (OECM) measures would need to be in place by the EOP. Unable to assess. The MTR recommends that this indicator is discontinued.

Table 13 Progress Towards Results Outcome 1

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism.								
Outcome 1, Indicator 1: Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted and integrated into work plans of agencies within the National Tourism Policy Committee	0	<p>This target is on track.</p> <p>5</p> <p>Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted: 1</p> <p>Integrated by 4 agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (Public Organization (BEDO)) Department of Tourism (DoT) Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Permanent Secretary Office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports <p>The biodiversity-based tourism strategy was adopted by the project steering committee and integrated into the Third National Tourism Development Plan (2023-2027) in 2023, see attached. Five agencies integrated the strategy into their work plans, including BEDO, DoT, TAT, and the Permanent Secretary Office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.</p> <p>Uploaded file:</p> <p>Biodiversity-based tourism strategy (draft) - File Name: Evidence Outcome 1 Indicator 1 Integrated Strategy</p>	5	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	<p>10</p> <p>Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted: 1</p> <p>Integrated by 9 agencies: BEDO, DNP, TAT, DoT, DMCR, RFD, DASTA, CDD-Mol</p>	On Track	S	This is on track, but there needs to be a better understanding and communication of the concept of biodiversity-based tourism.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Outcome 1, Indicator 2: National conservation, social and economic impact monitoring methodologies used at project sites	(a) 2 (b) 2 (c) 0 (d) 0 (e) 0 (f) 0	This target is on track. (a) 4 (b) 2 (c) 2 (d) 0 (e) 0 (f) 0	(a) 5 (b) 2 (c) 1 (d) 1 (e) 1 (f) 0	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 10 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 3 (e) 1 (f) 1	On Track	MS	The MTR target is not fully met and 2 of the methodologies were in use at the project' start and are still to be repeated for the mid-term assessment and scores are still not available ⁴² . The VUMF has been translated, which is an important development, but it is yet to be carried out systematically. The PES should be dropped from the SRF.
(a) Total (b) METT (Conservation) (c) Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) (Social) (d) Visitors Count! (Economic) (e) Natural Capital Accounting (Economic) (f) Payment for Ecosystem Services (Economic)		A total of four National conservation, social, and economic impact monitoring methodologies were used at project sites, including METT and VUMF. The Thai version of the VUMF manual has been translated. The consultant is working with local stakeholders to apply the tools in Q3/2024. Some tools (d, e, f) may not apply in the project sites because related stakeholders will choose a voluntary tool suitable to their needs. The first draft of VUMF (Thai Translation) was developed based on the international frameworks and adjusted to the context of Thailand. This method will be applied in the project area. The final one will be ready in September 2024, please refer to the attachment. Uploaded File: File Name: Outcome 1 Indicator 2 (Draft 1 VUMF Thai Translation)						
Outcome 1, Indicator 3: # of tourism standards integrating biodiversity conservation	1	This target is on track. Two tourism standards integrate biodiversity conservation: the BB Check and the CBT standard. The Project is working on a guideline for integrating biodiversity conservation into tourism standards, which will be finalized in December 2024. Please refer to the evidence of progress report related Outcome 1 Indicator 3 (number of tourism standards integrating biodiversity conservation) attached. 20 are expected to be reached by March 2025. Uploaded Files: 1. Evidence Outcome 1 Indicator 3 Tourism Standards	3	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	7	On Track	MS	One standard existed at the baseline, two standards (Business and Biodiversity Check (BB Check)) and the Community-based Tourism (CBT)
Business and Biodiversity Check (BB Check) Green Hotel standard Green National Park Homestay Standard Thailand Thailand Tourism Activity Standard Sustainable Tourism Management Standard								

⁴² The MTR also notes that METTS are generally carried out through projects using project funds and the real test is whether they are repeated post project and financed through national budgets.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Criteria for Thailand's Community-Based Tourism Development		2. Additional document for Outcome 1 Indicator 3 3. Draft Guideline of biodiversity-based tourism (Thai version). English version will be ready after verification and finalization of the report.						Standard) have been added in the first half and the Guideline for Integrating Biodiversity Conservation into Tourism Standards is expected be completed by December 2024.
Outcome 1, Indicator 4: Improved institutional capacity for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism planning, management and monitoring, measured by UNDP capacity development scorecard (see Annex 11g).	42	This target is on track. According to the work plan, the Capacity Development Scorecard will be completed in September 2024, please see the result report as of June 2024 attached. Please note that the score is the same as the baseline. Uploaded File: Outcome 1 Indicator 2 (Annex11g CD Score Card 2024)	55	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	77	Unable to assess	Unable to assess	Unable to assess, CDS score is not available.

101. **Output 1.1:** National biodiversity-based tourism strategy developed, adopted and integrated into government processes and reporting of MONRE and MOTS and improved agency coordination mechanisms

- Biodiversity-based Tourism Strategy was adopted by the project steering committee and integrated into the Third National Tourism Development Plan (2023-2027) in 2023. In December 2023, the Strategic Working Group 4 (Promote Sustainable Tourism Development), part of the Sub-committee for the Third National Tourism Development Plan (2023-2027) BEDO proposed integrating Biodiversity-based Tourism into the plan and it was recognized and incorporated into the work plan, identifying it as an indicator in the Sustainable Travel Index Ranking by Euromonitor International (Indicator 4.3).
- Four agencies integrated Biodiversity-based Tourism Strategy into their work plans, including 1) Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO); 2) Department of Tourism (DoT); 3) Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT); 4) Permanent Secretary Office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

102. **Output 1.2:** Operational policies on biodiversity financing solutions for tourist destinations developed and adopted.

- The Consultant team carried out consultation meeting with multi-stakeholders in the project area to study financial mechanism for tourist destinations. The final report will be finalized in Q4/2024.

103. **Output 1.3:** Practical, standardized methodologies for tourism's ecological, social and economic impact assessment and monitoring developed for biodiversity-based tourism in PAs and high-biodiversity sites across Thailand.

- A total of four National conservation, social, and economic impact monitoring methodologies were used at project sites, including METT and VUMF. The Thai version of the VUMF manual has been translated.

- In August 2024, the project conducted METT (using METT version 4) in two national parks in the project area, of which Kuiburi NP score is 86, and Khao Sam Roi Yot NP score is 74. The baseline was METT version 3 which could not be compared to the recent version.

104. Output 1.4: Biodiversity conservation integrated into existing national tourism standards and certifications, strengthening sustainability of tourism

- The Project is working on a guideline for integrating biodiversity conservation into tourism standards, which will be finalized in Q4 2024.
- The project Consultant team reviewed the existing standard that can be applied in the project landscape in Q3/2024. There are four main categories of tourism standards that could be applied in Prachuap Khiri Khan province:

Tourism Destination Standard

- Eco-Tourism Quality Destination Standard
- Natural Tourism Quality Destination Standard
- Management of Tourism Destination Standard
- DASTA CBT Award

Tourism Service Standard

- Food service standard for tourism
- Boat transportation standard
- Homestay standard
- Tourism Information standard
- Tourism business operation and tour guide standards

Tourism Activity Standard

- Trekking standard
- Bird Watching Standard

Product Standard

- Community product standard
- OTOP standard

105. Output 1.5: Capacity development program for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation within tourism planning, development and operations institutionalized within key national and provincial government agencies.

- The Consultant team has translated the VUMF manual into Thai (submitted draft report in July 2024). Currently, the consultant is integrating the VUMF with other methodologies suited to the local context. The final version will be ready on Q1/2025.
- The Consultant is working on biodiversity tourism curriculum which will be finalized in Q1/2025.
- The PMU is preparing a knowledge exchange for national and provincial level on biodiversity tourism in Q4/2024.

Table 14 Progress Towards Results Outcome 2

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Outcome 2: More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across the ecologically important Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape								
Outcome 2, Indicator 1: Strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA), tourism masterplan, and gender-responsive biodiversity-based tourism action plan finalized.	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (d) 0	This target is on track. This target is on track. (a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (d) 0	(a) 1 finalized (b) 1 finalized (c) 0 (d) 0	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/20 24	(a) 3 finalized (b) 1 finalized (c) 1 finalized (d) 1 finalized	Not on Track	U	The various studies have been undertaken but are not yet finalized. The MTR is concerned that the voices of local community and protected areas managers were not being heard during the consultation process and there is concern that there is not a single planning lead to bring all the studies together into a coherent set of planning documents, protocols and operational instructions. MTR team have not received the documents
(a) Total (b) SESA for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape (c) Tourism masterplan for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape (d) Biodiversity-based tourism action plan Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape		The strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA), tourism masterplan, and gender-responsive biodiversity-based tourism action plan is being finalized and will be ready by the time of MTR. The project is scheduled to conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders from June to July 2024 and will finalize the plans in September 2024. Please see the draft SESA which will be finalized in Q3/2024.						

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Outcome 2, Indicator 2: Visitor management plans finalized for project sites: Kui Buri NP; Khao Sam Roi Yot KNP; Pran Buri Estuary	0	<p>This target is on track.</p> <p>Based the revision of project's work plan and budget approved by the Project Steering Committee in November 2023 and adjustment March 2024, this activity will be started in the second half of 2024.</p> <p>The project has been conducting the Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF), please see the attached inception report (in Thai). The VUMF plan for three pilot sites will be finalized in December 2024.</p>	1 finalized	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	3 finalized	Not on Track	MU	<p>mentioned in the PIR and assume that they are on the process to be done. There are clear plans to do this, but these will all take part in the second half of the project with the attendant risk that they will be rushed and there is no opportunity for external scrutiny before the TE.</p>
Outcome 2, Indicator 3: Improvements in biodiversity, waste management and human wildlife conflict in the project landscape	(a) 33 (b) 157 (b1) 63 (b2) 60 (c) 115 (d) 25	<p>This target is on track.</p> <p>(a) 66 (Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park provided the data)</p> <p>(b) On going. The team is conducting biodiversity surveys. Please note that Sam Roi Yot wetland is the East Asian to Australian flyway of migrant birds during October to March each year.</p> <p>(b1) Not applicable. Off track: Could not survey the number of individual bird count of Manchurian Reed Warbler because they live it's in the National Park, where and they not allowed to catch the animal in the National Park is prohibited.</p> <p>(b2) Not applicable. Off track: Could not survey the number of individual bird count of Malay Plover because the habitat of this species is on the beaches.</p> <p>(c) On going. The National Park will finalize the report in September 2024</p> <p>(d) On going. The National Park will finalize the report in September 2024</p>	(a) 35 (b) All stable – as baseline or improved (b1) All stable – as baseline or improved (b2) All stable – as baseline or improved (c) 100 (d) 15	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 37 (b) All stable – as baseline or improved (b1) All stable – as baseline or improved (b2) All stable – as baseline or improved (c) 50 (d) 5	Not on Track	MU	<p>This indicator is very mixed up. Firstly, it should be possible to survey birds using non-intrusive methods (e.g. singing males). However, the inclusion of biological indicators in the SRF is questionable (see Table 5) and furthermore,</p>

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		Two sub-indicators (b1, b2) are not applicable because 1) to survey the number of individual bird count of Malay Plover (<i>Charadrius peronii</i>), the project must take a long time to survey the beach because the habitat of this species is on the beaches; 2) to survey the number of individual bird count of Manchurian Reed Warbler because it's in the National Park and they not allowed to catch the animal in the NP. Manchurian Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus tangorum</i>) always hides and nests in weed fields. To count an individual bird, bird experts must use a net to catch the bird, which is the method to count this species. However, catching individual birds in the National Park area is illegal. The project is conducting plants, fish, and animal species, which can represent biological diversity in the wetland area instead. The project can use the main indicators of a, b, c, and d to improve biodiversity and human-wildlife conflict in the project landscape.						the MTR would challenge whether a doubling of fishing cat populations in the two years of the project is due to survey techniques, confidence limits or other causes, but it is questionable to attribute this to the project intervention.
Outcome 2, Indicator 4: # of certified tourism ventures that are supporting biodiversity criteria in the project sites.	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (d) 0	This target is on track. (a) 16 (b) 16 (c) 0 (d) 0	(a) 20 (b) 10 (c) 5 (d) 5	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 47 (b) 22 (c) 15 (d) 10	On track	MS	Homestays and CBT is more suited to this type of certification. However, the larger hotels and resorts may be less inclined and more challenging to certify in any meaningful way and yet they are likely to have the greatest influence on visitor numbers, types and activities. It
(a) Total (b) Homestay/ CBT (c) # Hotel/resorts (d) # tour operators		Outcome 2 Indicator 4: A total of 16 CBTs are certified and support biodiversity criteria in the project landscape. These CBTs have allocated funding to support wildlife conservation. It's important to note that the project is not working directly with each hotel/resort and tour operator. However, within September 2024, the project is set to collaborate with Civil society in Prachuap Khiri Khan, including the Tourism Business Association, CBT Association, and CRS club. This collaboration will provide an overview of the tourism business sector at the provincial level through a MoU or similar form. The project has already signed an MoU with the Tourism Business Association, Community Based Tourism Association, and CRS club in Prachuab Khiri Khan, of which hotels/resorts and tour operators are members. Name will be announced one they are official certified.						

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
								will be challenging to meet the EOP targets at this rate.

106.Output 2.1: Provincial, multi-sector sustainable tourism platforms strengthened and adopted strategic environmental and social assessment and biodiversity-based tourism strategy action plan created, supporting sustainable implementation of provincial plans and strategies

- The Consultant team carried out 4 consultation meetings during May to August 2024, focusing on the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Biodiversity-based Tourism Masterplan, and gender-responsive biodiversity-based tourism action plan which are being finalized. The report and plan will be finalized in Q1/2025.
- The Consultant conducted a survey of the role and attitude of Park Advisory Committee (PAC) and Steering Committee of Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center to understand their perspective and needs. Two consultation meetings with the target national parks have been carried out, PAC, and local stakeholders in the project area in Q3/2024 to enhance capacity on biodiversity tourism. The final report submitted on late August 2024.

107.Output 2.2: Visitor management plans and revenue generation models that improve METT scores are implemented at project sites.

- The consultant team conducted METT (version 4) evaluation with two national parks, of which Khao Sam Roi Yot National Parks and Kui Buri National Park in the first week of August 2024. National Park (NP) superintendent, NP staffs, and representatives of the PAC were involved in the evaluation. The score of Kuiburi National is 86 which is considerably higher than the last years. For METT score of Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park is 74 (considerably higher than last year). Therefore, the baseline score using METT version 3 which could not compare in score.

108.Output 2.3: Sustainable biodiversity-based tourism products and experiences developed and strengthened with local communities to raise engagement in biodiversity conservation and generate livelihood benefits, including for women and youth.

- A draft MoU between BEDO and local civil society/ tourism associations to support community enterprise in the project landscape has been developed.
- The Consultant working closely with community-based tourism groups and conservation groups in the project landscape conducted needs assessment, products and services of Biodiversity-based tourism in Q2-Q3/2024. The recommendation of products and services for BD Tourism will be finalize in Q4/2024.
- A three-day workshop on Biodiversity Tourism Products and Services development has been carried out in Q3/2024.
- FPIC established in two community who is Karean Ethnic group in Ban Preak Trakro, and Ban Pamak. Both communities accepted and want to engage with the MBT project.
- A participatory biodiversity conservation and threat reduction plan has been developed in August 2024. The final plan will be ready in Q4/2024.

Table 15 Progress Towards Results outcome 3

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Outcome 3: Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-based tourism across Thailand is supported by raised awareness, improved market access and knowledge management								
Outcome 3, Indicator 1: Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of tourism	Baseline to be determined	This target is on track.	Targets to be	As reported in 1 st PIR	Targets to be established in Y1	Not on Track	U	The KAP was included as an objective

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
industry, communities and tourists for the importance of biodiversity to tourism improved, as measured by the KAP survey score (see Annex 11f).	in Y1 through KAP	Based on the revision of project activities and workplan, which was approved by the Project Steering Committee in November 2023 and adjustment in March 2024. the hiring process of a consultant to conduct a study on KAP was initiated in the last quarter of 2023 and completed in early 2024. The study on KAP baseline target is continually conducted and anticipated to be ready by December.2024.	established in Y1	30/06/2024				assessment of changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices with a supporting budget. No baseline has been established and the current funds assigned to the KAP do not reflect the sort of qualitative and quantitative study envisaged in the Project Document.
Outcome 3, Indicator 2: # of biodiversity-based tourism products on Online Travel Agent platforms and in tour operator itineraries	0	This target is on track. Based on the revision of the Project's workplan approved by the Project Steering Committee in November 2023, the Project is developing five (5) biodiversity-based tourism products based on preliminary defined, which are expected to be launched in December 2024.	5	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	10	Not on Track	MU	MTR target was 5 and the 5 being developed will not be available until December 2024.
Outcome 3, Indicator 3: # best practices and lessons learned developed, disseminated and used including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of tourism	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0	This target is on track. (a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0	(a) 4 (b) 3 (c) 1	As reported in 1 st PIR 30/06/2024	(a) 9 (b) 8 (c) 1	Not on Track	U	The project is generating very useful and interesting learning experiences, but these cannot yet be called best practices or lessons learned.
(a) Total (b) Best practices and lessons learned developed and disseminated (c) Knowledge system established and operational		Based on the revision of the Project's workplan approved by the Project Steering Committee in November 2023, the Project started this activity in early 2024. The hiring process of KM Specialists was completed in May 2024. A consultant team with 8 experts is working on the Project's landscape, which will draft best practices in late Q3/2024 to Q1/2025.						

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		Since BEDO commenced the project in January 2023, the results of the mid-term implementation are anticipated to meet the target in December 2024. The project is developing website to share knowledge and best practice from the ground. The lessons learned from the project, including challenges, limitations, and constraints have prompted BEDO to develop a work plan for best practices and lessons learned in September 2024. Additionally, BEDO plans to organize a forum in Q4/2024 for experience-sharing with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, private sectors, community networks, and the tourism business sector, at both national and international levels.						

109. Output 3.1: Improved access to e-marketplaces for biodiversity-based tourism providers.

- The Consultant has carried out a feasible study to use an Online Travel Agent (OTAs) platform for community-based enterprise, hotel and resort in the project landscape. The findings were that the OTAs platform is not well-suited for community-based tourism and homestay groups because of the high transaction costs. Therefore, a free online platform such as a Facebook page, TikTok, QueQ application are more suitable for the local community groups. The final report will be available in Q4/2024.
- The consultant is developing a Virtual Tour for a biodiversity tourism route. The final version will be ready in Q1/2025.

110. Output 3.2: Targeted outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism delivered to tourism industry, Civil Society Organisations (CSO)s, and domestic and international tourists.

- A video production team filming biodiversity services and products in the project area during Q2-Q3/2024. The video documentary or the project landscape will be finalized in Q4/2024. Then it will be published through social media.
- The project has not carried out a KAP as a baseline.

111. Output 3.3: Knowledge exchange system established for the sharing of experiences between communities and PAs, and for replication and upscaling of best practices across Thailand.

- Project website has been developing in Q3/2024.
- Knowledge exchange through conference and forum is preparing for Q4/2024.

112. Output 3.4: M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management.

- Third Project Steering Committee has been conducted in Q1/2024.
- PIR report has been done in Q2/2024.
- METT scored has been updated in Q3/2024 for two target national parks.
- The consultant submitted SESP report and draft of Gender Action Plan in Q3/2024.

4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

113. The project has considerable internal strengths. BEDO is a very capable organization and the PMU has considerable intellectual and technical strengths with a good understanding of the strategic needs of the project. However, there are clearly issues militating against the project reaching its objective indicated by the weak reporting and low budget execution at the mid-term. The MTR identifies four barriers to the project achieving a successful outcome:

114. **Barrier 1: Implementation Agency and Execution Agency working relationship.** GEF projects, because of their transformational expectations, carry with them considerable uncertainty which does not sit well with the necessary bureaucratic and administrative needs of managing a small, medium or large grant. While the UNDP-GEF reporting requirements can sometimes feel cumbersome, there is a purpose behind them as it ensures the administrative-bureaucratic grant accountability with the possible need to change tactics, and even the strategy if necessary, in a fast-moving project environment. This combination of *risk* management and *uncertainty* management creates a dissonance between the need to get things done, the need to be flexible and innovative and the need for accountability to the GEF for the fund which it has provided.

115. Therefore, the UNDP-GEF reporting protocol, can appear un-necessarily burdensome on project management, however, it is the product of considerable experience in marrying accountability and adaptive management within the construct of a project gained from many years and projects. It is not ideal, but it is necessary.

116. GEF projects, by their very nature are expected to be innovative and they require strong, pragmatic, working partnership relations between Implementing and Executing Agencies, that is; each organization brings specific strengths to the project necessary to implement a fast-moving, short-term, transformational GEF project. For national government institutions to invest in building GEF project implementation capacity is hard because it is only needed intermittently and ordinarily it does not fit well within their existing modes of operation, human resources, M&E, etc.

117. The NIM approach while reasonable in terms of national ownership and building national capacity (although in the case of Thailand it is less of a justification because there are already existing, very adequate, national government capacities) does not efficiently allow the focusing of both the national government, and the UNDP-GEF's strengths on solving the inevitable challenges that arise in any GEF project. Arguably, joining these two organizations to focus on the project allows each organization to use its strengths in achieving the best results in an extremely short project timeframe.

118. Based upon the experience of the MTR Team in reviewing and evaluation a considerable number of GEF NIM projects⁴³, regardless of the capacities of the Implementing Partner, these projects do not perform as well as supported NIM projects for two reasons: firstly they struggle to come to terms with the reporting and M&E procedures required by the GEF because they are significantly different from their own, and secondly, they require specific capacities which will only ever be needed in a GEF project and therefore there is an element of redundancy in investing in these for the short period of the project.
119. **Barrier 2: A lack of overall technical coordination:** While the project design is of very high quality, there is an inherent assumption that everything will come together by the end of the project. This is a risky assumption and could have been avoided by the inclusion of a substantive Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). For instance, the various studies which are nearing completion at the midterm will need to be brought together into a cohesive strategic plan, technical oversight of the survey and consultation during these studies relies almost entirely upon the Consultants themselves⁴⁴, certain outputs (such as the KAP survey) have been overlooked and replaced by less powerful tools to support planning, etc. It is these aspects which have a cumulative effect over the life of the project and the military adage that *“no plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength”*⁴⁵ is the very reason that the GEF pursues an adaptive management approach to project implementation. This technical oversight and the need to comply with UNDP-GEF M&E and reporting protocols can place a considerable burden on the PMU and in particular, the PM.
120. **Barrier 3: Absence of Innovative Agency Coordination Platform:** With the complex institutional setting - vertically from the national level down to the provincial and lowest administrative levels, and horizontally with partnership of government, private stakeholders, and community enterprises, it is challenging for the project to respond to the needs of all stakeholders and convince all of them that they have mutual benefits; not only the economic development but also socio-environmental resilience. The existing sub-committees and working groups are cumbersome and discontinuous in bringing along all parties to achieve the desirable targets. The Project Document indicates the needs for the “Agency Coordination Platform” to be established. From MTR interview and meetings, the government is now investing in the development of Government 4.0, but no details of such development were available. Technologically, there are several IT Application platforms that can help establishing a real-time and responsive coordination by which all stakeholders can have common ground and overall picture of progress, including the target to be achieved.
121. **Barrier 4: Inadequate Result-based demonstration:** At the midterm of the project, it appears that most project activities are aimed at the strategic policy and planning in mainstreaming “BD-based Tourism”. All contracting services work on the standard, quality verification tools, and tourism promotion. The tourism products and services are identified. However, it is rather unclear if the prototype works in reality and whether all the inputs via GEF resources can fill the gap in initiating the prototype and leave the legacy to BEDO to continue. The remaining two years will be crucial to start demonstrating on the ground how to weave all the elements together and make the biodiversity-based Tourism happen in reality.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Table 16 MTR Ratings Project Implementation & Adaptive Management

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	MU	<p>The project has experienced significant delays in the first half and is struggling with the M&E and reporting. It is only now addressing these weaknesses in the implementation (e.g. by strengthening the PMU) and the UNDP support to the PMU needs to be increased to assist them with meeting the UNDP-GEF M&E and reporting procedures.</p> <p>Many of the activities are currently in progress, whereas the design expectation was that these would have been completed by the mid-term. There needs to be greater collaboration between Implementing Partner and UNDP CO to ensure that the GEF requirements are met, but the MTR recognizes that there are resource challenges to support this under the NIM arrangements and that the delays have affected aspects of the project such as the co-financing.</p> <p>The Implementing Partner is committed to the project and the PMU has a number of admirable strengths which allow the MTR the confidence to state that the project can still</p>

⁴³ Across a more than one GEF Agency.

⁴⁴ For instance, key informants at the NP and community levels clearly indicated that they felt that their voices had not been heard during the studies.

⁴⁵ Helmuth von Moltke, German Military Strategist.

	<p>achieve its expected outcomes and objective to a high standard if it makes some adjustments to the implementation. On a programmatic point of view, the adaptive management should also include UNDP comparative advantage in leveraging the project's demonstration and results to the global recognition, via accessing the available global funding and alignment with the global framework.</p> <p>However, the MTR cautions against rushing to deliver the remaining activities and outcomes at the expense of embedding the process and changes and ensuring that all the outputs are coordinated towards the objective.</p>
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4.3.1 Management Arrangements

4.3.1.1 UNDP Project Assurance & Oversight

122. It is evident that the UNDP CO has found it hard to provide the necessary level of oversight and project assurance expected of a UNDP-GEF project.
123. The full NIM approach to UNDP-GEF projects has, in the experience of the MTR Team, proved problematic across a range of different GEF programmes, countries and projects and indeed, GEF Agencies. The GEF appears to underestimate the complexity of these projects and the institutional costs (staff time, procurement, dialogues, problem solving, etc.) of an adaptive management approach to projects. GEF projects very often require a sophisticated collaboration between GEF Agency and Implementing Partner to address an adaptive challenge. Such a collaborative partnership has not been fully formulated in the Project Document and indeed, the NIM arrangements *per se* militate against such arrangements.
124. Therefore, the UNDP CO has not been able to exert sufficient influence over the project's implementation. In part due to the inadequacy of the GEF management fee to cover these administrative costs and in part due to a reluctance of the Implementing Partner to accept this support having accepted the responsibility of implementing the project. To be clear, this appears to be based upon a strong sense of responsibility and ownership of the project's outcomes.
125. That said, there is a need for closer, pro-active working relationship between the PMU and the UNDP CO. The UNDP CO has at times tried to provide this support, although it is limited through the NIM approach in what it can do to support, in areas such as procurement and a certain resistance from the Implementing Partner to accept this support based on the Partner's sense of having accepted the responsibility and seeing the job through. While this is a very admirable in many ways, it is necessary to develop a more pragmatic, closer and progressive working partnership where both entities can bring their unique strengths to bear in the project.
126. The UNDP CO should recognize the importance and opportunity of the MBT project. Currently it appears to be a standalone project within the CO portfolio, however, the project is in many ways cross-cutting and has relevance to other programmes in terms of governance, rural development and SDGs Localization, poverty alleviation, climate change and ecosystem resilience (water provisioning, soil conservation, coastal protection, etc.). The Programme Team Leader needs to review whether the project is part of UNDP-Thailand Country Programme and how it can be made relevant to other UNDP initiatives. UNDP needs to review if the Vertical Funding (GEF and other global funds) is one of the strategic priorities in leveraging the counterpart funds as complementary financing.
127. The strength of the project's design and the commitment of the Implementing Partner make this a very good opportunity to utilize the UNDP Biodiversity Finance Initiative⁴⁶ (Biofin) and the GEF Global Biodiversity Framework Fund⁴⁷. The project has stimulated considerable interest, possibly because of the use of market-based approaches to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience and the project design with its mix of policy and planning is a very good testing bed for the commitments of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Kunming-Montreal GBF) commitments which are incorporated into the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2030 – 2050). Critically, the Kunming-Montreal GBF requires countries to recognize that the ecosystem damage and subsequent loss of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience is an existential threat which cannot be isolated from climate change, social and economic development.

4.3.1.2 Implementing Partner

128. BEDO is the Implementing Partner. BEDO is a Public Organization under the MONRE. According to the Project Document, the Implementing Partner is responsible for executing the project. Specific tasks include:

⁴⁶ <https://www.biofin.org/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/global-biodiversity-framework-fund>

- Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner ensures project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
 - Risk management as outlined in the Project Document;
 - Procurement of goods and services, including human resources;
 - Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets;
 - Approving and signing the multiyear workplan;
 - Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
 - Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.
129. The senior Executives of BEDO were actively involved in the project's design and there is a very strong sense of national ownership of the project and its outcomes from the very highest level. BEDO has a clear institutional mandate for biodiversity-based tourism and a flexible structure and rules for managing new initiatives including a granting mechanism to support rural communities with community-based tourism. The project concept grew out of previous initiatives on biodiversity-based income generation with rural communities. BEDO has established a Project Management Unit (PMU) and senior Executives, while delegating organizational powers to the PMU take a close interest in the project, including through the PSC. There is a very strong commitment from BEDO to the project and the PMU has considerable internal strengths and organizational capacities although these do not always match with the M&E and reporting requirements imposed by GEF project. There is wide political and institutional support to the aims and objectives of the project.
130. The projects implementation arrangements are complex (see Fig 2), however, these only reflect existing bureaucratic and administrative organizational arrangements and appear to work well. BEDO itself is very well-placed to advocate for policy change in the MoT and at the provincial administration level (Prachuab Khirikhan) as well, therefore, BEDO is in the best position in promoting biodiversity-based tourism as the moderating agency between the national policy and driving agencies on the ground. However, it is clear that the PMU has found the implementation challenging and at this point in the project with only two years left for completion it is advisable that the BEDO and the PMU consider a number of changes to the implementation approach (e.g. greater support from the UNDP CO and broader technical coordination of the studies and outputs) in order to achieve the expected results.
131. The Project Document makes an unstated assumption (see section 4.1.1) that, the PM and PMU will be able to navigate the complex M&E and reporting requirements and retrain a strategic hold on the outputs in order to achieve the outcomes. This is risky because of the large number of studies and the risk that these cannot be pulled together into a coherent plan and integrated into the other outputs and outcomes. The MTR is concerned that, given the remaining time and volume of activities and outputs, there is a risk that the project will focus on outputs and lose the broader strategic vision. The MTR considers that the most effective way of addressing this vulnerability (section 4.2.2, barriers 1 and 2) is to engage a substantive CTA.
132. Institutionally, there is a gender balance within the UNDP CO and PMU and this appears to carry through to the PSC. BEDO already has considerable experience in working with women and women's groups through its existing programmes and this includes working with women in rural communities in developing sustainable biodiversity-based income generating opportunities and enterprises. However, whether this translates into ensuring there are adequate safeguards, checks and balances necessary for the policy and planning shifts that the project will bring is less clear. Certainly, the UNDP CO should have this capacity to support the project, however, this will need closer collaboration and efforts than appear to have taken place in the first half of the project (especially considering that the project will be rushing to finish the activities due to the earlier delays). The UNDP-GEF approach to gender balance and equality and the safeguarding protocols are very specific, as are the different party's tolerance of risk. These protocols are addressed through the Gender Action Plan providing *due diligence* cover and assurance to a level of the party which can tolerate the least risk. However, for the PMU to implement the action plan it will need close support and training. Recommendations A.1 and A.2 are designed to address this issue and reduce any risks.

4.3.1.3 Steering Committee

133. The SC comprises of a Project Executive representing ownership of the project and chairing the Committee represented by the Executive Director of BEDO (normally the Deputy-Director). The membership of the SC is of Individuals or groups representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project. Their primary function within the Project Steering Committee is to ensure the realization of project results

from the perspective of project beneficiaries. The Beneficiary representatives are: MONRE (Office of Perm-Sec), ONEP, DNP, DMCR, RFD, MOTs (Office of the Permanent Secretary), DOT, TAT, DASTA, MOI-CDD (Deputy Governor of PKK Province); PTT Plc., TRTA, ATTA, TEATA and TCBTIF.

134. The UNDP is represented on the SC as the Development Partner and is normally attended by the Resident Representative, Integrated Team Leader, Programme Analyst and RTA⁴⁸.
135. There have been three SC meetings⁴⁹ since the project's start up. The PSC appears to function effectively having made a number of strategic decisions (revision of the multi-year workplan to accelerate implementation, etc.) regarding project implementation.
136. The MTR notes that the most recent SC meeting was attended by 40 Members which reflects the complex project implementation structure, however, there was no civil society representation on the Committee. Civil Society representatives are at the Provincial Committee level. This raises an issue of the UNDP-GEF guidance on project SCs or Project Boards. They appear to serve a dual function as a project executive and a platform for participation. However, on this scale (forty Members), the costs and logistics of arranging such meetings will be considerable. Furthermore, in the event that a difficult decision must be made, the executive function is likely to be diminished with a larger membership unless there are very clear instructions on what constitutes a quorum and voting rules, which are not immediately clear from the Project Document.

4.3.2 Work planning

137. Initially the project made slow progress from the start in October 2022. The Inception Phase and Workshop were carried out before a PMU was fully staffed in the third quarter of 2023. The Inception workshop was conducted without the realization that necessary adjustment must be agreed due to the lagging time between project approval and implementation commencement that there were a number of changed circumstances. The workshop concluded with summary of the project originally design with no concrete review. The MTR presumes that there was insufficient understanding of GEF project management and UNDP oversight role regarding the adaptive management function of the Inception Phase.
138. All procurement activities are through the PMU and the government procurement procedures. The high value of equipment and some of the technical assistance (studies) procurement appear to have been challenging⁵⁰. There was a revision of the projects multi-year workplan⁵¹ to accelerate budget execution and project implementation.
139. Due to the delays the project now has a considerable amount of activities which will need to be carried out during the remaining half of the project. While the MTR believes the PMU is capable of this it should be noted that this creates vulnerabilities and risks to the project's outcomes. These include trading process for expedience and insufficient time for sequenced outputs to become familiar and imbedded amongst stakeholders.
140. Regular meetings between the PMU and UNDP CO appear to be helping increase the rate of implementation, but the PMU is still finding the GEF-UNDP procedures challenging. For instance, the use of the project's SRF is only now, at the mid-term of the project, being used to report on the status of the indicators in assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of work planning in the PIR. Both UNDP Programme Officers and PMU would benefit from additional training and mentoring in meeting these procedures.
141. The political situation in Thailand has also impacted upon the delivery rate due to the dissolution of Parliament and the associated government transition⁵².

4.3.3 Finance and co-finance

142. As noted already, budget execution has been slow and a budget and workplan revision was carried out in November 2023 in order to increase the rate of expenditure. The low budget burn rate can be attributed to the delay in putting a PMU in place, the political situation and government transition and procurement challenges. However, it would appear that the revised budget and workplan are now putting the project on track.

⁴⁸ Minutes of the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting of the Mainstreaming Biodiversity-based Tourism in Thailand to Support Sustainable Tourism Development (YR 20240), 28/03/2024.

⁴⁹ Ibid, Summary of consideration of the Project Steering Committee at the 1st meeting, 11/05/2022, Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Project Steering Committee of The Mainstreaming Biodiversity-based Tourism in Thailand to Support Sustainable Tourism Development Project, 10/11/2023.

⁵⁰ 1st PIR, June 2024.

⁵¹ Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Project Steering Committee of The Mainstreaming Biodiversity-based Tourism in Thailand to Support Sustainable Tourism Development Project, 10/11/2023

⁵² PIR, June 2024.

143. However, according to the June 2024 PIR, the cumulative delivery against the total GEF Grant, as of July 2024 is 12.08% (\$318,930 of the total GEF grant \$ 2,639,726) and the 2024 cumulative delivery at the time of the MTR (as of end August 2024) is 27.60% (\$ 357,130 of \$ 1,293,828).
144. Notably, when the current Workplan and Budget are considered against the committed fund, the delivery forecast in 2024 has to include a considerable amount of the Outcome 2 budget which is already committed to the various Contractual Services that are already underway and will be disbursed in Q3 and Q4. See the Projection of Project Delivery at the end 2024 in Table 16.
145. The PMU would benefit from further training on FACE reporting and financial management of the NIM Advance. The MTR observation is that the PMU does not include the planned budget into the request for the NIM advance, but only the specific installments that are to be disbursed. This affects the delivery projection that there are large amounts of the committed funds (in the Contracts to the Services Providers) that are not counted as financial delivery.
146. Notably, financial management and FACE reporting should be correlated to the project SRF - according to the SRF. In resolving the financial non-delivery, for instance, the PMU should be able to track the expenses of particular activities and adjust the financial plan to compensate the delay.
147. In all, the PMU and UNDP CO needs a comprehensive training on project management and financial planning and reporting, PMU as the implementing agents and UNDP CO as the project assurance.
148. At the time of the MTR there is not an adequate record of the co-financing, although the MTR understands that this partner contribution has been provided to the level of 5% (\$ 996,953 of the committed \$ 19,817,134 at CEO Endorsement stage, Annex 7). Possible reasons for this may be the low GEF budget execution.
149. A Micro Assessment⁵³ was carried out on the BEDO in 2021 which found no issues and rated the Financial Reporting and Monitoring risk as Low⁵⁴ and based upon this it is reasonable to state that BEDO has 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 and that this does not account for the low budget expenditure rate. The likely cause of this lies more in the earlier delays and misunderstanding by the PMU regarding the use of the Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE) to ensure a forward flow of funds from UNDP to the PMU. This could be avoided through closer collaboration between the UNDP CO and PMU to address challenges as they arise.

⁵³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Thailand, Micro Assessment Report Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (Public Organization), March 2021

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5

Table 17 Budget Execution

	Actual Year					
Component 1		YR 1 2023	YR 2 2024	YR 3 2025 ⁵⁵	YR 4 2026	Total
Outcome 1	Project Document	\$205,375	\$61,625	\$44,500	\$24,500	\$336,000
	Actual	\$6,477	\$222,500	\$66,074	\$68,272	\$363,323
	Variance	\$198,898	-\$160,875	-\$21,574	-\$43,772	-\$27,323
Component 2						
Outcome 2	Project Document	\$67,500	\$591,250	\$570,750	\$244,026	\$1,473,526
	Actual	\$13,811	\$760,419	\$293,681	\$309,306	\$1,377,217
	Variance	\$53,689	-\$169,169	\$277,069	-\$65,280	\$96,309
Component 3						
Outcome 3	Project Document	\$87,650	\$160,150	\$204,900	\$251,800	\$704,500
	Actual	\$3,800	\$277,855	\$241,779	\$250,052	\$773,486
	Variance	\$83,850	-\$117,705	-\$36,879	\$1,748	-\$68,986
Project Management						
	Project Document	\$29,925	\$32,925	\$29,925	\$32,925	\$125,700
	Actual	\$35,576	\$33,054	\$28,559	\$28,511	\$125,700
	Variance	-\$5,651	-\$129	\$1,366	\$4,414	\$0
Totals						
	Project Document	\$390,450	\$845,950	\$1,054,975	\$553,251	\$2,639,726
	Actual	\$59,664	\$1,293,828	\$630,093	\$656,141	\$2,639,726
	Variance	\$330,786	-\$447,878	\$424,882	-\$102,890	\$0

Budget Revision #1 approved by PSC in December 2023 (USD)						
Component	Year 1/ 2023	Year 2/ 2024	Year 3/ 2025 ⁵⁶	Year 4/ 2026	Total	Pro Doc Budget
Component 1	\$6,477	\$222,500	\$66,074	\$68,272.00	\$363,323	\$336,000
Component 2	\$13,811	\$760,419	\$293,681	\$309,306.00	\$1,377,217	\$1,473,526
Component 3	\$3,800	\$277,855	\$241,779	\$250,052	\$773,486.00	\$704,500
Component 4	\$35,576	33,054	28,559	28,511	\$125,700.00	\$125,700
Total	\$59,664	\$1,293,828	\$630,093	\$656,141	\$2,639,726	\$2,639,726
Expenditure 2023	\$ 56,875					
	Projection of Project Delivery in 2024					
Budget Allocation	Expenditure Q1	Expenditure Q2	Expenditure Q3 as of end August	Committed Budget Q3	Committed Budget Q4	Total Spending 2024
\$ 1,293,828	\$45,656	\$154,287	\$157,187	\$204,157	\$305,892	\$867,180
					MTR Expense	\$25,113

⁵⁵ Years 2025 and 2026 are forecast provided by the PIU

⁵⁶ Years 2025 and 2026 are forecast provided by the PIU

				UNDP Oversight	Spot Check	\$2,300
Delivery Projection						\$894,593
2024 Delivery Rate	69.14%					
Project Delivery @ 2024 year end	36.04%					
Risks Assumption on the Delivery						
1. All the contractors deliver satisfactory outputs by the due date in Q3 and Q4.						
2. The International Workshop is succeeded as planned in Q4. (Total Budget = \$ 123,060)						
3. UNDP provide the regular training on FACE reporting and financial management to reduce cost and time in achieving the target spending on time.						
4. PMU and UNDP pro-actively monitor on financial planning and adaptive management in achieving the remaining 64% delivery target.						

4.3.4 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

150. The Project Document provides a standard, budgeted UNDP-GEF M&E framework⁵⁷. As stated in section 4.1.2, the project's SRF, the primary M&E tool, provides a very reasonable monitoring framework. However, the current project-level monitoring and evaluation is inadequate and it would appear that the PMU does not completely understand the GEF M&E approach and the use of the indicators and targets in the SRF and their importance in adaptive management. This is not unusual in GEF projects and is part of the challenge of GEF NIM projects *per se*, as they often require the adoption of quite different M&E approaches to those of the Implementing Partner. Ideally, there should be considerable orientation and training during the Inception Phase of the project, however, this is not reflected in the GEF Agency resources and in many instances, the Inception Phase which provides a significant opportunity in the project cycle is not utilized to good effect for orientation and training in the UNDP-GEF M&E procedures. This appears to be the case in this instance, because the PMU was not in place until after the Inception Report was produced suggesting that the UNDP CO was not effectively exercising its project assurance role.

151. The UNDP and Implementing Partner have tried to address this with the recent (2024) appointment of a Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer to the PMU which is a very positive move. But, it is unreasonable to expect one individual to become fully conversant with the UNDP-GEF project M&E and reporting requirements without significant investment in training and orientation. The M&E requirements are considerable and many of the GEF tools (e.g. METTs) and the Core Indicators, have little relevance at the country and project level and completing them can be extremely time consuming. Clearly, they are important to the GEF and this relevance needs to be explained to the PMU alongside the means to complete them in a timely manner.

152. The project has produced one PIR (June 2024) and this was only finalized after the MTR field mission. The PMU PIR and UNDP CO assessments of progress are somewhat optimistic with many indicators being assessed as on track while the MTR assesses⁵⁸ them as not being on track. Although the activities are underway to complete the targets the results will only be available at the end of 2024 and early 2025 whilst the expectations of the SRF was that they would be completed by the MTR.

153. The addition of the Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer to the PMU is a positive step in addressing this, however, it is unreasonable to expect this position to become confident with the intricacies of UNDP-GEF Results-based Management procedures without significant support and mentoring from the UNDP CO and ordinarily, a CTA would be ideal to support this position.

154. The Project Document includes a very detailed Gender Action Plan⁵⁹ with twenty-one indicators. These need to be regularly monitored and submitted with the PIR⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Project Document, pp. 128 – 136, Annex 4, p. 77, Table 14

⁵⁸ The MTR must assess on the current status to rate (on track/ not on track or 6-point ratings) project criteria and cannot use a forecast to provide these assessments.

⁵⁹ Project Document, Annex 9b, Gender Mainstreaming Plan, Report to UNDP

⁶⁰ A Draft SESP - Gender (Thai v.) was submitted with the June 2024 PIR but the English version will be provided after finalization of each report. This may contain the indicators.

4.3.5 Stakeholder engagement

155. The Project Document conducted a comprehensive stakeholder analysis and provided a stakeholder engagement plan⁶¹ (Project Document, Annex 8). This needs to be read in conjunction with the SESP, the Gender Action Plan (Project Document, Annex 9b) and seeking Free and Prior Informed Consent before commencing project activities which might affect certain groups of stakeholders and beneficiaries (e.g. indigenous minorities, women's groups, etc.).
156. Institutionally, there is very clear and enthusiastic engagement by stakeholders. In the project area, stakeholder engagement and support appear to have benefited from the activities of the project's Field Coordinator. However, during the field mission key informant interviews, protected areas staff and local community members indicated that their views did not appear to have been taken on board by the Consultants carrying out the surveys, especially related to the Master Planning. The issue appears, at least in part, to have been due to the nature of the questionnaires and the way that information was gathered. It would be important for the PMU to follow up on this and the MTR considers that this might have been avoided if the project had a CTA. In addition, the IT Application such as, Traffi Fondue, may help mitigating the gaps of inclusivity of key stakeholders and public response.
157. There are at least two different indigenous minorities in the project area, engagement of these communities should be clearly preceded by ensuring that there is FPIC⁶². Currently, a local NGO (RaK Thai) is Contracted to do the FPIC for the 2 indigenous communities. The MTR is concerned that the delivery of this job will be restricted to the guidelines and not the required FPIC process when the project starts demonstrating activities such as the Biodiversity Journey at which point these communities will be at their most vulnerable.
158. Institutionally, the project's objective is well-supported. There is, both institutionally and individually, a growing awareness of the need to build socio-ecosystem resilience into the planning process. Stochastic events made more extreme by climate change, issues such as the impact of invasive species and the global Covid-19 pandemic have brought home to stakeholders the vulnerability of the country's tourism sector and the trade-offs, risks and hazards of over-reliance on high-volume and low-value tourism. Overall, the MTR formed the impression that there is broad support to look for new ways to develop the tourism sector while avoiding the harm which accompanies mass tourism. This appears to be across all stakeholders and would appear to include local communities eager to avoid the social harms that can accompany mass tourism and looking for ways to sustainably utilize their natural and cultural resources.
159. An important facet of this project would be to capitalize on the opportunity provided by what is a well-designed project and exploit the process, as well as the outputs, through embracing the UNDP-GEF SESP and incorporating them into their own operational procedures and protocols.

4.3.6 Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

160. The Project Document contains a very detailed and professional SESP which clearly spells out the project's responsibilities. If anything, it may be too detailed in terms of the project resources available to carry it out.
161. The GEF is placing increasing importance on the SESP recognizing that this is not just a duty of care, but that inequalities in access to resources, services and opportunities are an integral part of the root causes of biodiversity loss. However, there are likely different ways in which the project partners regard these risks. There is nothing to suggest to the MTR that there are any serious social or environmental risks manifesting in the project at the moment, however, as the Project Document makes clear, those risks are present. The UNDP and GEF require that these risks are kept under constant surveillance through the processes and activities described in the Project Document.
162. The project updated the project risk in the UNDP offline template⁶³, which was used to inform the Project Board in the second (10 /11/2023) and third (28/03/2024) PSC meetings and registered them in the Quantum+. From now on, the project will use only the GEF Risk Template to monitor the project risk to avoid confusion⁶⁴. The project (PMU and UNDP) will need to become more proactive in monitoring these risks. For instance, the Risk Log should be updated to state *how the "Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) approach will be integrated and apply in the landscape tourism planning approach and processes in Component 2 to avoid and prevent potential social and environmental impacts linked to development and implementation of tourism plans for the project landscape"*⁶⁵.

⁶¹ Project Document, p. 61, Table 13

⁶² Project Document, Annex 11f, pp. 9 – 18 provides a comprehensive table and of particular note are the concerns listed there.

⁶³ GEF risk template and UNDP guidance March 2024_BEDP 2024 PIR

⁶⁴ Comments by UNDP CO on 3rd Draft MTR Report.

⁶⁵ Risk 1 in Project Document, Stakeholder Risk in risk template.

163. The two indigenous minorities in the project area are more vulnerable to negative effects of tourism and the project has a duty of care to carry out *due diligence* and ensure that the is Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) before any activities take place in or around their communities. The Project Document states that: *“a comprehensive FPIC process will be mainstreamed in the assessment and detailed planning of demonstration site activities further to the FPIC process conducted during the PPG and informed by the guidance provided in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 8). An Indigenous Peoples Plan will be developed at the start of implementation with an FPIC process to provide the necessary safeguarding measures for the above-mentioned ethnic minority community”*⁶⁶. The PMU must actively pursue and develop these tools prior to activities taking place to address these vulnerabilities in the project. However, this is not reflected in the project’s Risk Register – the 2024 Q2 Progress Report records that the *“project also developed a FPIC guideline for ethnic groups involved in mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism to ensure the inclusivity in tourism development”*⁶⁷, but this is not reflected in the 2024 PIR or Risk Register at the time of the MTR⁶⁸.
164. The SES, especially the FPIC appears to being addressed through the Contracting of an NGO, “Rak Thai”, to develop guidelines for FPIC. However, the social and environmental monitoring throughout the project’s implementation is an important aspect of the project assurance to the GEF and this does not appear to be covered by the Contracting parties.
165. There is confusion between UNDP and the PMU with regards the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). The Project Document requires the PMU to develop a GRM based upon the “Guidance Note UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES) Stakeholder Engagement Supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms”⁶⁹, key principles of which the project will adhere to are:
1. Legitimate: enabling trust from the stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and being accountable for the fair conduct of grievance processes.
 2. Accessible: being known to all stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and providing adequate assistance for those who may face particular barriers to access.
 3. Predictable: providing a clear and known procedure with an indicative timeframe for each stage, and clarity on the types of process and outcome available and means of monitoring implementation.
 4. Equitable: seeking to ensure that aggrieved parties have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise necessary to engage in a grievance process on fair, informed and respectful terms
 5. Transparent: keeping parties to a grievance informed about its progress, and providing sufficient information about the mechanism’s performance to build confidence in its effectiveness and meet any public interest at stake.
 6. Rights compatible: these processes are generally more successful when all parties agree that outcomes are consistent with applicable national and internationally recognized rights.
 7. Enabling continuous learning: drawing on relevant measures to identify lessons for improving the mechanism and preventing future grievances and harms.
 8. Based on engagement and dialogue: consulting the stakeholder groups for whose use they are
 9. intended on their design and performance, and focusing on dialogue as the means to address and resolve grievances.
166. The UNDP has worked with BEDO to analyze the government GRM Grievance Centre (Damrongtham Center⁷⁰) and UNDP concluded that it was not sufficient to meet the UNDP-GEF criteria due to the different perceptions in the template and questions. Whereas the PMU argues that there is already an existing official government GRM which provides a free and transparent means for Citizens to register and raise grievances through existing democratic channels.
167. Arguably, it would be sensible to use any existing formally recognized GRM however, if it does not meet the criteria set out in the Project Document then the project remains vulnerable. It is concerning that this has not been resolved and quite apart from addressing the vulnerabilities in the current project it will need to be sorted out because the GEF and all GEF Agencies now require an effective and transparent GRM. The

⁶⁶ Project Document, p. 140, Risk 2.

⁶⁷ 2024 Q2 Progress Report, p. 11

⁶⁸ The MTR understands that this has since been updated.

⁶⁹ Project Document, p. 59

⁷⁰ www.hama.dopa.go.th

MTR was unable to make a comparison between the two in order to provide a justification for whichever system is used. Therefore, the most important thing should be to settle on a GRM and then ensure that grievances are responded to transparently, effectively and recorded in the project's reporting procedures. Investing in this now will have benefits beyond this project's lifetime.

4.3.6 Reporting

168. GEF projects, because of their transformational expectations, carry with them considerable uncertainty which does not sit well with the necessary bureaucratic and administrative needs of managing a small, medium or large grant. While the UNDP-GEF reporting requirements can sometimes feel cumbersome, there is a purpose behind them as it ensures the administrative-bureaucratic grant accountability with the need to change tactics and even strategy in a fast-moving environment. This combination of risk management and uncertainty management creates a dissonance between the need to get things done, the need to be flexible and innovative and the need for accountability to the GEF for the fund which it has provided.
169. The UNDP-GEF reporting protocol, can appear un-necessarily burdensome on project management, however, it is the product of considerable experience in marrying accountability and adaptive management within the construct of a project gained from many years and projects. It is not ideal, but it is a necessary requirement of the GEF fund.
170. Currently, the project reporting is below what should be expected from a UNDP-GEF project. The project's Inception Report was produced before the PMU was fully in place and in common with the Quarterly Progress Reports, tends to restate the project objective, outcomes and outputs rather than provide the necessary data, analysis and adaptive management. For instance, the first PIR was being developed at the time of the MTR and was only available as a reviewed document post the MTR field mission. The PMU should recognize these important points in the project cycle management and ensure that these reports are recording activities and issues and submitted in a timely way to make the project's implementation more efficient and risk free.
171. The PSC meets twice annually. In the case of a fast-moving and complex GEF project there needs to be more active communication through the Quarterly Reports, PIR and management responses with follow-up support to navigate through the UNDP-GEF procedures if the project is to achieve its outcomes and objective in the remaining time.

4.3.7 Communications & Knowledge Management

172. Communications at the national level between government institutions is good (in the sense that project partners have a good understanding of the projects aims, they appear to have a shared concern regarding the issues surrounding the tourism sector and resilience and there is considerable support for the project's objectives suggesting that there is regular contact between project partners) and there is apparent active participation in the shared project activities.
173. However, the project has not generated enough experience yet to be producing knowledge products due to the delays in implementing activities. The appointment of a Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer to the PMU in early 2024 is a positive development by the project.
174. There appears to be a misunderstanding regarding the KAP. The Project Document budget assigns \$ 44,800 to the KAP⁷¹, however, the MTR does not feel that the project fully understands the nature of a KAP which is a very sophisticated and progressive approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of changes in stakeholder's perceptions. A KAP is a formalized approach to understanding and quantifying behavioral changes. It is not clear to the MTR whether the project is undertaking a qualified KAP survey.
175. The knowledge management and promotion of biodiversity tourism needs to be handled very sensitively. Promotion should be on a demonstration basis in sharing experiences and advice and a "safe space" to develop the concept before it is promoted with the attendant risk that it is overwhelmed by mass tourism and any "bad players" misrepresenting damaging tourism as biodiversity-friendly products or exploiting inexperienced local communities, hence, the need for clear safeguarding and FPIC rules.

4.4 Sustainability

Table 18 MTR Ratings for Sustainability

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
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⁷¹ Community Engagement Expert to complete KAP survey and KM plan during project start and at TE under Output 3.4 (2 surveys * 64 days * \$350 = \$44,800)

Sustainability	ML	The project results are all considered moderately sustainable in terms of the financial, socio-economic, institutional framework and governance and environmental criteria. However, risk monitoring within the project needs to be strengthened with more attention to the SESP, FPIC and ensuring that the indigenous minorities within the project area are integrated into the project activities and outcomes in a way that ensures their internal controls over their resources, cultural resources and identity and that they are capacitated to be able to negotiate with external interests in a secure and level market place.
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176. Sustainability is assessed based on the following four criteria: financial risks to sustainability, socio-economic sustainability, institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability and environmental risks to sustainability.

4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

177. Moderately Likely: The project is not fully developed yet and therefore the MTR is cautious about forecasting sustainability until outputs such as the Master Plan, etc., have been developed. The incorporation of biodiversity-based tourism into institutional frameworks and plans is an important step in indicating financial sustainability. Furthermore, the developments are generally market-based and there is likely to be an increase in investment in sustainably managing ecosystem goods and services through mitigation and adaptation to climate change and the Kunming-Montreal GBF which will underpin the project outcomes.

178. Biodiversity-based- Tourism, based on the feedback from key informants, appears to have captured the interest and support from the relevant ministries at the policy level (e.g. Tourism, National parks, and provincial administration) which fits with the overall market-based approach towards conservation. Additionally, BEDO is interested and well-practiced in leveraging support from private partners as well as community-based organization and local government. However, at the time of MTR, due to the delays in developing the project, the viability of Biodiversity-based Tourism has not been demonstrated yet). PTT already support the Learning Center of the estuary, and the project should leverage the function of the Learning Center to ensure the quality of the niche market of Biodiversity-based-based Tourism.

179. With its mandate and experience, BEDO's provides considerable opportunities to enlarge the partnership with government and private sector in securing financial support.

180. If BEDO and UNDP utilize each party's comparative advantage, BEDO, with government and local partners, can, for example, establish the key performance indicators in promoting the Biodiversity-based Tourism with the partner agencies. On the international front, UNDP can help accessing support from bilateral and global funds on Biodiversity-based Tourism.

181. The project document, referred to the UNDP-BIOFIN as a financial mechanism. However, at the MTR time, there is no active initiation with the BIOFIN. UNDP and BEDO should start investigating the applicable financial mechanism, taking advantage of BIOFIN success on other projects in Thailand. From the site visit, there was potential landscape of the privately owned land being abandoned and prone to biodiversity and ecosystem function losses and damage.

182. A specific, and cross-cutting, vulnerability will be the transitional period between the end of the project and the financial adoption of the Master Plan through the provincial planning cycle (which will be one year after the end of the GEF project). Therefore, a legacy plan to bridge this gap should be developed by the PMU, with support of the UNDP CO.

4.4.2 Socio-economic to sustainability

183. Moderately Likely: The project design is of very high quality with a very good understanding of how to integrate institutional aspects, policy and regulatory framework formulation and market-based measures into the sustainable use of biodiversity resources providing a very strong strategic approach which appears to be very well understood by the Implementing Partner (BEDO) which, as an organization, already has a proven track record in market-based approaches and community support.

184. There appear to be no political risks; on the contrary, Biodiversity-based Tourism is the subject of interest by all political parties – the MTR has repeatedly stated that these market-based approaches are broadly accepted and supported⁷². However, the frequent reshuffling of the government officials, especially the governor of the province at the demonstration site does raise concerns, but these are largely outside the project's sphere of influence. Democratic processes involving a change of positions might lengthen the decision-making process in continuation after the project ends, and on budget preparation for

⁷² The MTR does not evaluate the efficacy and risks associated with market-based approaches to biodiversity conservation

sustainability, however, this is a reality faced by every project. The project outcomes depend largely on the demonstration of the viability of Biodiversity-based Tourism, which is why the MTR places considerable emphasis on the project's implementation rate. Once demonstrated, government and local stakeholders are very likely to select resilience, security and control over future development over disruptive, rapid and uncertain change. The MTR withdraws from assessing the social risks, as stated in other section on SESP this depends largely on the risk monitoring and mitigation plan and actions, which have not been updated.

185. At the provincial administration, the vice governor addressed the budgeting issue and assigned the provincial MONRE to prepare for the annual budgeting beyond the project lifetime. Key concern is that for the government agencies, the annual budgeting process is a two-year undertaking. The MTR repeatedly raises the issue of delivery and the UNDP CO in ensuring that this stays on track which creates considerable uncertainty.

186. The newly appointed Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer is critical to this⁷³. As mentioned in the report, UNDP need to work closely with the PMU in equipping the tools and capacity of the M&E staff in transforming the lessons to knowledge of BEDO.

4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

187. Moderately Likely: The project objectives are vertically and horizontally well-supported within the government structures and organization and the BEDO is very effective in integrating, networking and participation within government, civil society and the private sector. There is significant support at the provincial level and overall support to find a "new model" of development which supports socio-ecosystem resilience. However, the governance risks, at least from the perspective of the GEF and UNDP need to be carefully considered in the second half of the project.

188. UNDP and BEDO should start developing a legacy plan directly after the MTR. The GEF project provides a very good governance structure, monitoring mechanism and knowledge management to support this process of establishing the legacy of BEDO which appears well-supported by the Director and Deputy Director during a meeting with the MTR.

189. BEDO will need to lead this process, but they appear very capable of doing this and coordinating other stakeholders. Currently, there appears to be strong support nationally and provincially and an effective M&E and risk management should track this in the remaining project lifetime.

4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

190. Likely: The project strategy, objective and outcomes are intended to provide a systemic approach to socio-economic development and ecosystem resilience and offers a workable and economically viable alternative to the high volume, low value, mass tourism which has characterized the tourism sector in Thailand until now.

191. Impacts from the extreme weather may undermine the results in terms of changing landscape and habitats of the biodiversity species or having wider effects on the tourism sector *per se*. Therefore, the project should not be a standalone effort, but integrated as part of the UNDP portfolio and Thailand Country Programme of the UN Partnership Framework in Thailand. Currently there is little evidence of this sort of integrated and strategic programmatic approach between UNDP and BEDO.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

192. The MBT project is well-designed and the Project Document sets out a clear strategic pathway of changes to the policy, regulatory and institutional framework necessary to mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector providing both biodiversity and ecosystem benefits and creating a high value and low volume sustainable tourism product.

193. Furthermore, it provides a good-quality and comprehensive M&E framework for measuring performance and impact of the intervention as well as monitoring the risks to the project implementation and its outcomes and in particular, monitoring any plausible social and environmental risks which might arise as a result of the project's intervention.

194. The project strategy and objectives are closely aligned with the national policy direction and objectives including using market-based approaches and building social and environmental resilience into the tourism

⁷³ The MTR flags this issue of the pivotal role of this position – it is an important component of the project and this should be reflected in the resources and time allocation to this position. An alternative would be to increase the headcount in the PMU. These issues were a design weakness and a failure to identify them during the Inception Phase.

sector as well as a number of goals and targets contained in the Kunming-Montreal GBF and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

195. Notwithstanding the earlier delays which have lost time there are four barriers to the project achieving its outcome:

196. **Barrier 1: Implementation Agency and Execution Agency working relationship.** GEF projects, because of their transformational expectations, carry with them considerable uncertainty which does not sit well with the necessary bureaucratic and administrative needs of managing a small, medium or large grant. The NIM approach while reasonable in terms of national ownership and building national capacity does not efficiently allow the focusing of both the national government, and the UNDP-GEF's strengths on solving the inevitable challenges that arise in any GEF project. Arguably, joining these two organizations to focus on the project allows each organization to use its strengths in achieving the best results in an extremely short project timeframe.

197. **Barrier 2: A lack of overall technical coordination:** While the project design is of very high quality, there is an inherent assumption that everything will come together by the end of the project. This is a risky assumption and could have been avoided by the inclusion of a substantive Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). This technical oversight and the need to comply with UNDP-GEF M&E and reporting protocols can place a considerable burden on the PMU and in particular, the PM.

198. **Barrier 3: Absence of Innovative Agency Coordination Platform:** With the complex institutional setting - vertically from the national level down to the provincial and lowest administrative levels, and horizontally with partnership of government, private stakeholders, and community enterprises, it is challenging for the project to respond to the needs of all stakeholders and convince all of them that they have mutual benefits; not only the economic development but also socio-environmental resilience. The existing sub-committees and working groups are cumbersome and discontinuous in bringing along all parties to achieve the desirable targets. The Project Document indicates the needs for the "Agency Coordination Platform" to be established.

199. **Barrier 4: Inadequate Result-based demonstration:** At the midterm of the project, it appears that most project activities are aimed at the strategic policy and planning in mainstreaming "Biodiversity-based Tourism". All contracting services work on the standard, quality verification tools, and tourism promotion. The tourism products and services are identified. However, it is rather unclear if the prototype works and whether all the inputs via GEF resources can fill the gap in initiating the prototype and leave the legacy to BEDO to continue. The remaining two years will be crucial to start demonstrating on the ground how to weave all the elements together and make the biodiversity-based Tourism happen.

200. **Specifically, the MTR finds:**

Project design, strategy and M&E framework.

- The MBT project is well-designed and the Project Document sets out a clear strategic pathway of changes to the policy, regulatory and institutional framework necessary to mainstream biodiversity into the tourism sector with is a good-quality and comprehensive M&E framework for measuring performance and impact of the intervention
- The project strategy and objectives are closely aligned with the national policy direction and objectives including using market-based approaches and building social and environmental resilience into the tourism sector as well as a number of goals and targets contained in the Kunming-Montreal GBF and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

Implementation.

- The project experienced a number of delays following its startup and although the project has taken a number of steps, including a workplan and budget revision, to accelerate the delivery of outputs, at the midterm the project is not on track. The low budget burn rate can be attributed to the delay in putting a PMU in place, the political situation and government transition and procurement challenges. According to the June 2024 PIR, the cumulative delivery against the total GEF Grant, as of July 2024 is 12.08% (\$318,930 of the total GEF grant \$ 2,639,726) and the 2024 cumulative delivery at the time of the MTR (as of end August 2024) is 27.60% (\$ 357,130 of \$ 1,293,828).
- When the current Workplan and Budget are considered against the committed fund, the delivery forecast in 2024 has to include a considerable amount of the Outcome 2 budget which is already committed to the various Contractual Services that are already underway and will be disbursed in Q3 and Q4.

- At the time of the MTR there is an adequate record of the co-financing, although the MTR understands that this partner contribution has only provided to the level of 5% (\$ 996,953 of the committed \$ 19,817,134 at CEO Endorsement stage). Possible reasons for this may be the low GEF budget execution.
- The PMU has considerable internal strengths and there is a very clear commitment and ownership by BEDO of the project and its outcomes. However, it is also clear that the PMU has struggled to meet the UNDP GEF M&E and reporting requirements.
- UNDP project assurance has been insufficient to address these challenges although there are some positive signs that steps are being taken by UNDP and the Implementing Partner to accelerate implementation.
- The rate of budget execution is low, but an acceleration plan is in place and expenditure is expected to increase by the end of this year.

Risks and vulnerabilities.

- The project is vulnerable to the same risks identified during the project preparation as well as making it difficult for project Partners and the MTR to precisely understand what the project's status with is regard to the delivery of expected results.
- With only two years remaining before the scheduled close of the project the accelerated budget expenditure creates a new risk that expedience and the delivery of outputs diminishes the process and achieving the expected outcomes and objective.
- Due to the nature of the project, tourism, rural communities, women in the economic sphere and indigenous minorities, there are possible, but significant, social and environmental risks. These have been correctly identified in the Project Document. It is very important that these risks are carefully monitored and that sufficient safeguards are developed and implemented, especially in relation to the ethnic minorities and the tourism developments, including ensuring that there is a clear FPIC.
- The project strategy is supported by a thorough and comprehensive Social and Environmental Screening Process (SESP). The Project Document identified gender inequalities and disparities⁷⁴ such as un-equal childcare roles affecting access to employment, wage disparities, over-reliance on the informal sector and low job security and welfare and noted that these disparities are further exacerbated for ethnic minority women, women migrants, and women living in border areas, who are discriminated against and have unequal access to resources and social services.
- The gender analysis also identified a lack of gender awareness amongst the targeted communities and a "startling" gender inequality in these communities especially in relation to access to benefits.
- BEDO already has considerable experience in working with women and women's groups through its existing programmes and this includes working with women in rural communities in developing sustainable biodiversity-based income generating opportunities and enterprises. However, whether this translates into ensuring there are adequate safeguards, checks and balances necessary for the policy and planning shifts that the project will bring is less clear. A comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Plan (Annex 9b, Project Document) was prepared with a detailed Gender Action Plan which recommended an annual Gender Programme Auditing on each of the three project Components and a comprehensive M&E plan including 21 activities (5 – 10 - 6 per Component). The PMU is responsible for ensuring these are carried out and the UNDP CO is responsible for ensuring that this happens and providing sufficient support to this process.

Progress towards results.

- At the midterm the progress towards results is worryingly behind schedule. However, the Implementing Partner and UNDP have taken a number of corrective actions. Most of the expected outputs are still under development meaning that the MTR cannot forecast the success and quality of the outputs. However, BEDO's experience and capacities in market-based biodiversity conservation mechanisms, its expert understanding of the strategic aspects of the project design and the sector *per se* alongside the clear commitment and ownership by BEDO, give the MTR a degree of confidence that the project can achieve its outcomes and objectives to a high quality within the remaining project timeframe.

Corrective actions to achieve the outcomes and objective.

⁷⁴ Project Document, pp. 65 - 67

- The PMU already has considerable strengths, but the MTR believes there is a very strong case to provide additional support to the PMU in recognition of the very many challenges a GEF project creates and that this would allow each party to capitalize on their strengths in implementing the project to a successful conclusion. Appointing a substantive Chief Technical Adviser (with UNDP-GEF project experience) on a part-time basis would be one way of achieving this without going down the supported NIM route.
- The UNDP CO should have the capacity to support the project, however, this will need closer collaboration and efforts than appear to have taken place in the first half of the project. The UNDP-GEF approach to gender balance and equality and the safeguarding protocols are very specific, as are the different party's tolerance of risk. These protocols are addressed through the Gender Action Plan providing due diligence cover and assurance to a level of the party which can tolerate the least risk. The PMU will need close support and training from the UNDP CO to implement the action plan it.

201. Finally, the UNDP-GEF reporting protocol, can appear un-necessarily burdensome on project management, but it is the product of considerable experience in marrying accountability and adaptive management within the construct of a project gained from many years and projects. It is not ideal, but it is a necessary requirement of the GEF fund. Ideally, the MTR would recommend that the project is moved to a Supported NIM in recognition of the strengths of each organization and that through a close partnership (supported NIM) both organizations could focus their different strengths together in order to achieve a very high-quality project outcome and the best possible results at the Terminal Evaluation. However, moving from full NIM to supported NIM is a time-consuming process and ideologically the GEF appears to resist it⁷⁵. The PMU already has many strengths, but the MTR believes there is a very strong case to provide additional support to the PMU in recognition of the challenges a GEF project creates and that this would allow each party to capitalize on their strengths in implementing the project to a successful conclusion. Appointing a substantive Chief Technical Adviser (with UNDP-GEF project experience) on a part-time basis would be one way of achieving this without going down the supported NIM route.

202. The MTR provides a number of recommendations it considers necessary for the project to enact in order to complete the project and to reduce any risks resulting, especially those which might arise due to the earlier lost implementation time.

203. Recommendations A.1 to D.3 are targeted at one or more of the four specific barriers identified by the MTR. Barriers D.4 and D.5 are addressing weaknesses in the principal M&E tool, the SRF, and are made in order to make life easier for the M&E and also provide greater accuracy in the indicator fit to the outcome.

⁷⁵ The MTR experience of six GEF projects (GEF & Adaptation Fund) in the last three years have concluded that NIM is extremely challenging and all six had either switched to supporting NIM or finding other complex mutually agreed solutions to provide more comprehensive UNDP support to the PMU.

5.2 Recommendations

Table 19 Recommendations

Rec #	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Project implementation		
A.1	UNDP CO to provide training and mentoring on the UNDP-GEF results-based monitoring to the PMU , in particular the recently appointed Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer. Ensure training includes a gender perspective to track and report on gender-related outcomes and impacts. This should include an orientation and development of a project cycle reporting periods chart for the PMU to follow. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 1</u>	UNDP CO	Immediate
A.2	Engage a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) to bridge the gap between the PMU's skills and the specificities of the UNDP-GEF results-based management requirements. A CTA would be a "quick win" solution to provide coverage of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Monitoring & Knowledge Management Officer UNDP-GEF and improve the M&E and reporting • Ensure that the SES and Safeguarding vulnerabilities of the project are addressed • Support the PMU in bringing together all of the outputs into coherent outcomes <u>Addresses MTR Barriers 1, 2 & 4</u>	BEDO, PMU & SC	Immediate
D.3	Make a qualified decision on the project GRM. The MTR is not able to assess the relative merits of the two systems and rule on one or the other. However, the project is vulnerable if it does not have a transparent system in place through which grievances can be registered and addressed in a transparent way. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 1</u>	UNDP & PMU	Immediate
B	Category 2: Operational		
B.1	Prepare a Legacy Plan to bridge the gap between the end of the GEF-funded project and the provincial government planning cycle (approximately one year between 2026 and 2027) to ensure that the project outputs, particularly the Master Plan, are included in the provincial planning tools and financing instruments. Ensure that the Legacy Plan includes provisions for sustaining gender-sensitive and ethnic minority's outcomes, such as integrating women's needs and perspectives into the provincial planning tools and financing instruments. <u>Addresses MTR Barriers 3 & 4</u>	PMU	Q2 2026
C	Category 3: Financial		
C.1	Ensure there is sufficient support and resources for the recently appointed Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer and if necessary elevate the position. It is unreasonable to expect this position to become confident with the intricacies of UNDP-GEF Results-based Management procedures without significant support and mentoring by the UNDP CO. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 2</u>	PMU	Immediate
D	Category 4: Technical		
D.1	PMU to organise a "mock up" of the biodiversity route within the project area as a demonstration. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate to high-level decision-makers, important players and partners in the tourism sector and donor agencies and country representatives (e.g. Embassy staff, etc.) the Thai Biodiversity Product. The exercise should develop a broad support as well as developing a shared vision for Thailand and an understanding of each organisations role in how biodiversity can support sustainable development and socio-ecosystem resilience. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 4</u>	PMU, UNDP to support	Quarter 2 2026

D.2	Establish an Agency Coordination Platform. The existing sub-committees and working groups are cumbersome and discontinuous in bringing along all parties to achieve the desirable targets. The project document indicates the needs for the “Agency Coordination Platform” to be established. From MTR interview and meetings, the government is now investing in the development of Government 4.0, but no details of such development were available. Technologically, there are several IT Application platforms that can help establishing a real-time and responsive coordination by which all stakeholders can have common ground and overall picture of progress, including the target to be achieved. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 3</u>	PMU	Q4 2024
D.3	Elect or appoint a civil society representative from the Provincial Committee level to represent those interests at the PSC raising local issues and concerns with the PSC and reporting back to provincial stakeholders. <u>Addresses MTR Barrier 3</u>	PMU	Immediate
D.4	Revise the project SRF and remove Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6 (Greenhouse gas). The MTR questions the utility of this indicator in this instance. Under other circumstances the indicator would be SMART, but in the body of this project it is important to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attribution – of any change in carbon storage to the activities in the project. • Cost effectiveness – of obtaining the data. If the data is already been collected then it would be reasonable even with the weak attribution. However, to go out and actually obtain the data is beyond the resource envelop of the project. 	PSC	At next PIR
D.5	Replace Outcome 2, Indicator 3 with a proxy indicator. Biological indicators in a four-year project are unrealistic and attributing and change (+/-) to a project intervention when there are so many other variables would be spurious. Furthermore, if this is by survey then the methodology and confidence limits would need to be included and likely these would be greater than the change predicted. ⁷⁶ A proxy indicator (e.g. monitoring “threat” reduction) would provide real-time measurements of project impact and performance. There are a number of tools which could be utilized and retrofitted to the baseline (e.g. a Threat reduction Assessment (TRA ⁷⁷) tool).	PMU, PSC & RTA	Immediate and reported in the 2 nd PIR

5.3 Lessons Learned

204. The MTR draws a single lesson from the review process of the MBT project and from the recent experience of the MTR Team.

205. The insistence on GEF projects following a National Implementation Modality is inflexible and militates against bring together the Implementing and Executing Agency’s relative strengths to their best advantage.

206. The full NIM approach to UNDP-GEF projects has, in the experience of the MTR Team, proved problematic across a range of different GEF programmes, countries and projects and indeed, GEF Agencies. The GEF appears to underestimate the complexity of these projects and the institutional costs (staff time, procurement, dialogues, problem solving, etc.) of an adaptive management approach to projects. GEF projects very often require a sophisticated collaboration between GEF Agency and Implementing Partner to address an adaptive challenge (see Table 13). Such a collaborative partnership is difficult to fully formulate in a NIM. Therefore, NIM arrangements *per se*, militate against such arrangements.

207. It is important to develop better partnership relations – currently they are characterised as either NIM or DIM and there is almost a competitive element to these relationships. These relationships need to greater reflect the changing face of global environmental finance with GEF Agencies acting as a resource for National Implementing partners so that they do not have to hold a large body of experience in GEF procedures and rules for short periods and ensuring a regular and smooth flow of resources to GEF-related activities.

208. GEF needs to recognize that their projects are complex and there is a high degree of uncertainty, because they are intended to be transformational, this does not sit well with government agencies because they are

⁷⁶ For the avoidance of doubt, long term monitoring of biological indicators is a legitimate output/outcome of a project, the point made is that they lack utility in terms of measuring project performance and impact because of the challenge of surveys and biological timeframes. In the case of water birds this would also include variables external to the project area such as breeding success in the northern breeding grounds or southern wintering grounds which are impossible for the project to predict. Monitoring the Water birds is an important activity and there are global flyway methodologies and even financial support for national annual surveys, but not as a project indicator.

⁷⁷ Is Our Project Succeeding? A Guide to Threat Reduction Assessment for Conservation. Richard Margoluis and Nick Salafsky, Biodiversity Support Programme, Washington DC.

inherently risk averse and are understandably uncomfortable with adaptive management. This requires investment of project funds to make it work and; doggedly sticking to unrealistic management costs and an insistence on building specific capacities in organisations which will only require these capacities intermittently is unlikely to be an efficient way of spending money. No two countries are the same and it is unreasonable to expect GEF procedures and rules and the very concept of a GEF project to be compatible across all these different governmental systems without an intermediary agency.

6. Annexes

Annex 1 MTR Terms of Reference

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled *Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development (PIMS#6441)* implemented through the *Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (BEDO)*, which is to be undertaken in August 2024. The project started on the 9th December 2022 and is in its second year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects.](#)

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project was designed to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity-based tourism. The Project Objective will be accomplished by: Establishing an enabling policy and planning framework; improved understanding and coordination between responsible agencies at national, provincial and local level; integration of biodiversity into standardised, locally appropriate tools; development and application of biodiversity financing solutions for tourism destinations; producing practical visitor management plans that address conservation, livelihoods and COVID-19 conditions; strengthening and establishing biodiversity-based tourism products and experiences that generate livelihood benefits, including for women and youth; and improved online market access and business skills for biodiversity-based tourism enterprises to improve commercial viability and resilience.

To ensure achievement of the Project Objective and Outcomes, the project will deliver Outputs organised within three complementary components:

Component 1. Enabling national framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism

Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism

Component 2. Integrated provincial model for mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism

Outcome 2: More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across the ecologically important Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape

Component 3. Knowledge management, awareness, gender mainstreaming and M&E

Outcome 3: Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-based tourism across Thailand is supported by raised awareness, improved market access and knowledge management.

This 48-month project received support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) around USD 2,639,726 and the confirmed co-financing amount of USD 20,817,134 from following agencies:

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment USD 15,684,243
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports USD 2,800,000
- Local Administration Office (TAOs) USD 796,566
- PTT USD 1,000,000
- UNDP USD 200,000
- WWF USD 336,325

The project sites are at Kuiburi National Park, Khao Somroi Yot National Park in Prachuab Khiri Khan province. Please refer to project map and geospatial coordinates of project sites below.

<u>Demonstration Landscape Areas</u>	<u>Area (hectares)</u>	<u>GPS Coordination</u>	
<u>Project Sites (Protected Areas)</u>		<u>Lat</u>	<u>Long</u>
<u>1. Kuiburi National Park</u>	<u>99,518.74</u>	<u>12° 3' 6" N</u>	<u>99° 33' 26" E</u>
<u>2. Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park</u>	<u>15,847.65</u>	<u>12° 12' 17" N</u>	<u>99° 56' 22" E</u>
<u>2.1 Terrestrial area (13,566.28 ha.)</u>			
<u>2.2 Marine area (2,281.37 ha.)</u>			
<u>TOTAL A.</u>	<u>115,366.39</u>		
<u>Project Landscape Area (Non-protected Areas)</u>			
<u>Pranburi Estuary (including Sam Roi Yot Coastal area</u>		<u>12° 23' 40.03" N</u>	<u>99° 58' 52.16" E</u>
<u>and Sam Roi Yot Wetland Area (outside the RAMSAR)</u>	<u>17,208.60</u>	<u>12° 12' 38.88" N</u>	<u>99° 54' 4.39" E</u>
<u>TOTAL B.</u>	<u>17,208.60</u>		
<u>GRAND TOTAL (A+B)</u>	<u>132,574.99</u>		

3. MTR PURPOSE

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review.⁷⁸ The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins. In addition, multiple data collection techniques, including but not limited to, primary and secondary data collection, interview, group discussion, etc., shall be adopted following the suitability for each key stakeholder. Please refer to summary of common data-collection method/sources used in UNDP evaluation below⁷⁹:

METHOD/SOURCE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES
UNDP monitoring systems	Uses performance indicators to measure progress, particularly actual results against expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a reliable, cost-efficient, objective method to assess progress of outputs and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent upon viable monitoring systems that have established baseline indicators and targets and have collected reliable data in relation to targets over time, as well as data relating to outcome indicators
Reports and documents	Existing documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the initiative, its outputs and outcomes, such as documentation from capacity development activities, donor reports and other evidentiary evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary evidence can be difficult to code and analyse in response to questions • Difficult to verify reliability and validity of data

⁷⁸ See Annex A

⁷⁹ UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, Revised edition: June 2021, (Annex-B page 50-52)

Questionnaires	Provides a standardized approach to obtaining information on a wide range of topics from a large number or diversity of stakeholders (usually employing sampling techniques) to obtain information on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, perceptions, level of satisfaction, etc. concerning the operations, inputs, outputs, and contextual factors of a UNDP initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for gathering descriptive data on a wide range of topics quickly at relatively low cost • Easy to analyse • Gives anonymity to respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reporting may lead to biased reporting • Data may provide a general picture but may lack depth • May not provide adequate information on context • Subject to sampling bias
Interviews	Solicit person-to-person responses to pre-determined questions designed to obtain in-depth information about a person's impressions or experiences, or to learn more about their answer to questionnaires or surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates fuller coverage, range, and depth of information of a topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be time-consuming • Can be difficult to analyse • Can be costly • Potential for interviewer to bias clients' responses
On-site observation	Entails use of a detailed observation form to record accurate information on site about how a programme operates (ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions, and observable results as directly observed, during the course of an initiative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can see operations of a programme as they are occurring • Can adapt to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to categorize or interpret observed behaviors • Can be expensive • Subject to (site) selection bias

Group interviews	A small group (six to eight people) is interviewed together to explore in-depth stakeholder opinions, similar or divergent points of view, or judgements about a development initiative or policy, to collect information around tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from an initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick, reliable way to obtain common impressions from diverse stakeholders • Efficient way to obtain a high degree of range and depth of information in a short time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be hard to analyse responses • Requires trained facilitator • May be difficult to schedule
Key informants	Qualitative in-depth interviews, often one-on-one, with a wide range of stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge of the initiative's operations and context. These community experts can provide specific knowledge, and understanding of problems and recommend solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions • Can provide different perspectives on a single issue or on several issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to sampling bias • Must have some means to verify or corroborate information
Expert panels	A peer review, or reference group, composed of external experts to provide input on technical or other substance topics covered by the evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds credibility • Can serve as added (expert) source of information that can provide greater depth • Can verify or substantiate information and results in topic area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of consultancy and related expenses if any • Must ensure impartiality and that there are no conflicts of interest

Case studies	<p>Involves comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases to obtain in-depth information with the goal to fully understand the operational dynamics, activities, outputs, outcomes and interactions of a development project or programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful to fully explore factors that contribute to outputs and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires considerable time and resources not usually available for commissioned evaluations • Can be difficult to analyse
Remote/ virtual engagement	<p>In times of crises, access challenges or other inconveniences remote/virtual tools could be feasible options such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, telephone, and others.</p> <p>Additionally, new documentation could be anticipated, if applicable: GIS satellite images, social media analysis, or other big data information analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be cheap but costs for registration and different packages need to be considered • Reduces travel costs • Reduces the carbon footprints of individuals and organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a stable internet connection and access to technology (computers, mobile phones, internet, etc.) • Requires specific IT, communication and facilitation skills • Requires special experiences regarding data gathering, data analysis and data interpretation skills especially for new documentation as stated • Meeting virtually is different than meeting in person (loss of certain communicational aspects in human psychology) • Not possible to make observations or meet people coincidentally or more informally. • Certain groups and individuals may not have the opportunity to be involved • More time for conducting an

evaluation may need
to be envisaged

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach⁸⁰ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Environment & Energy (E&E) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to national government (e.g., government offices under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Tourism & Sports, and Ministry of Interior); provincial and local government unit, private sector and CSOs, executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to Prachuab Khiri Khan province, including the following project sites at Kuiburi National Park, Khao Somroi Yot National Park and project landscape areas at Pranburi Estuary (including Sam Roi Yot Coastal area) and Sam Roi Yot Wetland area (outside the RAMSAR).

⁸⁰ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The MTR team must use vulnerable groups, disability-inclusive, human-rights, LNOB, gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

The final MTR report must describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#) for extended descriptions.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism development and operations at national and local levels through policy integration and development of an integrated model for biodiversity-based tourism	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 1: # of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (GEF-7 Core indicator 11) (d) Total (e) People living in the demonstration landscape (f) Private sector personnel: Formal and community-based (g) Government officials: National, Provincial, and District	(a) 0 people (b) 0 people (c) 0 people (d) 0 people		(a) 2,500 people (1,200 female) (b) 350 people (195 female) (c) 1,500 people (855 female) (d) 650 people (150 female)	(a) 5,230 people (2,470 female) (b) 700 people (390 female) (c) 3,150 people (1,760 female) (d) 1,380 people (320 female)			
	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 2: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (GEF-7 Core indicator 1.2) (c) Total hectares METT score total	(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: 99,518 hectares (b) 64 Khao Sam Roi Yot National 13,566 hectares (b) 67		(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: (b) 68 Khao Sam Roi Yot National (b) 71	(a) 113,085 hectares Kui Buri National Park: (b) 73 Khao Sam Roi Yot National: (b) 76			
	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 3: Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (Hectares) (GEF-7 Core indicator 2.2)	2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 67)		2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 71)	2,281 hectares Khao Sam Roi Yot National (METT Score = 76)			

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares) (GEF-7 Core indicator 4.1)	0 hectares Pran Buri Estuary (including Pak Nam Pran, Sam Roi Yot coastal and wetland areas)		7,000 hectares	17,208 hectares			
	Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated as a result of improved management effectiveness of estimated 113, 085 ha of forests (99,518 ha within Kui Buri NP, 13,566 ha in Khao Sam Roi Yot NP) and improved landscape management of estimated 17,208 ha of Pran Buri Estuary, totaling 130,293 ha (Expected tCO _{2e}): (GEF Core Indicator 6.1)	0		800,000 tCO _{2e}	2,265,238 tCO _{2e}			
Outcome 1: Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism	Indicator 1: Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted and integrated into work plans of agencies within the National Tourism Policy Committee	0		5 Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted: 1 Integrated by 4 agencies	10 Biodiversity-based tourism strategy adopted: 1 Integrated by 9 agencies			
	Indicator 2: National conservation, social and economic impact monitoring methodologies used at project sites (a) Total (b) METT (Conservation) (c) Visitor Use Management Framework (VUMF) (Social) (d) Visitors Count (Economic) (e) Natural Capital Accounting (Economic) (f) Payments for Ecosystem Services (Economic)	(a) 2 (b) 2 (c) 0 (d) 0 (e) 0 (f) 0		(a) 5 (b) 2 (c) 1 (d) 1 (e) 1 (f) 0	(a) 10 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 3 (e) 1 (f) 1			

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	Indicator 3: # of tourism standards integrating biodiversity conservation	1		3	7			
	Indicator 4: Improved institutional capacity for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into tourism planning, management and monitoring, measured by UNDP capacity development scorecard.	42		55	77			
Outcome 2: More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across the ecologically important Prachuap Khiri Khan landscape	Indicator 1: Strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA), tourism masterplan, and gender-responsive biodiversity-based tourism action plan finalized. (a) Total (b) SESA for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape (c) Tourism masterplan for Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape (d) Biodiversity-based tourism action plan Prachuap Khiri Khan project landscape	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (d) 0		(a) 1 finalized (b) 1 finalized (c) 0 (d) 0	(a) 3 finalized (b) 1 finalized (c) 1 finalized (d) 1 finalized			
	Indicator 2: Visitor management plans finalized for project sites: Kui Buri NP; Khao Sam Roi Yot KNP; Pran Buri Estuary	0		1 Finalized	3 Finalized			

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	<i>Indicator 3:</i> Improvements in biodiversity, waste management and human wildlife conflict in the project landscape (a) # Fishing cats (b) # waterbird species in Khao Sam Roi Yot wetland (b1) # Individual bird count of Manchurian Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus tangorum</i>) (b2) # Individual bird count of Malay Plover (<i>Charadrius peronii</i>) (c) # reports HWC with fishing cat (d) # reports HWC with elephant	(a) 33 (b) 157 (b1) 63 (b2) 60 (c) 115 (d) 25		(a) 35 (b, b1, b2) All stable – as baseline or improved. (c) 100 (d) 15	(a) 37 (b, b1, b2) All stable – as baseline or improved. (c) 50 (d) 5			
	Indicator 4: # of certified tourism ventures that are supporting biodiversity criteria in the project sites. (a) Total (b) Homestay/ CBT (c) # Hotel/resorts (d) # tour operators	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (d) 0		(a) 20 (b) 10 (c) 5 (d) 5	(a) 47 (b) 22 (c) 15 (d) 10			
Outcome 3 Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-based tourism across Thailand is supported by raised awareness, improved market access and knowledge management	<i>Indicator 1:</i> Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of tourism industry, communities and tourists for the importance of biodiversity to tourism improved, as measured by the KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) survey score (See Annex 11f)	Baseline to be determined in Y1 through KAP		Targets to be established in Y1	Targets to be established in Y1			
	<i>Indicator 2:</i> # of biodiversity-based tourism products on Online Travel Agent platforms and in tour operator itineraries	0		5	10			

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	Indicator 3: # best practices and lessons learned developed, disseminated and used including on gender mainstreaming and socio-cultural benefits of tourism (a) Total (b) Best practices and lessons learned developed and disseminated (c) Knowledge system established and operational	(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0		(a) 4 (b) 3 (c) 1	(a) 9 (b) 8 (c) 1			

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved

Yellow= On target to be achieved

Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive ManagementManagement Arrangements:

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

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?

- Examine the use of the project's results framework/logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
	<u>BEDO</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>9,442,467</u>		
		<u>Public Investment</u>	<u>818,666</u>		
	<u>DNP</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>3,746,656</u>		
		<u>Public Investment</u>	<u>1,276,413</u>		
	<u>DMCR</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>6,673</u>		
		<u>Public Investment</u>	<u>43,367</u>		
	<u>RFD</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>350,000</u>		
	<u>MoTS</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>2,800,000</u>		
	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Public Investment</u>	<u>796,566</u>		
	<u>UNDP</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>200,000</u>		
	<u>WWF</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>336,325</u>		
	<u>PTT</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>		
		<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>20,817,134</u>		

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

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

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

Stakeholder Engagement:

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

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁸¹ (in the SESP).
 - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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

Reporting:

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

Communications & Knowledge Management:

⁸¹ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

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

iv. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR team will include a section in the MTR report for evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

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

Ratings

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

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism in Thailand to support sustainable tourism development)

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

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 25 working days over a time period of 1 August – 31 October 2024. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	3 days	9 August 2024
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	10 days	6 September 2024
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 day	13 September 2024
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	6 days	27 September 2024
Organizing a meeting to discuss on the draft report with the UNDP CO, RTA, and the M&E Specialist in COSQA	1 day	2 October 2024

Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)

4 days

10 October 2024

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Report	Inception MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft MTR Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
4	Meeting with UNDP (CO team, RTA and M&E Specialist in COSQA)	Discussion on draft MTR report	Within 1 week after sharing the draft report with the CO	MTR Team meets with UNDP CO, RTA, and M&E Specialist in COSQA
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is *UNDP Thailand Country Office*.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within Thailand for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader/international consultant (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one team expert/local consultant with prior experiences in project review/evaluation assisting the team leader/international consultant. The team leader will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the MTR report, etc. The team expert/local consultant will assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory frameworks, budget

allocations, capacity building, work with the Project Team in developing the MTR itinerary, etc. The local consultant will also act as a focal point for coordinating and working with relevant stakeholders in Thailand. The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

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

Criteria	Weight	Max. Point
Technical	70	
Educational Qualification		15
Year of Experience		15
Understanding about M&E of similar project and substantive experience to evaluating similar project		25
Experience evaluating GEF funded projects		10
Experience working with UN agencies and other donor funded projects		5
Sub-total A. (Technical)		70
Financial	30	30
Sub-Total B. (Financial)		30
Total (A+B)		100

Qualification Criteria

A. Team Leader/International Consultant

Education

- A Master's degree in *Environmental Science, Biodiversity, Natural Resource Management, Ecotourism, Environmental Management, Sustainable Development, Development Studies or relevant discipline, or other closely related field*

Experience

- Substantive experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to (Biodiversity);
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system; experience working with UNDP- GEF- evaluations will be considered an asset;
- Strong technical background in ecotourism, biodiversity conservation, protected areas management, livelihoods, or related areas of natural resource management in the Asia-Pacific region, preferably experience working in Thailand
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least **10 years** is required;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Biodiversity; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Excellent communication skills; A sample of the evaluation report is required.
- Demonstrable analytical skills; which shall be showcased through previous Project evaluation report submitted to United Nations agencies or in the form of a writing sample that demonstrates the analytical ability of the Consultant

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

B. Local Consultant

Education

- A Master's degree in *Environmental Science, Biodiversity, Sustainable Development, Development Studies or relevant discipline, or other closely related field*

Experience

- *Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years; Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;*
- *Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;*
- *Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system, experience working with UNDP-GEF evaluation will be considered an asset;*
- *Experience working with Thai governments, and local CSOs is required;*
- *Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity, experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.*
- *Excellent communication skills; A sample of the evaluation report is required.*
- *Demonstrable analytical skills; which shall be articulated through previous Evaluation report conducted and submitted to United Nations agencies or in the form of a writing sample that demonstrates the analytical ability of the Consultant*

Language

- *Fluency in written and spoken English.*
- *Fluency in written and spoken Thai.*

10. ETHICS

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The MTR team must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail
- Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%⁸²:
- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

⁸² The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

https://poppp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

Annex 2 MTR Evaluation Matrix

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
To what extent are the project's objectives consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, national priorities and policies, global priorities and partners' and GEF policies and priorities?	Adequacy of activities in relation to policies and stakeholders' needs. Alignment of project objective and outcomes with policy objectives. Alignment of projects strategy and theory of change with country situation and national priorities.	Project Document, UNDP Country Programme, sector policies and regulatory frameworks, regional agreements and programmes	Interviews of stakeholders / beneficiaries Interviews steering committee members Review of documents
To what extent were decision-making processes during the project's design phase reflecting national priorities and needs? Were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?	Effectiveness of partnerships arrangements since inception, co-financing budget execution	Project Document, Inception Report, PIRs, minutes of PSC meetings, TOC.	Document review, interviews with government agency stakeholders and project partners, analysis.
How relevant is the project strategy to the situation in the project area/ national context and circumstances? Does it provide the most effective route towards expected/intended results? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?	Coherence between project design and implementation – what changes have had to be made. Should changes have been made? Level of project resources assigned to tasks.	Project Document, Inception Report, Consultant's studies and reports, minutes of PSC/PB and Technical Working Groups	Document review, interviews with government agency stakeholders and project partners, analysis.
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?	SRF indicators & MT & EOP targets,	Project Document, SRF, PIRs, results, GEF-7 BD Core Indicators	Document review, analysis, interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries
To what extent did the project contribute to the Country Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities?	Alignment and synergies of outcomes	Project Document, CPAP, SDGs, GEF strategic priorities, GEF-7 BD Core Indicators	Document review, high-level stakeholder interviews, analysis
What factors have contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs? Could the project include alternative strategies?	Progress towards results, efficiency of project strategy, adjustments to strategy Number of key priorities that have been met through the project Assumptions not met / unpredictable effects	SRF, Project Document, PIR, risk log.	Document review, interviews, analysis

Has the project produced unintended results - positive or negative? If there are negative results, what mitigation activities are in place?	Progress towards results, efficiency of project strategy, adjustments to strategy Number of key priorities that have been met through the project Assumptions not met / unpredictable effects	SRF, Project Document, PIR, risk log.	Document review, interviews, analysis
What evidence is there to suggest that the project will/ has achieve the outcomes and objective by the close of the GEF-fund?	Budget execution, realism of work plans, results to date	SRF indicator MT & EOP targets, PMU, project documentation	Document review, interviews, field visits
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
To what extent has the project completed the planned activities and met/ is meeting or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of global environmental and development objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned?	Activity modifications (removal / adding) Budget revisions Circumstances for no-cost extension Functionality of M&E system Compliance with UNDP-GEF rules	UNDP finance & project staff Project Director interview Annual reports, CDR, co-financing reports	Interviews, analysis, field visits
To what extent were project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?	As above	As above	As above
Are there variances between planned and actual expenditures? What are the main reasons? To what extend did financial controls allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget? What extra resources has the project leveraged? How have they contributed to the project's ultimate objective?	Disbursement trends Follow-up and adjustments of procurement plan Co-financing complementarities / substitution M&E system updates and annual/intra-year budgetary adjustments	UNDP finance & project staff Project Director interview Annual reports, CDR, co-financing reports.	Interviews, analysis
To what extent has UNDP delivered effectively on activities related to project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion and evaluation? To what extent has the Implementing Partner effectively managed and administered the project's day-to-day activities? How was UNDP's overall oversight and supervision?	Changes in UNDP staff Periodicity of technical meetings with project team & relevant support / timeliness of recruitments Changes in project team staff Activity / staff / service payment delays... Role of UNDP-GEF Regional Office.	Annual reports, PIR UNDP, BEPO, PSC interviews CDR.	Interviews, document review, analysis

How are risks monitored and managed?	Project risk log in QUANTUM and management responses, communication with partners and stakeholders, change over from ATLAS to QUANTUM.	Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the QUANTUM Risk Register, project communications strategy, MTR & Management Response	Review, interviews, analysis
In the project's Results Framework, to what extent the project's objectives and components are clear, practicable and feasible within its time frame? Was there a clearly defined and robust Theory of Change? Were the indicators in the Results Framework SMART?	Number of activities that were amended / terminated and reasons Follow-up of Capacity Score Card indicators Changes of indicators during implementation, number of indicators not assessed Usability of baseline studies Cost-effectiveness of indicators	Interviews project team Interviews of ministry Interviews PSC members, SRF/ log frame Project strategy.	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
To what extent did the Monitoring systems allow the collection, analysis and use of information to track the project's progress, risks and opportunities toward reaching its objectives and to guide management decisions? Were the budget and responsibilities clearly identified and distributed?	Level of functionality of M&E system; updating and effective integration into decision-making (planning + adjustments) Cost effectiveness of indicators	Interviews PMU, RTA, UNDP CO	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
How are risks monitored and managed?	Project risk log in QUANTUM and management responses, communication with partners and stakeholders, change over from ATLAS to QUANTUM.	Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the QUANTUM Risk Register, project communications strategy	Review, interviews, analysis
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends?	Public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other (donor) funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)	National policies and plans, local policies and plans, NGO feedback, private sector feedback, project exit arrangements. Consultants and service providers reports	Review, interviews, analysis
What are the long-term socio-political risks to the outcomes of the project?	Partner and stakeholder ownership, public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives, sharing of information on risks, adjustments to interventions to address specific risks	National policies and plans, local policies and plans, NGO feedback, private sector feedback, project exit arrangements. Consultants and service providers reports	Review, interviews, analysis
What are the environmental risks to the sustainability of the project's outcomes? How are these managed and mitigated?	Climate data and forecasts. National disaster risk reduction strategies and plans	National data, policies and plans	Review and analysis, field visits
Integrating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI): How can the project further broaden its contribution to enhancing diversity and inclusion? To what extent have local communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups benefited from the project. To what extent have gender equality and empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?			

<p>Where all key stakeholders identified, were they categorised correctly?</p> <p>To what extent do project stakeholders share a common understanding and are involved in the decision-making process of the project?</p> <p>To what extent did stakeholder's participation mechanisms in place lead to empowerment and joint ownership of the project? What should be done better to increase their participation and engagement?</p>	<p>Degree of active participation in project activities / capacity building training</p> <p>Project responsiveness re. final beneficiary/community needs</p> <p>Degree of participation of stakeholders in project (annual) planning</p>	<p>PMU & BEDO interviews</p> <p>Interviews of community representatives and local government</p>	<p>Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis</p>
<p>How have the project activities contributed to poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk, and/or addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation?</p> <p>To what extent has the project incorporated capacity development activities? Were results achieved?</p>	<p>Conversion incentives success rate</p> <p>Increased resources through improved technology (& capacity building) / diversification</p> <p>Pilot-project appropriation and empowerment, number of beneficiaries, gender differences in beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Interviews project staff</p> <p>Interviews final beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews community members / representatives</p>	<p>Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis</p>
<p>How have the project activities contributed to poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk, and/or addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation?</p> <p>To what extent has the project incorporated capacity development activities? Were results achieved?</p>	<p>Conversion incentives success rate</p> <p>Increased resources through improved technology (& capacity building) / diversification</p> <p>Pilot-project appropriation and empowerment, number of beneficiaries, gender differences in beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Interviews project staff</p> <p>Interviews final beneficiaries</p> <p>Interviews community members / representatives</p>	<p>Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis</p>
<p>LNOB: Were persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women and youth consulted and meaningful involved in programme planning and implementation? Were proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disability, ethnic minorities, women and youth?</p>			

<p>How were gender and human rights considerations integrated in the project's design, including analysis, implementation plan, indicators, targets, budget, timeframe and responsible party?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and human rights of disadvantaged or marginalized groups?</p> <p>To what extent did women, poor, indigenous, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups participate and benefit from the project?</p> <p>Was the UNDP Gender Marker rating assigned to the project document realistic and backed by the findings of the gender analysis?</p> <p>Is there any potential negative impact on gender equality, women's empowerment, disadvantaged or marginalized groups? If so, what can be done to mitigate this?</p> <p>To what extent was the SESP realistic, followed and monitored.</p> <p>Were gender related/ affecting activities, gender-blind, -negative, -targeted, -responsive, - transformational?</p>	<p>M&E system covering gender</p> <p>Activity adaptability as per gender and target beneficiaries' types</p> <p>Degree of project targeting of vulnerable people</p> <p>Number of women & vulnerable people that were direct beneficiaries from project's results</p> <p>Level of participation of vulnerable groups & women in activities' operationalization</p> <p>Safeguarding actions and activities</p> <p>FPIC</p>	<p>Gender-specific & marginalized group interviews (focus groups)</p> <p>Project team interview</p> <p>Local Council interviews</p> <p>Annual reports</p> <p>SESP</p>	<p>Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis</p>
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*Annex 3 MTR Mission Itinerary*Mid-Term Review (MTR) ProgrammeMainstreaming Biodiversity-based Tourism in Thailand to Support Sustainable Tourism Development Project (MBT) PIMS No. 6441 UNDP Output Id: 00118268DATE: 20th - 27th August 2024

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
Tue 20 Aug	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 2]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>✓ <u>09:00 AM</u> - Meeting with BEDO Executives</p> <p>1. Ms. Suwanna Tiansuwan (Director General of BEDO)</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BEDO's role and mandate towards biodiversity-based tourism from National policy to provincial and local government ▪ Inter-agencies mechanism in mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism <p>2. Mr. Tanit Changthavorn (Deputy Director General of BEDO)</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expected incremental value of the project to BEDO ▪ Project's KPIs in contribution to BEDO KPIs ▪ Project Challenges and Resolution 	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 2]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>✓ <u>13:30 PM</u> - Meeting with DMCR</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying the icon species of marine and coastal resources in the project areas ▪ Tracking method on biodiversity of marine and coastal resources <p><u>Representatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Vararin Vongpanich (Biodiversity Research Specialist) ❖ Ms. Chanakarn Thammavichan (Fishery Biologist – Professional Level)

<p>[Continue]</p> <p>Tue</p> <p>20 Aug</p>	<p>✓ <u>10.00 AM</u> – Group Meeting with PMU</p> <p>❖ Mr. Tanit Changthavorn (Project Director)</p> <p>❖ Mr. Rachai Cholsindusongkramchai (Project Manager)</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Project management▪ Project Institutional Setting▪ Project Implementation▪ Project Monitoring Mechanism▪ Adaptive Management	
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<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
<p>Wed</p> <p>21 Aug</p>	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 3]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/6638784604?pwd=VHBpaGE0aVVHZm4xSIQxYW5XcUpNQTO9&omn=92860207953 Meeting ID: 663 878 4604 Passcode: 679669</p> <p>✓ <u>11:00 AM</u> - Zoom Meeting with MOTS</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Tourism Plan and the niche for Biodiversity-based Tourism ▪ Area-based approach for the biodiversity-based Tourism ▪ Role of MOTS to the project <p><u>Representative:</u></p> <p>Mr.Mongkon Wimonrat (Deputy Permanent Secretary) Ministry of Tourism and Sports</p>	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 3]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>✓ <u>13:30 PM</u> - Zoom Meeting with DASTA</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Criteria on the special zones for sustainable tourism and the potential candidate of biodiversity-based tourism ▪ Value chains of the special zones of sustainable tourism by DAST <p><u>Representative:</u></p> <p>Ms. Wanvipa Phanumat (Director of the Office of Strategic Management)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>✓ <u>15:30 PM</u> - Zoom Meeting with ONEP</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity value of Sam Roi Yod wetland and tracking method in reporting to the Ramsar Convention ▪ OECM approach to be applied in the project's demonstration site <p><u>Representative:</u></p> <p>Mr. Wanlop Preechamart (Environmentalist, Senior Professional Level) Biodiversity Management Division</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
Thu 22 Aug	<p><u>Travel to Prachuap Khiri Khan</u></p> <p>Local Focal Point: Khun Tho</p> <p>Mr. Naruphon Pueanpinij (Field Coordinator)</p> <p>Accommodation: <i>Varinah Resort</i></p>	<p><u>Venue: Provincial Town Hall</u></p> <p>✓ <u>13:30 PM</u> - Group Meeting with Provincial Government Officers</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming Biodiversity-based Tourism into the Provincial Development Plan • Possibility in promoting “Biodiversity Journey” as the provincial highlight <p><u>Representatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Vice Governor of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province ❖ Deputy Governor of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province ❖ Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment ❖ PMU Team ❖ Other provincial officers involving with the project <p>(Details in Participants List)</p> <p>-----</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
<p>Fri</p> <p>23 Aug</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Visit Pranburi Area</u> <u>Venue: Sirinart Learning Centre</u></p> <p>✓ <u>09:30 AM</u> – Group Meeting with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Komsun Hongphattarakhiri (Manager of Sirinart Learning Center) ❖ Mr. Somsuk Krithathon (Chief of Pranburi Forest Park) <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the Learning Center define “Biodiversity” to the public and feedback ▪ What is in incremental value of the project to the Learning Center <p style="text-align: center;">(Details in Participants List)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Visit Kuiburi Area</u> <u>Venue: Kuiburi National Park Office</u></p> <p>✓ <u>13:00 PM</u> – Group Meeting with Representatives from Kuiburi Protected Area Committee (PAC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ PAC representative from Wildlife Conservation Tourism Club ❖ PAC representative from Wildlife Conservation Project under World Wildlife Fund (WWF) <p style="text-align: center;">(Details in Participants List)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Visit “Baan Ruam Thai” Community</u></p> <p>✓ <u>15:00 PM</u> – Safari Tour [Observe Tourism Activity in the National Park]</p> <p>✓ <u>17:30 PM</u> - Kin-Khaw-Tary-Raii [Local Products/Services]</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
<p>Sat</p> <p>24 Aug</p>	<p><u>Visit Sam Roy Yod Area</u> <u>Venue: Sirinart Learning Centre</u></p> <p>✓ <u>09:30 AM</u> - Observe Local Community Enterprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Baan Kho Pai Learning Centre (Sightseeing Boat Ride) ❖ Dek Rak Toong (Bird-Watching Activity by Local Youth Group) ❖ Aunty Nhu's Kitchen (Authentic Local Food/Ingredients) <p>(Details in Participants List)</p>	

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
<p>Mon</p> <p>26 Aug</p>	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 2]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/6638784604?pwd=VHBpaGE0aVVHZm4xSlQxYW5XcUpNQTO9&omn=95289367164 Meeting ID: 663 878 4604 Passcode: 679669</p> <p>✓ <u>10:00 AM</u> - Meeting with Tourism Department</p> <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where and how Biodiversity-based Tourism stands in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the 3rd national Tourism Development Plan ▪ National Action Plan on Biodiversity-based Tourism <p><u>Representative:</u></p> <p>Ms. Kobkul Pitarachart (Tourism Development Specialist)</p>	<p>Meeting with PMU Team</p>

<u>Date</u>	<u>1st Half of the day</u>	<u>2nd Half of the day</u>
<p>Tue</p> <p>27 Aug</p>	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 2]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/6638784604?pwd=VHBpaGE0aVVHZm4xSlQxYW5XcUpNQTO9&omn=92196978704 Meeting ID: 663 878 4604 Passcode: 679669</p> <p>✓ <u>09:30 AM</u> – Zoom Meeting with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Suan Sunandha University ❖ Burapha University <p><u>Discussion Topics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Products and Services Development ▪ Master Plan Development 	<p><u>Venue: BEDO [Meeting Room 2]</u> <i>Government Complex – Building B (9th Floor)</i></p> <p>Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/6638784604?pwd=VHBpaGE0aVVHZm4xSlQxYW5XcUpNQTO9&omn=92196978704 Meeting ID: 663 878 4604 Passcode: 679669</p> <p>✓ <u>13:30 PM</u> – Zoom Meeting with All Project Consultants (List of consultants in the table next page)</p> <p><u>Activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress Report (for each consultant) ▪ Group Discussion (on technical issues) ▪ Exchanging information ▪ Receiving comments and suggestions

List of Project Consultants and Activities

<u>Consultant</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Raks Thai Foundation	Feasibility study on the financial mechanism of tourism fees and local authorities' levies to support the establishment of biodiversity conservation and management
	Develop a guideline for Participatory Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Ethnic groups involved in mainstreaming biodiversity-based tourism to support sustainable tourism development project
Suan Dusit University	Enhance the capacity of the Protected Area Committee (PAC) of Kui Buri National Park, Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park, and the steering committee of the Sirinat Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center in conducting biodiversity-based tourism activities
	Develop a biodiversity-based strategy to integrate into the National Tourism Development Plan, incorporating a gender auditing tool and safeguards for measuring gender equality and social impact protection
Thammasat University	Develop biodiversity-based tourism products and services using digital platforms for the pilot sites in Prachuap Khiri Khan
Burapha University	Develop Biodiversity-Based Tourism Master Plan with Integration of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), and Visitor Management Framework (VUMF)
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University	Collaboratively develop biodiversity-based tourism products and services with local communities to enhance sustainable use and promote biodiversity conservation
Thai Wetlands Foundation	Conducting surveys and gathering data on biological diversity within the project landscape

Field Trip to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province

22nd – 25th August 2024

Date and Time	Detail	Remark
22 nd August 2024		
07:00 – 13:30	Travel from BKK to Prachuap Khiri Khan City (270 km.)	
13.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Prachuap Khiri Khan Deputy Governor and team <u>Key people</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prachuap Khiri Khan Deputy Governor (Mr. Komkrich Jaroenpattanasombat) 2. Provincial Secretary 3. Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment 4. MoTS Prachuap Khiri Khan 	BKK – Prachuap City is around 270 km. Location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/CpFpBzWfHmuDRmM7
15.00 – 16.00	Travel to the hotel in Sam Roi Yot beach (Varinah Resort)	Location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/jj5pbb5HGFa7S3TX7
23 rd August 2024		
08:20 – 08:50	Travel from the hotel to Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center in Pran Buri Estuary (Pak Nam Pran)	Location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/mEw9kQfngtdnzJcm7
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with the manager of Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center , Pak Nam Pran Sub-district, Pran Buri District <u>Key people</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supertendent of Pran Buri Forest Park (Mr. Khomson Hongpattarakhiri) 2. Manager of Sirinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center (Mr.Somsak krithatorn) 	
10.30 – 13.00	Travel to Kuiburi National Park*	Location https://maps.app.goo.gl/rq65sHYcBfBdV3Te7 * Quick lunch on the way to Kui Buri National Park

13.00 – 14.30	<p>Interview Representative of Kuiburi National Park and some of PAC</p> <p><u>Key people</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative of Kui Buri National Park 2. President of Kuiburi Ecotourism Club (Mrs. Prachuap Puatha) 3. Representative from WWF Thailand 4. Village Head of Ban Ruam Thai 	
14.30 – 15:00	Travel to Ban Ruam Thai (15-20 min by car)	
15:00 – 18:30	<p>Activities:</p> <p>15:00 - 17:00 Wildlife Safari Tour (around 2-2.30 hours) Meet the president of Kuiburi Ecotourism Club</p> <p>17:00 – 18:30 Dinner at a farmhouse (Meet Kon-Changpa Kuiburi Community Enterprise Network). This activity is shows Human-Wildlife Conflict resolution</p>	<p>Location</p> <p>https://maps.app.goo.gl/RGgdoX2VJKTsaxRA6</p>
18:30 – 19:30	Travel to Sam Roi Yot (Varinah Resort)	
24th August 2024		
08:00 – 09:00 น.	Travel to Ban Koh Mon in Sam Roi Yot District (30-40 min by car)	<p>Location</p> <p>https://maps.app.goo.gl/wFQDGpkYvGb3TgUS7</p>
09.00 – 10.30 น.	<p>Activity: Boat trip in Sam Roi Yot Wetland (1.30 hours)</p> <p>Meet a representative of Ban Koh Pai Community-based Tourism Community Enterprise, Rai Mai Sub-district, Sam Roi Yot District</p> <p><u>Key people</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ban Koh Pai Community-based Tourism Community Enterprise (Mr. SOMkid Pongpae) 2. Village Head Moo. 5 Ban Koh Pai (Mr. Siri Inprasit) 	<p>Please prepare sunscreen, hat, sun glasses, and raincoat.</p>

11.00 – 12.00	Travel to Ban Rong Jae (10-15 min by car) Meet representative of “Dek Rak Thung group”, young generation and alumni from Sam Roi Yot Wittayakhom School who monitor biological diversity in Sam Roi Yot Wetland area (bird watching and fishing cat monitoring)	
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch at a local villager house “Aunty Noo”, the elder woman who utilize resources from the wetland to cook traditional local food and generate income	
13:30-14:20	Travel to the hotel in Sam Roi Yot beach	
24th August 2024		
08:00 – 12:00	Travel from Sam Roi Yot, Prachuap Khiri Khan to Bangkok by van	

Annex 4 List Persons Interviewed



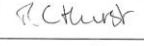
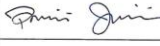



22 August 2024 Meeting the Vice governor and Prachuab Khirikhan Provincial administration

Female : Male Participation rate = 1:7 (PMU & MTR not included)


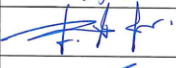



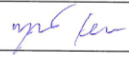
รายชื่อผู้เข้าร่วมประชุมประเมินผลการดำเนินงาน ผู้เชี่ยวชาญต่างประเทศ GEF-7 (Mid Term Review - MTR)

โครงการบูรณาการการท่องเที่ยวบนพื้นฐานความหลากหลายทางชีวภาพเพื่อการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน (โครงการ MBT)



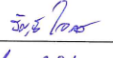
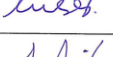

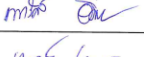
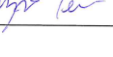
วันที่ 22 สิงหาคม 2567 เวลา 13.30 น. - 17.00 น. ณ ห้องประชุม ศาลากลางจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์

ลำดับ	ชื่อ-สกุล	ตำแหน่ง	ลายมือชื่อ	เบอร์โทร / อีเมล
สำนักงานพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจจากฐานชีวภาพ (องค์การมหาชน)				
1	นายคมกริช เจริญพัฒนสมบัติ	รองผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ Vice Governor of Prachuab Khiri Khan		
2	นายปรีดา สุขใจ	ปลัดจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ Chief of Provincial Administration - Prachuab Khiri Khan		094 254 8970
3	นายนิทัศน์ จันทร์ทอง	ทรัพยากรธรรมชาติและสิ่งแวดล้อมจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ Provincial MONRE - Prachuab Khiri Khan	-	
4		ห้องเรียนและกีฬาจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์	-	
5	Mr.Francis Hurst	MTR - International Consultant (Team Leader)		
6	Ms.Phansiri Winichagoon	MTR - International Expert /Local Consultant		081 802 9885
7	นางฉวีวรรณ วัฒนศิริวัฒน์	ผู้เชี่ยวชาญสิ่งแวดล้อม Provincial Environment Expert		094 082 1666
8	นายอภิสิทธิ์ วัฒนางาม	นักวิเคราะห์นโยบายและแผนชำนาญการ Provincial Policy and Planning Expert		094 969 1989
9	นายวิฑูรย์ จันทน์สุวรรณ	นักวิเคราะห์นโยบายและแผนปฏิบัติการ Provincial Policy and Planning Officer	วฑ	096 289 143
10	นายอภิสิทธิ์ ปิยะพัฒน์	เจ้าหน้าที่บริหารงานทั่วไป Provincial Administration Officer		

รายชื่อผู้เข้าร่วมประชุมประเมินผลการดำเนินงาน ผู้เชี่ยวชาญต่างประเทศ GEF-7 (Mid Term Review - MTR)
โครงการบูรณาการการท่องเที่ยวบนพื้นฐานความหลากหลายทางชีวภาพเพื่อการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน (โครงการ MBT)
วันที่ 22 สิงหาคม 2567 เวลา 08.30 น. - 13.00 น. ณ สภ.พริยาคารธรรมชาติและสิ่งแวดล้อมจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์

ลำดับ	ชื่อ-สกุล	ตำแหน่ง	ลายมือชื่อ	เบอร์โทร / อีเมล
สำนักงานพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจจากฐานชีวภาพ (องค์การมหาชน)				
1	นายราชัย ชลสินธุ์สงครามชัย	ผู้จัดการโครงการ MBT		
2	นางสาวเพชรพุ่ม สุขพงษ์	เจ้าหน้าที่ชำนาญการพิเศษ โครงการ MBT		
3	นายธัญชัย ใจอง	ผู้ช่วยผู้จัดการด้านประสานงานโครงการ MBT		
4	นางสาวสาวตรี บุญยะอุดมกุล	ผู้ช่วยผู้จัดการโครงการ MBT		
5	นายวิชาญ นริสวงศ์	หัวหน้างานปฏิบัติการด้านเกษตร		
6	นายพนธ์ น้อยแก้ว	เจ้าหน้าที่ประสานงานจาก ร.น.น.		081-7009795
7				
8				
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รายชื่อผู้เข้าร่วมประชุมประเมินผลการดำเนินงาน ผู้เชี่ยวชาญต่างประเทศ GEF-7 (Mid Term Review - MTR)
โครงการบูรณาการการท่องเที่ยวบนพื้นฐานความหลากหลายทางชีวภาพเพื่อการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน (โครงการ MBT)
วันที่ 22 สิงหาคม 2567 เวลา 08.30 น. – 13.00 น. ณ สภ.พริยาคารธรรมชาตินและสิ่งแวดล้อมจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์

ลำดับ	ชื่อ-สกุล	ตำแหน่ง	ลายมือชื่อ	เบอร์โทร / อีเมล
สำนักงานพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจจากฐานชีวภาพ (องค์การมหาชน)				
1	นายราชัย ขอสืบรุ่งสงครามชัย	ผู้จัดการโครงการ MBT		
2	นางสาวเพรชชฎ์ สุขพงษ์	เจ้าหน้าที่ชำนาญการพิเศษ โครงการ MBT		
3	นายธัญชัย ใจคง	ผู้ช่วยผู้จัดการด้านประสานงานโครงการ MBT		
4	นางสาวสราวิศรี บุญระดมกุล	ผู้ช่วยผู้จัดการโครงการ MBT		
5	จ.อ.อ.อ.อ. อ.อ.อ.อ.อ.	นักวิจัยอาวุโส ฝ่ายวิจัยและพัฒนา		0949691989
6	นางเนตรวิทย์ ลาบุญอินทร์	นักวิจัยอาวุโส ฝ่ายวิจัยและพัฒนา		0840821566
7	นายณัฏฐ์ เพ็ชรพันธุ์	เจ้าหน้าที่บริหารงานทั่วไป		081-7009795
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UNDP

The Briefing Meeting on Aug 16:

1. Mr. Khan Ramindra UNDP Integrated team Leader
2. Ms. Sukanya Thongthamrong UNDP Programme Analyst
3. Mr. Peeranut Supinanon UNDP Result-based Management Analyst
4. Ms. Chalisa Raksanaves UNDP Programme Associate

The meeting with RTA on Aug 19:

1. Ms. Solene Le Doze UNDP Regional Technical Advisor

The meeting with DRR on Aug 26

1. Ms. Irina Goryonova UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

The Debriefing meeting on September 19

1. Ms. Solene Le Doze UNDP Regional Technical Advisor
2. Ms. Sukanya Thongthamrong UNDP Programme Analyst
3. Mr. Peeranut Supinanon UNDP Result-based Management Analyst

All were via Zoom.

Annex 5 List Documents Reviewed

1. PIF
2. UNDP Initiation Plan
3. UNDP Project Document
4. UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)
5. Project Inception Report
6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8. Audit reports
9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team

The following documents will also be available:

13. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
14. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)

Annex 6 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

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.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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


Name of Consultant: Francis Hurst

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 *Moncarapacho, Portugal (Place)* on *9th August 2024*

Signature:



Evaluators/Consultants:

10. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
11. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
12. 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.
13. 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.
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15. 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.
16. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
17. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
18. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: Phansiri Winichagoon

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 Bangkok, Thailand (Place) on 22th September 2024 (Date)

Signature: 

Annex 7 Cofinancing Delivery

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Committed at MTR (US\$)	Actual % of Amount (US\$)
Government	BEDO	In-kind	\$10,261,134	\$911,333	8.8%
Government	DNP	In-kind	\$5,023,069	\$0.00	%
Government	DMCR	In-kind	\$50,040	\$85,620	171%
Government	RFD	In-kind	\$3550,000	\$0.00	%
Government	MOTS	In-kind	\$2,800,000	\$0.00	%
Government	Local Government	In-kind	\$796,556	\$0.00	%
NGO	WWF	Grant	\$336,325	\$0.00	%
Donor Agency	UNDP (TRAC)	Grant	\$200,000	\$0.00	%
Total			\$19,817,134	\$996,953	5%

Sources of Co-Financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (US\$)
Partner Agencies	BEDO	In-kind	(Public) Investment Mobilized	\$10,261,134
Partner Agencies	DNP	In-kind	(Public) Investment Mobilized	\$5,023,069
Partner Agencies	DMCR	In-kind	(Public) Investment mobilised	\$50,000
Partner Agencies	RFD	In-kind	(Public) Investment Mobilised	\$350,000
	MOTS	In-kind	(Public) Investment Mobilised	\$2,800,000
Government	Local Government	In-kind	(Public) Investment Mobilised	\$796,556
NGO	WWF	Grant	Investment mobilized	\$336,325
Donor Agency	UNDP	Grant	Investment mobilized	\$200,000
Total				\$19,817,134

- *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
- *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.*) or *Core Indicators*
- *Annexed in a separate file:* *GEF Co-financing template (categorizing co-financing amounts by source as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditure')*