



MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

“Seventh Operational Phase of GEF Small Grants Programme in India”
(PIMS ID 6253; GEF ID 10125)

MTR Time frame: September to November 2024

Date of MTR Report: 20th of November

Regions and countries included in the project: India, three regions based on Landscape, Indian Coastal Region, Northeast Region, Central Semi-arid Region

GEF Operational/focal area: Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation, Land Degradation

Executing Agency / Implementing Partner: The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI)

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i. Acronyms and Abbreviations

1	BPPS (UNDP)	Bureau of Policy and Programme Support
2	tCO ₂	tons carbon dioxide equivalent
3	CBO	Community-Based Organisation
4	CCD	The Covenant Centre for Development (CCD)
5	COMDEKS	Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative
6	CSAR	Central Semi-Arid Region
7	CSO	Civil Society Organisation
8	DMKS	Darshna Mahila Kalyan Samiti
9	DONER	(Ministry of) Development of Northeastern Region
10	EPCO	Environmental Planning & Coordination Organisation (Environment Dept. Govt. of M.P.)
11	ERC (UNDP)	Evaluation Resource Centre
12	ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
13	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
14	GDI	Gender Development Index
15	GEB	Global Environmental Benefit
16	GEF	Global Environment Facility
17	GHG	Greenhouse Gas
18	GI	Geographical Indication
19	GII	Gender Inequality Index
20	GIM	Green India Mission
21	GOI	Government of India
22	GVS	Green Valley Society
23	ha	Hectare
24	ICCA	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area
25	ICR	Indian Coastal Region
26	INDCs	India's Nationally Determined Contributions
27	INR	Indian Rupee
28	IP	Implementing Partner
29	KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
30	KII	Key Informant Interviews
31	KM	Knowledge Management
32	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
33	MJ	Megajoule
34	MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
35	MSPs	Multi-Stakeholder Platforms
36	MSSRF	MS Swaminathan Research Foundation
37	MTR	Mid-term Review
38	MW	Megawatt
39	NAPCC	National Action Plan on Climate Change



40	NEP	National Environment Policy
41	NER	Northeastern Region
42	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
43	NHI	National Host Institution
44	NRM	Natural Resource Management
45	NSC	National Steering Committee
46	NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
47	OFP	Operational Focal Point
48	OP7	Seventh Operational Phase
49	PA	Protected Area
50	PIMS	Project Information Management System
51	PIR	Project Implementation Review
52	PLANT	Participatory Learning Action Network and Training
53	POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
54	PPG	Project Preparation Grant
55	PPVFRA	Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority
56	RC	Regional Coordinators
57	RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
58	SC	Scheduled Caste
59	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
60	SES	Social and Environmental Standards (UNDP)
61	SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (UNDP)
62	SGP	Small Grants Programme
63	SHG	Self Help Group
64	SKECH	Sri Kannapiran Educational & Charitable Trust
65	SPEED	Society for People Education and Economic Development Trust
66	SPREAD NE	Society For Promotion Of Rural Economy & Agricultural Development North East
67	SNEHPAD	Society for Northeast Handmade Paper Development
68	TAG	Technical Advisory Group
69	TBD	To Be Determined
70	TE	Terminal Evaluation
71	TERI	The Energy and Resources Institute
72	TK	Traditional Knowledge
73	UCP	Upgraded Country Programme
74	UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
75	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
76	UNDP CO	United Nations Development Programme Country Office
77	USD	United States Dollar



1.Executive Summary

Table 1. Project Information Table

Project Title: Seventh Operational Phase of Small Grants Programme in India			
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	6253	PIF Approval Date:	June 11, 2019
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	10125	CEO Endorsement Date:	May 28, 2021
Country(ies):	India	Date project manager hired:	Sep 15, 2021
Region:	Northeast, central semiarid and coastal regions.	Inception Workshop date:	Mar 29, 2022
Focal Area:	Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation, Land Degradation	Midterm Review completion date:	20 th of November 2024
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	Biodiversity, land degradation and climate change mitigation.	Planned closing date:	Sep 15, 2026
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF Trust Fund	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI)		
Other execution partners:			
Project Financing	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (US\$)	MTR according to PIR 2 (2024 June)	
[1] GEF financing:	<u>4,474,886</u>		
[2] UNDP contribution:	1,500,000	<u>400,000</u>	
[3] Government:	1,900,000		
[4] Other partners:	5,200,000	<u>183,372</u>	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	8,600,000	583,372	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	13,074,886		

1.1 Project Description

The Seventh Operational Phase (OP7) of the GEF Small Grants Programme in India aims to enable communities and organizations in some of the most vulnerable and least developed areas of India to take collective action. This is achieved through a participatory landscape planning and management approach aimed at enhancing socio-ecological resilience through innovative livelihood options that produce local and global environmental benefits. Building upon achievements and lessons learned



during earlier operational phases, the OP7 project is focused on three regions in the country: the highlands of the Northeast, the Central semi-arid region, and the Indian coastal regions.

Globally significant biodiversity in these regions faces a variety of threats, ranging from land use changes in natural habitats to overexploitation of natural resources, proliferation of invasive species, and climate change. Moreover, poor land management practices and other factors, including climate change, have led to extensive forest, land, and coastal zone degradation. This degradation results in diminished ecosystem services, lower agricultural yields, and food supplies, and exacerbates the vulnerability of marginalized communities to the impacts of climate change. Many rural communities in the target regions lack access to commercial and clean energy, due to a lack of infrastructure, low levels of affordability, and limited awareness and technical know-how.

The project strategy addresses the threats and barriers in the target regions to generate multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, and the well-being of local communities. This is achieved through participatory, integrated land and resource management approaches implemented across socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes. Achieving landscape restoration goals requires collaboration with local communities and recognition of their knowledge of ecosystems. Convergence with national and local policies have proven effective in achieving landscape resilience and connectivity through sustainable land use systems. The project has a strong commitment to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable sub-groups within the communities, such as women and marginalised tribal communities. This is done by supporting their productive and sustainable initiatives. Additionally, the project invests in strategic projects that build knowledge and capacity, generating synergies among smaller local actions. The aim is to build long-term ecological, social, and economic resilience in rural landscapes.

1.2 Project Progress Summary

The project has a **Moderately Satisfactory** rating, presenting relevant and robust management arrangements, and maintaining a participatory and collaborative approach that allows effective engagement of stakeholders. The project is on track to achieve most of its end-of-project (EOP) targets and the results related to the project components. Delays observed in the initial phase of the project are being addressed by the implementing partner to ensure timely achievement of EOP targets, following due diligence in awarding proposal grants. During the MTR period, most of the activities outlined in the work plan had been implemented, and 14 indicators defined in the framework, including seven mandatory ones were on track to be achieved (except for core indicator six and indicator nine & ten). Effective contributions are being made towards climate-resilient landscapes in the Northeastern Region, Indian Coastal Region, and Central Semi-Arid Region, based on the results of socio-ecological resilience assessments.

The project has been a strong advocate for gender issues and is highly recognized for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in every step of the program cycle. A gender focal point was designated within each RAC to ensure the review of gender considerations in project selection. The project prioritizes working with women groups, particularly women's self-help groups (SHGs). The Country Programme team, as part of project preparation, undertook a gender analysis, and formulated a specific gender strategy and action plan to engage women's groups as primary actors in landscape management. During project implementation, it is observed that many selected partner NGOs (such as CONCEPT, Bhagirath and others) have engaged women's SHGs as primary actors in their interventions (such as landscape management, livelihood development, biogas for cooking etc.), recognizing their crucial role in using and managing natural resources, and addressing the gender division of labour in livelihood opportunities. Although some NGO partners' projects (such as MSSRF's project on ghost gears which works with fisherfolk) had faced challenges with engaging women's groups in their intervention, given the nature of their intervention, it is understandable. Overall, the implementation of



Gender Action Plan at MTR stage was largely effective and relevant, as is reflected in the gender disaggregated beneficiary data tracked and reported (provided later in this report).

The engagement of vulnerable and marginalized communities, such as tribal and nomadic communities in the districts where projects are being implemented, is a significant focus of strategic landscape partners, along with strengthened conservation of globally significant biodiversity, enhanced ecosystem resilience, and improved access to ecosystem services based on an integrated landscape management approach and community-driven projects. Linkages were drawn to relevant programs and schemes, leading to co-benefits such as improved adaptive capacity, food security, and poverty reduction.

The project aims to adopt low-emission, efficient, and clean technology initiatives of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in the three strategic landscapes. The project is also contributing to strengthening landscape governance and adaptive management by catalysing multistakeholder platforms to discuss and promote alternatives to enhance socio-ecological resilience. These platforms function as partnership networks, carrying out participatory baseline assessments and developing landscape strategies that outline priority issues and actions to focus on. The project is successful in organizing a knowledge management strategy and communications strategy, including campaigns, educational materials, newsletters, booklets, social media campaigns, and cross-landscape learning exchanges between actors. This ensures that the priority actions of these strategies are being implemented across the project, establishing and maintaining the SGP Learning Forum, and assisting the Country Programme Management Unit (CPMU) in sharing lessons and experiences across the target regions.

1.3 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Table 2. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	The project strategy, as outlined in the Prodoc, remains relevant and effectively aligned with the expected results. According to document review and interviews with representatives of MoEFCC and UNDP, the project aligns with India's national and state-level priorities. The project establishes landscape multi-stakeholder platforms for strengthening the socio-ecological resilience of local communities. The project's gender strategy, analysis, and action plan demonstrate robust and effective measures to ensure gender-positive and transformative outcomes. It acknowledges the differential roles and contributions of women in managing natural resources and the gender-specific allocation of productive resources like land and water.
Progress Towards Results	Objective To enable communities and organizations to take collective action for socio-ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods for local and global environmental benefits in three key landscapes of globally significant ecosystems in India.	According to the latest PIR, the 8 grants approved during the last reporting period contributed 1,003 ha of land under improved practices through climate resilient crop variety, use of vermi-compost in place of chemical fertilizers, renovation of existing ponds for surface water recharge, plantation in coastal sacred groves and formation of Coastal Sacred Groves Management Committee. However, the targets related to mandatory indicator 6 are too high even after the approval of 3 grants during the last reporting period, reaching 7,856.7.4 metric tons



	<p>Achievement Rating Moderately Satisfactory (4)</p>	<p>of CO2 (lifetime direct) (1.1% of the EOP target) and 15,700 metric tons of CO2e (lifetime indirect) as of 30 June 2024.</p>
	<p>Outcome 1.1: Globally significant biodiversity protected, and ecosystem services enhanced through improved community-led management practices and systems.</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (4)</p>	<p>It was observed that 6 new partnerships have been identified between CBOs and enabling stakeholders for biodiversity and/or land degradation initiatives and a total of 6 out of 60 organizations are headed by women. including 2 women-led CBOs from the Central Semi-Arid Region, The Sri Kannapiran Educational & Charitable Trust (SKECH Trust) helps provide livelihoods to women through the grant “Integrated Development of Farming Communities with Climate Proofing Interventions” in the India Coastal Region. Women’s participation in farming is higher as most of the youth migrate abroad in search of better employment opportunities. Women stay behind to tend to farming practices, SKECH ensured that every village’s SHG is well-informed and trained. They are expected to obtain an organic certification for the Ramand Mundu Chili, a peculiar indigenous variety. Lotus Progressive Centre (grantee from NER) is supporting the creation of 20 seed banks which will be maintained by the local farmers for preserving indigenous variety of paddy and vegetables.</p>
	<p>Outcome 1.2: Appropriate low emission, efficient and clean technologies and solutions adopted at scale.</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Unsatisfactory (2)</p>	<p>The project began implementation of 5 grants during the last reporting period that contributes directly to this indicator, saving 20.66 million MJ of which 20.6 MJ due to saving of fuelwood, 0.06 million MJ due to savings in electricity. The end of the project targets will require an upscaling grant this year for implementation of climate change related projects, as targets are far from achievement in most of the landscapes.</p>
	<p>Outcome 2.1: Community institutions strengthened for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience</p>	<p>It was identified from the reports that feedback was received from the NSC and the multi-stakeholder platform that the project carried out multiple consultations aimed at equipping participants and key stakeholders with crucial knowledge and skills related to the landscape approach. The project plans to work closely with all relevant stakeholders for inclusion of these actions in the Gram Panchayat Development Plans.</p> <p>The Society for People on Education and Economic Development Trust (SPEED) from the Indian coastal region of Tamil Nadu has conducted training sessions on leadership and gender sensitization and has also formed decision making committees in each community that have women members. These committees make decisions on selecting landscapes and types of tree</p>



	<p>Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (4)</p>	<p>saplings for ecosystem restoration in “sacred groves” in their communities. Meanwhile, another NGO partner, the Society for NorthEast Handmade Paper Development (SNEHPAD) from the Northeast region, has empowered most of its women SHGs in decision-making. These women choose the agricultural crops they want to grow, such as mushrooms, or diversify their incomes through eri silkworm or bee culture development and develop valuable supply chains to reach domestic markets.</p>
	<p>Outcome 2.2: Strengthened capacities and systems for upscaling of successful community initiatives</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory (5)</p>	<p>Since its inception, the project has actively engaged potential grantees to promote cash co-financing in the SGP portfolio, aiming for 50% participation from women-led CBOs. This included explaining co-financing requirements during three regional workshops, where representatives from government and local leaders explored synergies with existing government schemes. During the upcoming reporting year, 10 capacity-building workshops were held. In addition, the project identified organizations capable of mobilizing co-financing during regional training and capacity-building workshops across three landscapes.</p>
	<p>Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory (5)</p>	<p>The project's management and reporting systems have been robust, with timely delivery of key documents and regular updates to reflect project progress. The continuous monitoring of the risks and SESP assessments demonstrate the project's proactive approach to addressing environmental and social considerations, essential for maintaining project effectiveness. These efforts set a solid foundation for continued implementation and achievement of project objectives in subsequent reporting periods. Project indicators as reported in PIRs were gender-disaggregated, and the reports sent by NGOs also tracked the impact on women beneficiaries. This included the number of participating community members, women-led projects, beneficiaries that participated in FPIC consultations and training/capacity building workshops and projects contributing to equal access to resources and decision-making for women.</p>
<p>Project Implementation & Adaptive Management</p>		<p>The implementation partner (TERI) is recognized by all key stakeholders as an experienced and reliable partner, essential for the success of the project due to its familiarity with the rules and operational dynamics of the involved institutions, its ability to meet deadlines, and its high-quality and transparent communication practices. The technical team and consultants make regular visits to project sites to provide capacity strengthening, monitoring, and facilitate joint learning initiatives. The management arrangement at the project</p>



	<p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory (5)</p>	<p>site level is context driven, innovative, fostering ongoing learning and innovation.</p> <p>The implementation of the gender action plan is monitored and evaluated throughout the project timeframe. Adaptive management measures are put in place as needed to adjust the plan to current circumstances and according to the findings of monitoring and evaluation efforts.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Achievement Rating: Moderately Likely (3)</p>	<p>Government of India and respective State Governments have taken significant steps to strengthen the institutional framework and governance structures to ensure the sustainability of project interventions. For example, MoEFCC, Government of India, via forest departments of respective states, has supported ecosystem restoration projects under SGP in all landscapes, by providing technical support and saplings to NGO partners, along with additional support for scaling up these interventions. Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated a new program to develop Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for plastic, fishing gear and other waste management in coastal regions of Tamil Nadu (one of SGP project’s ICR landscapes), and with support from an RAC member, NGO partners such as MSSRF working in this landscape are being engaged with the government to scale up SGP project interventions. There is no significant socio-economic risk to the project’s sustainability. The management arrangement at the landscape level allows autonomy for local partners in setting priorities. No risks to financial sustainability have been identified, as the project has secured commitments from various stakeholders to support its long-term goals. The project faces several environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustenance of its outcomes. Climate factors such as forest fires have been reported by two partners in the Northeast region.</p>
<p>Rights Based Approach & Gender Equality</p>		<p>The project has made significant strides in promoting gender equality and mainstreaming gender issues into its socio-economic and environmental benefits. Bhagirath from ICR has successfully provided a clean source of fuel to women who previously had to collect fuelwood for cooking. This initiative has led to better health outcomes and given these women extra time to pursue income-generating activities. SPREAD from NER has 200 beneficiaries, 80% of whom are women. They have transformed the waste-equivalent water hyacinth into an income-generating resource. This allows women to earn additional livelihoods for their households, empowering them to improve their status in both private and public spheres. The NGO partner is also forming clusters of women in groups of 30-35 to</p>



	<p>Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (4)</p>	<p>further motivate them to establish their supply chains and reap economic benefits as a collective.</p> <p>A considerable number of team members from TERI, UNDP, and landscape implementing partners have sufficient awareness and knowledge of relevant gender issues, achieved through targeted capacity-building programs and continuous engagement. Active participation and representation of women were encouraged during the selection of NGOs and project implementation, with six out of the 30 NGOs from the ongoing projects being led by women. CONCEPT in Madhya Pradesh was a flagbearer in integrating LNOB strategies with gender. They were collaborating with three SHGs beneficiary groups from the Scheduled Tribe community, primarily engaged in agriculture. With farm labourers outnumbering landowners and small land holdings, the seasonal agricultural income was insufficient to sustain families. To address this, the project enhanced income opportunities for 10 SHG members by introducing solar-powered Incubator and Brooder Centres. Backyard poultry, a lucrative livelihood option, especially for women in tribal regions, aligned with their traditional practices and allows them to maintain their routine activities undisturbed. These programs have been instrumental in familiarizing NGOs/CBOs with the importance of including women in projects and mainstreaming gender in project interventions.</p>
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1.4 Concise Summary of Conclusions

The SGP in India, after two decades, has achieved significant learnings, refined its strategy and incorporated lessons learned. The MTR rates the project as **Moderately Satisfactory**, noting efficient and cost-effective implementation despite procedural challenges. The project aligns with national priorities and demonstrates strong country ownership through active stakeholder engagement. Its progressive design is underscored by the integration of gender-sensitive strategies, which have significantly increased women's participation in local governance and decision-making processes.

Innovative livelihood initiatives, such as solar-powered egg incubators, biogas plants and multi-layered farming, have laid a strong foundation for socio-economic and environmental transformation. The project's strength lies in its ability to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, CBOs, and government bodies, addressing complex multi-sectoral challenges. TERI and regional coordinators have enhanced community participation, decision-making, monitoring, gender inclusivity, and community ownership. NGO partners have been central to implementation and monitoring, ensuring gender-inclusive and community-centred interventions. However, low local government engagement and procedural challenges need addressing as does realistic calibration of renewable energy targets.

Gender mainstreaming is a fundamental component integrated into all project interventions. The project has successfully built the capacity of CBOs, including women and other marginalized groups, to enable their active participation in the project. Additionally, income-generating plans for CBOs in the



intervention landscapes have been formulated. The project has produced and disseminated information on best practices, including specific knowledge products targeted at women and marginalized groups. However, more workshops and knowledge-sharing sessions are needed to address persistent gender inequalities.

Despite delays in grant approvals, regional offices support NGOs and CBOs in developing high-quality proposals. The project’s work-planning processes are results-based and aligned with the results framework. Monitoring and evaluation systems are of decent quality, providing timely and transparent information with satisfactory stakeholder involvement. However, there is scope for improving project’s M&E systems through training and technical support to NGOs and CBOs. UNDP and MoEFCC facilitate co-financing, though most co-finance flows from the private sector and the same can be expanded to explore financing options to achieve clean technology targets. Expediting strategic grants and reducing co-finance requirements will alleviate financial burdens on smaller NGOs, enabling them to focus on impactful interventions and ensure sustainable outcomes. The implementation partner’s platform supports management, financial reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of projects. However, periodic bookkeeping and accounting support is needed, especially for smaller NGOs with limited capabilities, to cope with the rigour of online systems. Grievance redressal mechanisms also require to be implemented.

However, the project faces a few gaps, particularly in engaging men in gender sensitization workshops and securing sustained engagement from local and state authorities. Procedural delays and technical capacity gaps among local partners have also hindered progress. Despite these challenges, the project has demonstrated significant socio-economic benefits and strong community ownership, providing a scalable blueprint for sustainable development. By addressing these gaps, the project can maximize its potential impact, setting a benchmark for future initiatives within the UNDP-GEF portfolio.

1.5 Summary of Recommendations

Table 3. Recommendations Summary

REC#	Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project, etc.	Entity Responsible	Timeframe
1	<p>Recommendation for Outcome 1.2</p> <p>Indicator 9 & 10: Formation of strategic alliances with private sector partners and funding institutions to co-finance climate change projects following a Blended Finance Approach.</p> <p>Recommendation for Outcome 2.2</p> <p>Indicator 13: To enhance co-financing outcomes through convergence with government programmes and projects implemented by bilateral and multilateral agencies in the programme landscapes</p>	TERI/NGO Partners/UNDP/SGP NSC	By the end of project OP7
2	<p>Recommendation on Implementation Arrangements</p> <p>A key gap in the project implementation arrangements is that the project’s National Steering Committee (NSC) does not follow the recommended structure and hence it is recommended that the NSC</p>		



	include recommended number of women members, and also appoint a gender focal point.		
3	<p>Recommendation for Outcome 2.1</p> <p>Recommendation to Enhance Community-level Training and Capacity Building by NGO Partners To enhance socio-ecological resilience through participatory governance, it is recommended that TERI and NGO partners conduct comprehensive capacity-building training to integrate community members with project objectives. Given the strong community support observed by MSSRF, additional community level training initiatives are necessary to address the impacts of tourism and marine pollution. SPEED's findings highlight the need for community training in identifying alien plant species to prevent the introduction of exotic species.</p> <p>Project Level Monitoring & Evaluation Systems</p> <p>Recommendation on Enhancing Training, Documentation, and Monitoring TERI should improve offline training to NGO partners and extend reporting deadlines, while RAC suggests increasing field visits for expert oversight. Increased field visits by RAC members would also enhance expert guidance to NGO partners.</p> <p>Recommendation for Outcome 3.1</p> <p>Regional-level workshops are proposed to provide bookkeeping and technical support to NGOs, with the suggestion that TERI could hire and send accounts interns to assist NGO partners, at least in the initial reporting cycles.</p> <p>Rights Based Approach & Gender Equality</p> <p>Recommendation: Community level gender training for men should be prioritized as a rights-based approach to fostering gender equality.</p> <p>Recommendation on Gender Mainstreaming TERI should strengthen capacity-building initiatives under the programme by providing in-depth training on thematic aspects of gender mainstreaming and gender transformative approach for both NGOs and community institutions.</p>	TERI/NGO Partners	By the end of 2025
4	<p>Revision of End-of-Project Targets for Renewable Energy Indicators</p> <p>Recommendation for Outcome 1.2</p>		



	<p>Indicators Covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (million metric tons of CO₂e). • Indicator 9: Energy saved due to adoption of low-emission, energy-efficient, and clean solutions (MJ). • Indicator 10: Increase in installed renewable energy capacity across different RE solutions (MW) <p>Revise end-of-project targets to align with ground realities, considering the technical and financial constraints faced by implementing partners. Recommendation is to consider re-negotiating / revising renewable energy installed capacity, GHG emission reduction and energy saving targets by at least 50% from the targets included at CEO-ER approval stage.</p>	SGP NSC/ TERI	By mid 2025
5	<p>Work Planning</p> <p>Recommendation on Enhancing Equipment, Infrastructure, and Financial Processes</p> <p>Local NGOs should prioritize equipment and infrastructure, while TERI can streamline financial processes and expand support for sapling distribution.</p>	TERI/NGO Partners	2025/2026 depending on the grant cycle of each NGO
6	<p>Finance / Disbursements</p> <p>UNDP should expedite disbursement of funds to NGO partners by simplifying and streamlining procedures.</p>	UNDP/TERI	By end of 2025
7	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Recommendation on Implementing Grievance Redressal Mechanism</p> <p>UNDP should operationalize a Grievance Redressal Mechanism for better stakeholder communication.</p>	UNDP	2025
8	<p>Communications & Knowledge Management</p> <p>Recommendation on Improving Knowledge Sharing and Exposure</p> <p>TERI should focus on case studies, cross-learning, and exposure visits to build best practices and foster collaborative efforts.</p>	TERI	2025-26
9	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Recommendation: Deliberate and develop a prudent and robust exit strategy to ensure the</p>	UNDP/TERI &	2025-26



The UNDP-GEF MTR of the full-sized project titled Seventh Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme in the India (SGP-OP7) (PIMS 6253), implemented under NGO modality by the implementing partner TERI, has the following purpose, objectives and scope:

- Assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document (PRODOC).
- Assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.
- The relevance of the Project to the national and sectoral level particularly on the implementation of the SGP and to the target beneficiaries' needs and priorities.
- The effectiveness of the Project implementation strategies in the achievement of objectives and results based on the Theory of Change and Results Framework.
- Review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.
- The likely contribution of the project to the overall impact of addressing pressing environmental and associated social and economic challenges, by capacitating local communities and institutions, with support from the government to pilot and implement initiatives that promote biodiversity protection.
- Analyse the cross-cutting issues and application of the rights-based approach, gender responsiveness, and leaving no one behind (LNOB) in the project interventions, particularly with the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) framework. This will also include contribution of the project towards promotion of gender equality.

In addition, the MTR will serve as baseline for the project implementation unit to adjust implementation plan or act upon possible shortcomings for UNDP India and TERI to assess implementation.

The project started in September 2021 and is in its third year of implementation.

2.1 Methodology

This MTR was based on document analysis and collection of evidence and feedback from different stakeholders related to the project design, monitoring, and implementation. The MTR consultants team complemented the analysis with field visits to observe the interventions carried out. This was supported with a thorough review of all available information related to the project, based on the information produced during the preparation stage of the mission: Project document, Project Implementation Report¹, budget information, related and cross-cutting policies of the project² (Annex 7). The focus was on gathering core and relevant information to assess the project's execution in relation to its Results Framework. The overall approach and methodology were participatory and consultative, and the evaluation followed the guidelines established in the UNDP Guide for conducting final evaluations of projects financed by the GEF. The evaluation was conducted by a team of international and national consultant.

Key Principles Guiding the Methodology

1. **Participatory Approach:** Ensuring active involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process to capture diverse perspectives.
2. **Gender and Human Rights Perspective:** Embedding gender equality and human rights considerations throughout data collection and analysis.
3. **Theory of Change Framework:** Evaluating project progress based on the logical sequence of outputs and their expected effects.

¹ Latest PIR dated June 2024 was used.

² Please refer to Annex 7 for the List of Documents that were reviewed.



4. Knowledge Management: Identifying best practices and lessons learned to inform future GEF-funded projects.

Justification for Methodological Approach

The chosen methodology aimed to ensure that the evaluation captured diverse perspectives and produced actionable recommendations. The participatory and consultative approach allowed for meaningful engagement with stakeholders, ensuring the collection of reliable, context-specific, and comprehensive data. Given the complexity of the project, with its multi-stakeholder nature and geographically diverse landscapes, the combination of document analysis, field visits, and interviews provided an appropriate balance between depth and breadth of evaluation. A focus on triangulation further strengthened the validity of the findings by cross-verifying data from multiple sources.

Participatory Tools

Several participatory tools were employed to gather qualitative insights, including:

- **Participatory Construction of the Project Timeline:** To discuss adaptive changes and learnings.
- **Focus Groups:** To explore key topics in depth.
- **Appreciative Inquiry:** To identify strengths, successes, and opportunities for improvement.

These tools enabled the evaluators to capture stakeholders’ impressions systematically and build coherent responses aligned with the evaluation Matrix (Annex 2). The MTR team followed a collaborative and participatory approach, ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office, the Regional Coordinators, Partner NGOs, Landscape Strategic partners, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Data Analysis Techniques and Sampling Strategy

1. Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation of diverse geographies, stakeholder groups, and project interventions. Criteria for selecting sites and stakeholders included:

- Geographic diversity (highlands, coastal regions, and arid zones)
- Variation in project outcomes and challenges
- Logistical feasibility within the review timeline

Table 4: Data on Sampling Strategy

Stakeholders	No. Of Stakeholders Consulted during MTR Preparation	% of Total
Cycle 1 NGO Partners	14 NGOs (8 in person/field visits, 6 Online)	93%
Community Visits	2-3 per NGO visited in-person	10-15%
RAC Members	3 (All online)	17%
RCs (TERI)	3 (In Person)	100%
TERI SGP Project Team	All	100%
UNDP Project Team	All	100%

2. Triangulation and Data Synthesis



Triangulation was a cornerstone of the analysis process, combining data from:

- Document review
- Field observations
- Stakeholder interviews and focus groups

3. Evaluation Approach

The methodological approach had the purpose of providing opportunities and conditions to collect and systematize evidence-based information that is reliable and useful. Seeking to enhance the value of participation and the perspective of different stakeholders, the evaluators interviewed relevant stakeholders including project beneficiaries from each landscape groups, some partners were interviewed in-person during the field visits and while selected few were consulted online³ (Annex 6). This data collection process was implemented ensuring compliance with UNDP and GEF guidelines on participation, gender equity, and human rights, among others.

This method ensured cross-verification of findings, reducing biases and enhancing reliability. Data synthesis involved identifying patterns, drawing comparisons across different sites, and aligning findings with the project's Results Framework. Gender-responsive tools were applied to ensure that cross-cutting themes, such as gender equity and women's empowerment, were thoroughly analyzed.

The triangulation of data, information, and findings from field observation and document review enabled the construction of analysis that revealed the project's progress in terms of the strategies adopted and the intended outcomes. The approach of co-constructing knowledge facilitated the formulation of recommendations to contribute to any necessary course corrections within the project scope.

Stakeholders' involvement was assured by focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews with those who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: National Steering Committee (NSC); Partner NGOs; Multistakeholder Platforms; Women-led Organizations and other CBOs; UNDP Team, Project Team (TERI/ Implementing Partner); SGP grantees and projects' beneficiaries, including women and vulnerable communities.

Gender-responsive methodologies and tools (Annex 3) were also used to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs were tracked and reported in PIRs and are reviewed and reported into the MTR report. Please refer to Annex 3, Interview Guide used for Data Collection, which includes components on gender responsive methodologies utilized. The MTR team, within the time and budgetary constraints of this MTR assignment, made efforts to identify vulnerable groups, as well as to listening to the opinions and impressions of the women involved in the project's actions on the ground.

Field visits were conducted to hear from nine NGO Partners from three landscapes: ICR, NER and CSAR, with special attention to Multistakeholder Platforms, women-led organizations, youth and SGP grantees and projects' beneficiaries. In dialogue with TERI, seven sites were selected for the visits: from the highlands of NER in Assam, Lotus Progressive Centre (LOTUS) and Aranyak, from ICR, on the Konkan coast of Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district: Bhagirath, and on the coromandel coast in Tamil Nadu's Ramanthapuram district M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). and SPEED, and from CSAR in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur District: Darshna Mahila Kalyan Samiti (DMKS) and Haritika and Concept Society in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh. For this choice, logistical issues, availability of NGO partners in the review timeline, and diversity were considered, aiming to select landscapes that were differentiated in social and environmental terms, being one each from strategically chosen landscapes, and with different challenges and outcomes.

³ Please refer to Annex 6 on detailed list of persons interviewed.



Based on the development of the Evaluation Matrix⁴ (Annex 2), semi-structured questionnaires⁵ (Annex 3) were prepared for groups of actors identified in the Inception Report. The semi-structured questionnaire was adapted for conducting FGDs with communities and NGO teams as well as individual interviews with different stakeholders. The MTR process and the mission itinerary timeline is available in Annex 6 (Annex 6 - List of persons interviewed) for Stakeholder interviews coordinated and conducted based on guided interviews (Annex 3 – Interview guide for data collection).

The methodology employed for this MTR combined document analysis, field visits, stakeholder engagement, and participatory tools to ensure a thorough evaluation of the project. By triangulating data and applying gender-responsive and inclusive approaches, the evaluation team has developed a robust framework for assessing the project's achievements and providing actionable recommendations for its future course.

There were no limitations to the MTR. UNDP, TERI, NGO Partners and local communities provided timely and adequate support to all phases of the work, allowing access to relevant documents, facilitating contact with persons to be interviewed and logistical support to field visits. NSC members were also collaborative, responding in an agile manner to MTR teams contacts.

2.2 Structure of the MTR Report

The structure of the report conforms to what is indicated in Annex B of the ToR "Guidelines on the content of the MID-TERM EVALUATION report," which proposes the following six chapters:

1. Executive Summary; 2. Introduction; 3. Project description and background context; 4. Findings; 5. Conclusions and recommendations and 6. Annexes.

3. Project Description and Background Context

India, covering 2.4% of the world's surface area and home to 17.7% of the global population, boasts diverse agroclimatic zones ranging from the Himalayan peaks to tropical rainforests and a 7,517 km coastline. 700 million rural people depend on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, forests, and fisheries for their livelihoods. The SGP has been strengthening local communities' capacities to achieve conservation and socio-economic outcomes, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups. The design of the full-size OP7 project focuses on three regions: the highlands of the Northeast, the Central semi-arid region, and the Indian coastal regions.

Region 1: Northeastern Region

Northeast India comprises eight states – Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim – and shares international borders with Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and China. The region is ecologically fragile and biologically rich with vulnerable ecosystems and biophysical characteristics. Parts of Assam and Meghalaya are part of the Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspots. Key biodiversity areas in the region include the Manas National Park, situated at the northern edge of Assam, bordering Bhutan. Natural resources in the region are being exploited and manipulated in several ways. The Northeast region did not benefit much from the Green Revolution, which was confined to a few states in North India, leading to significant socio-economic upliftment in other parts of the country. Human poverty is influenced by a lack of skills and livelihood opportunities among the poor. Unemployment in the region is high, with the unemployment rate of rural youth (15-29

⁴ Refer to Annex 2 MTR Evaluative Matrix

For finding evaluative questions on relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness of the project

⁵ Refer to Annex 3 for Example Interview Guide used for Data Collection



years) in Assam at 27.6% during the reporting period July 2017-June 2018, as documented in the 2019 Periodic Labour Force Survey annual report published by the National Statistical Office.

Region 2: Indian Coast Region

According to the 2011 Census, 17% of India's total population resides in the 66 coastal districts of the 9 coastal states. Indian coasts are under threat due to multiple stressors like climate change and anthropogenic activities driving vulnerabilities such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, frequent extreme events, and saltwater encroachment. The Indian subcontinent, with a long coastline of 8,041 km, is exposed to nearly 10% of the world's tropical cyclones. Climate change issues are of major concern for coastal regions of India, mainly because of the vulnerability of the poor to climate change and the large spatial and temporal variations in the climate. Since the 1990s, the coastal agrarian economy has encountered a range of problems brought on by a complex set of factors, often rooted beyond the coast itself. In agriculture and fisheries, productivity has remained static or even declined. Fragmentation of landholdings, increased size, and efficiency of fishing fleets, increasing urbanization, and growing population pressure have reduced effective yields from the land and sea. Thousands of hectares of mangrove forests along Indian coasts have been reclaimed for agriculture, industry, and urban development. Mangrove areas have been used for discharging industrial effluents, sewage, and garbage. Urbanization and coastal development have created significant pressures on coastal areas. Degradation of coastal ecosystems has negative implications for coastal communities dependent on these ecosystems for their livelihoods.

Region 3: Central Semi-Arid Region

The states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh lie in the Central semi-arid region. The region faces serious challenges due to a lack of food security and economic opportunities for many residents. India has been implementing the National Food Security Act 2013 since July 2013, but challenges remain, exacerbated by socioeconomic disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Low productivity of lands and small landholdings have led to high levels of unemployment, increasing the region's vulnerability. Under current agricultural practices, many dryland farmers are unable to earn a year-round livelihood. For pastoralists or goat/cattle keepers, water scarcity, feed scarcity, and animal diseases are major problems. Reducing pasturelands and common grazing lands creates further pressure on the land. Biodiversity and food security are related. An inter-cropped, traditional variety of crop has a much higher chance of surviving a bad and erratic monsoon, allowing farmers to secure their basic food needs. Crop diversification and intercropping systems are means to reduce the risk of crop failure due to adverse weather events, crop pests, or insect attacks. Arid and semi-arid regions are expected to undergo significant climate changes. Adverse weather, in the form of prolonged dry spells or delayed rains, has considerable negative effects on harvest yields and impacts the lives of the people much harder.

The intervention landscapes were selected based on the following criteria: (1) high socioeconomic vulnerability, (2) biodiversity values, (3) vulnerability to climate change, and (4) land/coastal zone degradation conditions. Selection of intervention landscapes was confirmed during the project preparation phase through consultations with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and other stakeholders.

3.1 Problems, Threats and Barriers that the Project aims to address

India's biodiversity faces significant threats from land use changes, overexploitation of resources, invasive species, and climate change, with large-scale development projects and conversion of ecosystems exacerbating the issue. Land degradation affects 29.32% of India's land, reducing soil productivity and ecosystem services, leading to increased vulnerability to climate change, especially for the poor and women. Waste management, particularly in rural areas, poses severe public health risks, with improper disposal contributing to disease. Socioeconomic barriers in less developed districts,



including low adaptive capacities and limited resources, hinder development, with COVID-19 exacerbated inequalities in labour markets and food security.

Threats in Demarcated Landscapes

Upon reviewing the project documentation, several critical threats have been identified across specific landscapes targeted by the SGP interventions:

1. **Northeastern Region (Assam and Meghalaya):** Part of the Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspots, this region faces ecological fragility compounded by socioeconomic challenges. Vulnerable ecosystems with significant biophysical sensitivities are prevalent. The exploitation of natural resources contributes to the degradation of these biologically rich areas.
2. **Indian Coastal Regions (Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu):** These areas face multifaceted threats driven by climate change and human activities. Vulnerabilities include sea-level rise, coastal erosion, frequent extreme weather events, and saltwater intrusion. Coastal ecosystems, particularly mangrove forests, have suffered significant degradation due to urbanization, industrialization, and agricultural expansion. This has been compounded by ghost nets and related plastic pollution in the coastal areas, adversely impacting fishing activities and saline intrusion into groundwater tables due to poor land management practices. Consequently, agricultural and fisheries productivity has stagnated or declined due to land fragmentation, overfishing, and growing urban pressures.
3. **Central Semi-Arid Regions:** In regions like Madhya Pradesh, the threats are primarily due to deforestation, overgrazing, and unsustainable agricultural practices. These activities lead to soil erosion, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity. The local communities, heavily dependent on agriculture and livestock, face significant challenges due to declining land productivity and water availability. Additionally, the socioeconomic conditions are strained by limited access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, further exacerbating poverty and vulnerability.

Barriers Analysis

The long-term vision of the project is to generate multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, and the well-being of local communities through participatory, integrated land and resource management approaches implemented across socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes. The following barriers are currently impeding the achievement of this vision:

1. **Limited Capacities and Knowledge:** Community organizations have limited capacities and knowledge to plan, manage, and coordinate the use of their production landscapes with a long-term vision for biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and increased sustainability and productivity of ecosystem goods and services. Communities are not adequately involved in decision-making for sustainable land management practices and lack knowledge of ecosystem functions, the value and loss of biodiversity, and sustainable alternatives.
2. **Technical Know-How:** Community organizations lack the technical know-how to improve the productivity and sustainability of their agroecosystems, install and apply renewable energy solutions, or manage land and resources to optimize ecosystem services. National programs promoting appropriate crop varieties, good soil management practices, and organic agricultural methods have been insufficient to reverse unsustainable production practices leading to the loss of important species and habitats as well as to increased emissions of CO₂ and therefore food insecurity is a pervasive problem. Ecosystem services and biodiversity degrade due to overharvesting of non-timber forest products, unsustainable livestock management, and soil and water mismanagement, heightening the risk from drought and extreme weather events. Provision of energy services is weak, with technological alternatives to grid extension poorly



tested and distributed. Low-cost solutions are not adequately demonstrated or accessible, and there is an inadequate interface between technology developers and local communities.

3. **Innovation and Commercialization:** Community organizations have weak capacities to innovate, diversify, and commercialize their products and services while improving livelihoods and landscape resilience. Unemployment and underemployment lead to rural-urban migration. Innovation, scaling-up of previous experiences, securing financial incentives, and leveraging market opportunities for niche products are not sufficiently promoted. Demonstration of successful models linked with financial institutions is inadequate, especially in remote areas. Small agricultural producers, who often practice biological control and protect water sources, face economic vulnerability due to market obstacles.
4. **Governance and Representation:** Community-based organizations have limited or weak representation and participation in formal inter-institutional governance structures at the landscape level. There is inadequate convergence, synergies, and integration of government priorities, programs, and schemes with those of NGOs, the private sector, and community-based organizations. Cross-sectoral coordination is lacking, which is essential for successful landscape approaches. Coordination issues limit the potential of initiatives to be scaled up, especially through a landscape approach. The private sector is not adequately sensitized or motivated to invest in community-based sustainable production initiatives.
5. **Microfinance Access:** Community organizations lack knowledge to manage and access microfinance schemes to improve livelihoods and production landscapes. Restoration or improvement in ecosystem services, innovation, renewable energy application, and entrepreneurship development require investment mechanisms, which are limited due to lack of knowledge and enabling conditions to access existing microfinance schemes.
6. **Waste Management:** Communities in vulnerable and lesser-developed areas have limited information on waste disposal facilities and cost-effective sustainable solutions. There is a lack of technical know-how for planning and developing integrated solid waste management plans. Self-sustaining and replicable business models of waste management are inadequate. Although there are best practices in community-led sustainable waste management, dissemination and replication are missing. The legislative framework on waste management exists but is not adequately implemented.
7. **Land Degradation and Desertification:** Community organizations lack technical know-how to address land degradation and desertification. Increased food demand due to a rising middle class puts pressure on agricultural land, which has reached optimal production capacity. Poor and unsustainable land management has led to increased degraded land, particularly in central and northeastern India.

3.2 Project Description and Strategy

The GEF funded SGP has been operational in India for over two decades, focusing on empowering local communities, particularly women and marginalized groups, to achieve conservation and socio-economic objectives. Since the fifth operational phase (OP5) in 2012, India has been part of the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP). The design of the full-size OP7 project focuses on three regions: the highlands of the Northeast, the Central semi-arid region, and the Indian coastal regions.

The National Steering Committee has selected Biodiversity, Land Degradation, and Climate Change as priority sectors. In the selected landscapes, implementing agencies have designed interventions to mitigate risks associated with these sectors, employing grassroot led bottom-up approach.

The project objective is to enable communities and organizations to take collective action for socio-ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods, providing local and global environmental benefits in three key landscapes of globally significant ecosystems in India. The project strategy, as the GEF aimed



at removing the barriers outlined in the Development Challenge section of the Prodoc, is broken down into the following five outcomes distributed across three mutually supportive components:

Component 1: Resilient Landscapes for Sustainable Development and Global Environmental Benefits.

- Outcome 1.1: Globally significant biodiversity protected, and ecosystem services enhanced through improved community-led management practices and systems.
- Outcome 1.2: Appropriate low emission, efficient, and clean technologies and solutions adopted at scale.

Component 2: Enhancing Sustainability through Participatory Governance and Upscaling of Best Practices

- Outcome 2.1: Community institutions strengthened for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience.
- Outcome 2.2: Strengthened capacities and systems for upscaling successful community initiatives.

Component 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The expected results by the end of the project cycle for GEF Core Indicators are as follows:

- Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares): End-of-project target: 10,000 ha
- Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) End-of-project target: 60,000 ha
- Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas) End-of-project target: 1,200 ha
- Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO₂e) End-of-project target: 695,000 tCO₂e (lifetime direct); 100,000 tCO₂e (lifetime indirect)
- Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment End-of-project target: 16,800 (of whom 9,240 are female and 7,560 are male)

3.3 Project Implementation Arrangements

The Project Implementation Arrangements comprises the **National Steering Committee (NSC)**, which in keeping with past best practice, the UNDP Resident Representative appoints in consultation with the MoEFCC. The NSC, composed of government and non-government organizations with a non-government majority, a UNDP representative, and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas, is responsible for grant selection and approval and for determining the overall strategy of the SGP in the country. The NSC also contributes to bridging community-level experiences with national policymaking. Additionally, there is a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) composed of a pool of voluntary experts on call to serve as a technical sub-committee. The direct implementation of the project falls under the responsibility of TERI, which allocates resources for small projects of local organizations, conducts monitoring of these projects, promotes training activities, exchanges, communication, and manages the entire project.

The **UNDP Country Office (CO)** is the business unit in UNDP for the SGP project and is responsible for ensuring the project meets its objective and delivers on its targets. The CO will make available its expertise in various environment and development fields as shown below. It will also provide other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial management services, as required. UNDP will be represented in the NSC and will actively participate in grant monitoring activities. The CO



will participate in NSC meetings, promoting synergies with other relevant Programmes, and support the design and implementation of the SGP strategy, among other things.

TERI, the Implementing Partner, conducts detailed project management, functions as the secretariat for the strategic work of the NSC, and oversees project selection. Additionally, TERI is responsible for:

1. Drafting calls for proposals and managing the proposal selection process.
2. Monitoring the project portfolio and providing technical assistance to beneficiaries during project conception and implementation.
3. Preparing reports for UNDP, GEF, and other donors.
4. Implementing capacity development actions for communities and their grassroots organizations, as well as providing advisory services.
5. Proposing and implementing communication and knowledge management strategies and plans to ensure adequate visibility of GEF investments and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.
6. Mobilizing resources.

At the Landscapes level, each region has **Regional Advisory Committees (RACs)** established by the Implementing Partner for each target region, i.e., ICR, NER, and CSAR, to pre-screen project proposals, provide strategic guidance to the MSPs in the project intervention landscapes, promote innovative approaches, facilitate engagement of enabling stakeholders in the project regions, strengthen capacities, monitor and advise the small projects within the landscapes and make recommendations for ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the project grants.

3.4 Project Timing and Milestones

The project started operating in September 2021, the Midterm Review was carried out from September to November 2024, and the project execution is planned for five years. It is currently in its third year of implementation, and it is expected to end in August 2026.

3.5 Main Stakeholders Summary List

During MTR, stakeholder engagement plan was reviewed and analysed on its implementation status. The main stakeholders and their indicative responsibilities in the scope of the project implementation are outlined as follows:

Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Community Based Organizations	Main participants in landscape planning exercises, skills-building, and use of easy-to-handle technologies, including training and documentation of experiences and dissemination of knowledge gained through peer-to-peer exchanges, etc. Special attention is given to organizations led by and serving women, vulnerable groups and communities, and youth.
NGOs, strategic partners	They lead and facilitate participatory baseline assessments and landscape planning processes; partners in multi-stakeholder partnerships for each landscape; are signatories to community level partnership agreements; provide technical assistance to community organizations for implementation of their projects; and are potential participants on policy platforms.
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	MoEFCC co-chairs the NSC and is the nodal ministry in the administrative structure of the Central Government for planning, promoting, coordinating and overseeing implementation of India's environmental, forestry, land degradation, climate change related policies and programmes.
SGP National Host Institution /	The SGP NHI / IP is responsible for implementation of the SGP India Programme. The IP is the Secretariat to the NSC and helps in mobilizing



Implementing Partner (IP)	co financing, organizing strategic partnerships and supports successful achievement of Country Programme objectives as described in the Project Document. The IP will establish regional coordinating offices in the three project target regions.
SGP NSC	Functions as the project board. The NSC reviews and approves SGP strategies; advises regarding multi-stakeholder partnership composition and terms of reference; approves criteria for project eligibility based on proposal by multi-stakeholder partnership and SGP Operational Guidelines; reviews and approves projects submitted by SGP National Coordinator; reviews annual project progress reports and recommends revisions and course corrections, as appropriate.
Technical Advisory Group	Comprises a pool of experts that review project proposals in early stages. A national level panel will support the NSC with technical and strategic issues.
Other Union Ministries	Other union ministries of Government of India have a direct mandate and bearing on the project. These include the Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Rural Development and Land Resources; Ministry of Tribal Affairs; the Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Ministry of Power, Ministry of Non-Renewable Energy, the Ministry of Development of Northeast Region, and the Ministry of Tourism.
State Governments	Various State departments such as the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, including the State Biodiversity Boards; Panchayat Raj, Energy and Power, Education, Planning, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Land and Water Resources, Waste Management State Watershed Missions, State Livelihoods Missions, Fodder & Forage Departments are particularly noteworthy and linked to the relevant activities of the SGP.
District and local administrations	These are headed by the District Collector/ Magistrate and include functionaries responsible for different aspects of district governance. Of relevance to this project are functionaries responsible for district planning (District Planning Officer), fisheries (Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries), agriculture (District Agriculture Officer), forests and wildlife (Deputy Conservator of Forests), livestock (District Animal Husbandry/Livestock Officer), soil and water engineers, officials of the Women and Child Department. At the taluka/block level there are Panchayat Samitis and the Block Development Officers (BDOs) and at the village level there are Gram Panchayats. Biodiversity Management Committees are also present at the local level to support implementation of the Biodiversity Act 2002.
Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State level Urban Development, Municipal Corporations (MCs) and Pollution Control Boards	These are statutory authorities entrusted to implement environmental laws and regulations within the jurisdiction of the centre and state. National pollution control norms are set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). State boards ensure proper implementation of the statutes, judicial and legislative pronouncements related to environmental protection within the State. State boards have the responsibility of implementing the following environmental acts and rules, either directly or indirectly: Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Rules and notifications made thereunder (including EIA notifications), Hazardous Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989. Urban municipal bodies also facilitate and check the safe waste management practices under the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2000, Plastics Wastes Rules, 1999, etc.



<p>Agricultural Universities and other science, environment and educational universities and institutions</p>	<p>Various technical and academic institutes and universities will help build capacities at the grassroots level through low cost, easy-to-adopt technologies tested on farmers' fields as well as energy and waste management technologies. Links are made between community practices, educational institutions and universities to develop the same into business models and approaches, source young men and women as interns for studies, analysis, documentation and local capacity building.</p>
<p>Private Sector, Chambers of commerce and industry</p>	<p>Collaboration between SGP partners and the private sector and industry are crucial for leveraging resources, knowledge, practices and skills to influence the corporate sector to adopt such technologies, processes, methodologies, systems, products for better sustainability and for increased income for local communities. The SGP has developed links to the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of the private sector for wider resource mobilization for grantee partners and for building more confidence and credibility of the program and its approach at the community level.</p>
<p>Banks and financial institutions</p>	<p>The SGP and communities are being linked at the local levels to access credit facilities through small kinship-based, women's self-help groups (SHGs), for bookkeeping, accounts trainings and capacity building. This extra financial access is not only helping in building local community institutions and trust at the community and project levels but is also enhancing the adoption of technologies and skills by the local communities. Nearly 80% of the users/beneficiaries are women. Such links are also helping in building the skills in project planning, implementation, training, documentation, media management, networking, hosting workshops and business model approaches.</p>
<p>SHGs, Women Forest Protection Committees, Federations, Cooperatives, Fishermen's Associations, Youth Groups, etc</p>	<p>These will encourage collective action for sustainable resource use through informal community-based institutions in the implementation of SGP activities. As they are networked locally, they would also take on the role of peer sharing of innovative practices.</p>
<p>UNDP, as GEF implementing agency and Other UN and bilateral agencies</p>	<p>Its role is to oversee the successful design and implementation of the project providing quality assurance. UNDP is a senior member of the National Steering Committee and participates in all sessions, providing advice and information to maximize the effect of the Country Programme on the vulnerable areas of India. Synergies and complementary opportunities will be advocated among projects and initiatives supported by other UN and bilateral agencies.</p>

4 Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1 Project Design

The project strategy, as outlined in the Prodoc, remains relevant and effectively aligned with the expected results. According to document review and interviews with representatives of MoEFCC and UNDP, the project aligns with India's national and state-level priorities on biodiversity conservation



(National Biodiversity Action Plan 2008), renewable energy (National Solar Mission), clean water (Jal Jeevan Mission and State Watershed Missions), ecosystem restoration (National Action Plan for Climate Change), rural livelihoods (National and State Rural Livelihood Mission), and climate change adaptation (India's Nationally Determined Contributions). The project is relevant with respect to several of the SDGs, most notably SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The strategy was consistent with the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2023-2027 and demonstrates strong country ownership through active stakeholder engagement, including government officials and local communities. The project established landscape multi-stakeholder platforms for strengthening the socio-ecological resilience of local communities.

Participation status and insights from previous phases have been crucial in shaping the project's strategy following the landscape approach, inspired by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS). This approach had been fruitful in developing new partnerships, networks, and strengthening community resilience. The project employed a three-tier governance structure and landscape-level multi-stakeholder platforms, generating participative and consultative processes with approximately 43% women participation in districts.

TERI and regional coordinators have provided location-specific expertise, significantly contributing to community participation, decision-making, monitoring, gender inclusivity, community ownership, and strengthening the social fabric. NGO partners have been central to project implementation and monitoring, ensuring women's engagement and community-centered interventions, particularly for ST populations. For example, the choice of species planted in the afforestation projects was in keeping with the local context. In the CSAR region, in the project implemented by Hartika and MDKS, mostly timber and fruit bearing horticulture species were planted on degraded land.

The project results framework, as designed in the Prodoc, remains valid, supported by a logical framework and the 'Theory of Change'. The project design incorporated gender issues and "leaving no one behind" strategies, including a gender action plan, emphasizing gender equality in climate change and empowerment. The project's gender strategy, analysis, and action plan demonstrated robust and effective measures to ensure gender-positive and transformative outcomes. Gender mainstreaming discussions at NSC and regional inception workshops have enhanced women's participation in land restoration activities through SGP grants. Regional training workshops have identified organizations capable of significant contributions, encouraging women-led NGOs to apply for OP7 grants.

Key Problems and Assumptions

The project addresses key problems such as biodiversity loss, land degradation, and climate change impacts. Underlying assumptions during the project design included the integration of GESI lens through an in-depth gender analysis across the three project landscapes. Changes in context or assumptions affecting project results are monitored through PIRs and discussions with TERI, UNDP, and NGO partners.

Risk Identification

The risk identification process adopted during the project design stage was relevant to the context, addressing key operational, social, environmental, financial, and strategic risks associated with project implementation. The prodoc appropriately recognized the low technical and managerial capacity of CBOs as a significant operational risk, rated as "low" with a likelihood of 3 and impact of 2. This assessment is justified given the mitigation measures, such as capacity-building initiatives, proposal development grants, and thematic strategic grants to strengthen CBOs' engagement and performance.

Emerging risks during implementation included the need for adaptive strategies to address challenges such as climate unpredictability, public health crises (e.g., COVID-19), and limited market access for community projects. The structured involvement of MSPs and the guidance provided by the NSC



mitigated coordination and landscape management risks. Strategic measures, such as integrating gender action plans, stakeholder engagement, and environmental safeguards, were also appropriately designed accounting for landscape related project risks.

While financial risks such as exchange rate fluctuations and potential economic recessions were rated as “substantial” in the prodoc, annual budget reviews and adjustments were proposed to address these issues effectively. However, mobilisation of co-finance from stakeholders who committed co-financing letters during project design stage remains low, and mitigation measures for this have not yet been identified.

Governance and Decision-Making

The project employs a robust governance mechanism, with decisions guided by the Prodoc. The project follows an online financial management system that facilitates entry of vouchers/ bills at the NGO level and subsequent scrutiny/ consolidation and generation of financial and accounting statements at different levels- NGO, Regional, Implementation partner level and by the MoEFCC at National level.

Governance and oversight progress are tracked through steering committee meeting minutes, call for proposals analysis, annual reports/PIRs and NGO partner selection processes. Stakeholder perspectives, including those of beneficiary communities and NGO partners, were integral to the project design and implementation, ensuring inclusive and effective decision-making.

4.1.2 Results Framework/Logframe

In terms of the logical framework design, the objectives, outcomes, and components are clear, practical, and achievable. The midterm and end-of-project targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and tend to be feasible within their time frame. Beneficial development effects were included in the project results framework and are monitored regularly, including broader development and gender aspects of the project. The logical framework design is robust, ensuring coherence and alignment between activities, outcomes, and expected impacts. However, certain indicators (e.g., Indicators 6, 9, and 10) lack realistic time-bound targets and fail to reflect the on-ground capabilities of implementing partners such as NGOs.

SMART Analysis of Targets

- **Specific:** Most midterm and end-of-project targets are specific, with well-defined indicators aimed at tracking progress on energy efficiency, renewable energy capacity, and GHG mitigation.
- **Measurable:** The indicators and targets are mostly measurable, but issues arise with capturing reliable data for Indicators 9 and 10 due to insufficient baselines and monitoring tools.
- **Achievable:** Many targets are over-ambitious, especially for renewable energy installations and GHG emissions mitigations, considering the technical and financial capacities of local NGO implementers, especially in Core indicator 6 and Project Indicators 9 & 10.
- **Relevant:** The targets are relevant to the project’s core objectives of addressing energy efficiency, clean energy adoption, and climate mitigation, aligning well with SDG 7 and SDG 13.
- **Time-bound:** While some indicators are time-bound, those with unattainable end-of-project targets (e.g., Indicators 9 and 10) require a reassessment to reflect the project’s realistic timeframes and constraints.

Outcome Indicators	Progress Toward Midterm and End-of-Project Targets
Indicator 9:	Progress in energy savings is significantly lagging, with only 17% of the end-of-project (EOP) target achieved. Fuelwood savings account for 23% of the



	EOP target, while electricity savings remain negligible (0%). This suggests overestimated targets and challenges in scaling low-emission solutions.
Indicator 10:	Renewable energy capacity installation has reached only 1.16% of the EOP target. Specific shortfalls include solar PV (1.4% of target) and biomass (20% of target), indicating challenges in resource mobilization, technical implementation, and scalability.
GEF-7 Core Indicator 6	Lifetime GHG emissions mitigated stand at approximately 7,853 metric tons CO ₂ e (direct), which is substantially lower than the 695,000 metric tons CO ₂ e lifetime direct target. This reflects a significant mismatch between the projected impact and actual achievements.

Need for Revising/Amending Project Targets and Indicators

- **Overambitious Targets:** Indicators 9, 10, and Core Indicator 6 were set without fully considering the operational and financial capacities of implementing partners.
- **Lack of Ground Realism:** Targets fail to capture the realistic potential of NGO interventions, such as limited adoption rates of clean technologies and renewable energy solutions.
- **Data Monitoring Gaps:** There are gaps in tracking progress, particularly for lifetime energy savings and GHG emissions reductions, which hinder accurate assessments.

While the project’s results framework and objectives are well-aligned with broader development goals, key targets require revision to better reflect the practical capabilities of on-ground stakeholders and available resources. Recalibrating these indicators and strengthening monitoring mechanisms will improve project effectiveness and ensure realistic progress tracking.



4.2 Progress Towards Results

4.2.1 Progress Towards Outcome Analysis

Table presents the progress towards results analysis, regarding the achievement of results against End-of-Project Targets at the stage of the MTR; the following table shows the Rating Matrix for each result and objective:

Table 5. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of Outcomes against End-of-Project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ⁶	Baseline Level ⁷	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-Term Target	End of Project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁸	Achievement Rating ⁹	Justification for Ratings
	Mandatory Indicator, GEF-7 Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares) SDG 15.3;	Under OP5, there were 11 LD projects.	0 ha of area of land restored .	5,000 ha included among the approved projects by midterm.	10,000 ha	403.6 Ha of land area has been brought under activities contributing to restoration of land (4.036 % of End of Project (EOP) Target.	MS	EOP targets will be achieved. Out of the 60 projects currently being executed after a review by NSC members, 17 projects are expected to restore over 14,717 hectares through various activities. These activities include the development of Antyodaya Vatikas, improving soil quality through surface water recharge, invasive weed disposal and grassland

⁶ Data from Logframe and Scorecards will be used.

⁷ Data from Project Document will be used.

⁸ This segment will be colour coded Green, Yellow and Red based on final assessment.

⁹ the 6-point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU



							management, afforestation with local grasses and elephant fodder herbs, water body de-silting, and embankment strengthening for land restoration. Among these 17 projects, 4 partners have reported that approximately 403.6 hectares of land have already been brought under restoration activities. This progress indicates a positive impact, but there is still significant work to be done to achieve the overall restoration goals.
	Mandatory Indicator, GEF-7 Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (hectares)	Sustainable land and resource management projects benefitting biodiversity were implemented in the Western Ghats, Himalayan Front and Arid and Sem Arid regions of India	0 ha of landscape under improved practices.	30,000 ha included among the approved projects	60,000 hectares	1520.5 ha of land under improved practices.	MS EOP targets will be achieved. Out of the 60 projects, 32 are expected to bring 43,356 hectares of land under improved practices. These activities include the plantation of trees, herbs, shrubs, and fodder grasses, promotion of relevant bunding, installation of micro irrigation systems, formation and renovation of farm ponds, introduction of high-yield crop varieties suitable to local climatic conditions, establishment of nurseries and coastal sacred grove management committees, and restoration of water



							<p>bodies and coastal sacred groves. According to reports from 7 partners, multiple improved practices have already been introduced in approximately 1,520.5 hectares of land. This progress is promising, but there is still considerable work needed to achieve the overall goals.</p>
	<p>Mandatory Indicator, GEF-7 Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (hectares; excluding protected areas) SDG 14.2; SDG 14.b</p>	<p>Under OP5, there were interventions on enhancing coastal ecosystem services and protecting biodiversity through artificial reefs and promoting of sustainable fishing among small-scale fishers</p>	<p>0 ha of marine habitat under improved practices.</p>	<p>600 ha included among the approved projects by mid term</p>	<p>1,200 hectares</p>	<p>397.5 ha of marine habitat brought under improved practices.</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>Targets on Track to be achieved. Currently, three proposals are expected to bring 731 ha of marine habitat under improved practices. These activities include ghost gear clean-up drives, developing a voluntary code of practice for ghost gear management among local communities, demonstrating ghost gear reuse as an economic commodity for livelihood promotion, seaweed farming, developing green mini recirculatory aquaculture systems, integrated fish farm development, GIS-based cluster planning, micro cold-chain facilities for women fish vendors, and standardizing dry fish production and marketing systems.</p>



							While the progress is on track and the activities are diverse and impactful, the current scope covers only 731 hectares, which is significantly less than the target of 1,200 hectares. This indicates that although the initiatives are beneficial and progressing, there is still a considerable gap to be addressed to meet the overall target.
	Mandatory Indicator, GEF-7 Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (million metric tons of CO2e) SDG 7.1; SDG 13.2; SDG 13.3	200,000 metric tons CO2e achieved in OP5	0 tCO2e.	Approx. half of the envisaged CCM projects approved by midterm	695,000 metric tons CO2e (lifetime direct) over the lifetime of the GHG mitigation projects; 100,000 metric tons CO2e (lifetime indirect)	7853.02 metric tons CO2e (lifetime direct) over the lifetime of the GHG mitigation projects; 15700 metric tons CO2e (lifetime indirect)	U EOP targets might not be achieved. Currently, 11 out of the 60 ongoing projects include activities that contribute directly to mitigating GHG emissions. These activities involve implementing low carbon technologies to reduce fuel wood consumption and GHG emissions, installing solar incubators to replace coal-based thermal power incubator systems, planting immunity booster plants, and promoting solar stoves, solar-based irrigation, and organic farming. Despite these efforts, the progress towards the target is unsatisfactory. The current activities, while beneficial, are not sufficient to meet the



								ambitious goal of mitigating 695,000 metric tons of CO2e directly and 100,000 metric tons of CO2e indirectly. There is a significant gap between the current achievements and the overall target, indicating the need for more robust and widespread implementation of GHG mitigation activities.
	<p>Mandatory Indicator 1, GEF-7 Core Indicator 11: # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co benefit of GEF investment (individual people) SDG 1.4; SDG 1.b; SDG 5.a; SDG 7.1;</p>	<p>Cumulative total of 433 projects supported by SGP, with average 58% female and 42% male beneficiaries.</p>	<p>626 direct project beneficiaries (of whom 257 are female, 369 are male).</p>	<p>5,000 (of whom 2,750 are female and 2,250 are male), based on the approved projects by midterm</p>	<p>16,800 of whom 9,240 are female (55%) and 7,560 are male</p>	<p>8,064 direct project beneficiaries (2578 women, 5864 men)</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>48% of the EOP target will be achieved, according to the latest PIR.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the project organized activities and moved forward with grant implementation, benefitting 8,064 individuals (5,486 male, 2578 female). 30 grants initiatives on biogas, distribution of improved cook stoves (Integrated Development System), and climate resilient crops, distribution and application of vermicomposting, creation/rejuvenation of farm ponds, installation of off-grid solar powered energy efficient incubators, amongst others.</p> <p>Landscape wise contribution with ICR contributing 6,336 individuals (4,436 male, 1,900 female).CSAR</p>



							<p>contributing 1,440 individuals (813 male, 627 female) and NER contributing 288 individuals (237 male, 51 female).</p> <p>In addition, the project has secured the approval from the National Steering Committee of an additional 14 grant proposals contributing directly to this indicator which, upon completion, are expected to directly benefit additional 7,000 individuals – 42 % of the EOP target (2,586 female – 27% of the EOP target and 4,414 male – 58% of the EOP target): 1,878 in ICR, 1,724 in CSAR and 3,399 in NER by January 2026.</p>
<p>Component 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental benefits.</p> <p>Outcome 1.1: Globally significant biodiversity protected, and ecosystem services enhanced through improved community-led management practices and systems.</p>	<p>Indicator 6: Sustainable management of common resources, as indicated by the number of new partnerships between CBOs and</p>	<p>A wide range of partnerships were realized under OP5, including with governmental departments and agencies, foundations and private sector enterprises</p>	<p>0 new partnerships between CBOs and enabling stakeholders for biodiversity and/or land degradation</p>	<p>3 identified in the set of approved projects in the first call for proposals</p>	<p>6 new partnerships between CBOs (including 3 women-led CBOs) and enabling stakeholders for biodiver</p>	<p>6 new partnerships identified between CBOs and enabling stakeholders for biodiversity and/or land degradation initiatives, including 2 women-led CBOs (66%</p>	<p>EOP targets will be achieved, according to the latest progress report.</p> <p>It was observed that 6 new partnerships have been identified between CBOs and enabling stakeholders for biodiversity and/or land degradation initiatives. A total of 6 out of 60 organizations are headed by women. including 2 women-led CBOs from the Central Semi-Arid Region and are</p>



<p>Output to achieve outcomes</p> <p>Output 1.1.1: Community level small grant projects implemented that conserve biodiversity and enhance ecosystem services through sustainable harvest of NTFPs and marine resources, rehabilitation or restoration of degraded ecosystems, management of human-wildlife conflict, managed natural regeneration of key habitats or others</p>	<p>enabling stakeholders for biodiversity conservation and/or restoration-rehabilitation initiatives in production landscapes, disaggregated by gender</p>		<p>initiatives.</p>		<p>sity and/or land degradation initiatives</p>	<p>of the EOP target).</p>	<p>currently engaged in discussions with National Rural Livelihoods Mission and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to expand their project activities and leverage government schemes applicable to their project, while also accessing credit linkage opportunities. The progress made by the project is promising.</p>
<p>Output 1.1.2: Community level small grant projects implemented that stimulate adoption of sustainable agroecological practices and systems by small and marginal farmers and fishers</p> <p>Output 1.1.3: Community projects implemented that strengthen conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity, including certification, labelling/branding of organic and green products, access to marketing channels for community level products, and documentation of traditional knowledge</p>	<p>Indicator 7: Maintenance and use of local agrobiodiversity, as indicated by the number of varieties or cultivars obtaining new or upgraded independent eco-certification</p>	<p>18 rare and threatened cultivars-breeds-varieties were brought under focused conservation practices, and 1 rice variety in Assam obtained geographical indication certification</p>	<p>0 varieties or cultivars obtaining new or upgraded independent eco-certification.</p>	<p>1 included among the approved projects in the first call</p>	<p>3 varieties or cultivars obtaining new or upgraded independent eco-certification</p>	<p>One organization is expected to obtain an organic certification for the Ramand Mundu Chili — a peculiar indigenous variety only available in the project area. This year, the organization promoted the cultivation of this variety of chilli while adopting the latest</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>According to the latest Progress Report, the project is on track to achieve its EOP targets.</p> <p>During the reporting period, significant progress was made with the implementation of the grant "Integrated Development of Farming Communities with Climate Proofing Interventions" by the Sri Kannapiran Educational & Charitable Trust (SKECH Trust) in the ICR. This project aims to obtain organic certification for the Ramand Mundu Chili, a unique indigenous variety, by the second year of implementation.</p>



						technology to increase its production.	<p>This year, the organization has promoted the cultivation of this chili variety while adopting the latest technology to boost its production. Measures are in place to expedite the process in the upcoming reporting period, and there are plans to call for proposals to meet the EOP targets for this indicator. While the progress is promising and on track, the rating of moderately satisfactory reflects that there is still work to be done to fully achieve the targets. The ongoing efforts and planned measures indicate a positive trajectory, but continuous monitoring and timely implementation are essential to ensure the successful completion of the project.</p>
	<p>Indicator 8: Documentation of traditional knowledge related to biodiversity, as indicated by the number of systems</p>	<p>OP5 made concerted efforts to engage particularly vulnerable tribal groups.</p>	<p>0 systems developed or strengthened.</p>	<p>5 included among the approved projects by midterm</p>	<p>12 systems developed or strengthened</p>	<p>Two systems developed/strengthened (16% of the EOP target).</p>	<p>EOP targets will be achieved, according to the latest PIR.</p> <p>Aaranyak (grantee) in, Assam (NER) is working to document traditional knowledge related to biodiversity conservation and management. Homestead gardens of 33 beneficiaries have been identified for scientific</p>



	<p>developed or strengthened where traditional biodiversity knowledge is documented, stored and made available to local people (e.g., Peoples Biodiversity Registers, traditional knowledge recordings, resource classification systems, etc.)</p>					<p>MU</p>	<p>management and upgradation through the project nursery. A biodiversity survey report has also been prepared by the grantee. Another NGO from NER, Lotus Progressive Centre (grantee) is supporting the creation of 20 seed banks which will be maintained by the local farmers for preserving indigenous varieties of paddy and vegetables. 3 training courses have been conducted to equip farmers with skills to document traditional knowledge related to biodiversity.</p> <p>In addition, 7 out of the 14 grant proposals approved by the NSC during this reporting period n total, 9 of 30 grant projects have proposed activities on preservation and propagation of indigenous varieties of seeds of which 4 are from the ICR, 1 is from the CSAR and 4 are from the NER. Opportunities are being explored to document traditional knowledge catering to a particular variety. These activities include promotion, preservation & propagation of indigenous seeds, plantation of indigenous</p>
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							<p>medicinal plants, and promotion of agrobiodiversity through promotion indigenous varieties of rice and ragi amongst others.</p> <p>These NGOs are also receiving capacity building workshops on documenting traditional knowledge during the upcoming reporting period, further contributing towards EOP target.</p>
<p>Outcome 1.2: Appropriate low emission, efficient and clean technologies and solutions adopted at scale.</p> <p>Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.2:</p> <p>Output 1.2.1: Broader adoption of successfully implemented community level renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and solutions through upscaling partnerships</p> <p>Output 1.2.2: Community level initiatives implemented that apply integrated RE and energy efficient technologies and solutions for productive use</p>	<p>Indicator 9: Energy saved due to adoption of low emission, energy efficient and clean solutions (MJ)</p>	<p>During OP5, 46 of the 102 projects involved CCM interventions, including smokeless stoves, solar cookers, bio-briquettes, biogas units</p>		<p>First call of CCM projects designed, procured and initiated; no quantitative midterm target</p>	<p>126 million MJ total, of which: 90 million MJ due to saving of fuelwood 36 million MJ due to savings in electricity</p>	<p>20.66 million MJ saved (17% of the EOP target), of which 20.6 million MJ is attributed to saving of fuelwood (23% of the EOP target) and 0.06 million MJ to savings in electricity (0% of the EOP target).</p>	<p>EOP targets might not be achieved.</p> <p>The project has saved 20.66 million MJ so far, which is only 17% of the EOP target. Most of this saving is from fuelwood, with minimal savings from electricity. There was no quantitative midterm targets set, making it difficult to measure progress effectively. Contributions vary significantly across different landscapes. For example, the NER region has not contributed any energy saving yet. The project plans to launch an upscaling grant to engage private sector partners and other funding institutions. This is crucial for</p>



							meeting the EOP targets. Identified activities like solar-based cold storage, irrigation, agrivoltaics, and fish drying through solar are promising but need effective implementation and scaling. To improve the rating, the project should focus on setting clear midterm targets, enhancing contributions across all landscapes, and accelerating the adoption of diverse renewable energy activities. Engaging more with private sector partners could also provide the necessary boost to achieve the EOP targets.
	Indicator 10: Increase in installed Renewable Energy Capacity across different RE solutions (MW)	RE solutions implemented under OP5 included hybrid solar and micro-hydro systems, biomass energy systems	0 MW installed	First call of RE projects designed, procured and initiated; no quantitative midterm target	3 MW total, of which: Solar PV = 2 MW Solar Thermal = 0.25 MWe = 0.75 MWt Biomass = 0.5 MWe = 1.50 MWt Biogas = 0.25	0.035 MW installed (1.16% of the EOP target), of which solar PV: 0.0295 MW (1.4 % of the EOP target, solar thermal: 0.006 Mwe (2.4% of the EOP target), biomass: 0.01 Mwe (20% of the EOP target), biogas: 0.25	U EOP targets might not be achieved. The rating for Indicator 10 is unsatisfactory due to several key factors. Firstly, the project has only achieved 1.16% of the EOP target, with just 0.035 MW installed out of the planned 3 MW. This includes minimal contributions from solar PV, solar thermal, biomass, and biogas solutions. The initial phase saw no installations, and while the first call of renewable energy projects was designed, procured, and initiated, there were no



					MWe = 0.75 MWt	Mwe (33% of the EOP target).	<p>quantitative midterm targets set, making it difficult to track progress effectively. During the reporting period, the project began implementing four grants approved in the last period, which included various small-scale installations such as solar-powered incubators, improved cook stoves, and solar pumps. However, these efforts have not significantly advanced the overall target. Additionally, the landscape-wise contributions have been uneven, with some regions like ICR making notable progress through biogas units, while others lag behind.</p> <p>Looking ahead, although there are projections that four out of thirty projects could achieve 1.35 MW installed capacity, this still falls short of the EOP target. The project must accelerate its efforts, particularly in engaging with private sector partners and scaling up diverse renewable energy activities, to improve its performance and meet the ambitious targets set.</p>
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<p>Component 2: Enhancing sustainability through participatory governance and upscaling of best practices</p> <p>Outcome 2.1: Community institutions strengthened for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience</p> <p>Outputs to achieve Outcome2.1:</p> <p>Output 2.1.1: Multi-stakeholder platforms established and/or strengthened for improved governance of intervention landscapes</p> <p>Output 2.1.2: Landscape strategies for effective governance developed based on results of participatory socio-ecological resilience assessments in the selected intervention landscapes</p>	<p>Indicator 11: Number of landscape strategies developed through participatory consultation and based on the socio ecological resilience landscape baseline assessments</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>0 landscape strategies developed and endorsed by multi-stakeholder governance platforms.</p>	<p>3 landscape strategies developed and endorsed by the multi-stakeholder governance platforms</p>	<p>3 landscape strategies under implementation and evaluated at end of project</p>	<p>3 landscape strategies have been developed and endorsed by the multi-stakeholder governance platforms and are under implementation.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 24px;">S</p> <p>EOP targets will be achieved, according to the latest PIR. under implementation. The project has successfully conducted multiple workshops that provided valuable platforms for stakeholders from diverse government departments, such as NABARD, Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam, NRLM, and various state departments including forest, agriculture, and fisheries. These workshops facilitated the strengthening of concepts proposed by NGOs and CBOs and allowed for brainstorming on local environmental issues and community-led initiatives under the SGP OP 7. Feedback from the NSC and the MSPs indicated that the project carried out numerous consultations to equip participants and key stakeholders with crucial knowledge and skills related to the landscape approach.</p> <p>During the reporting period, 19 capacity building workshops on Detailed Project Report (DPR) Presentation for second cycle grantees were held, along with 7 RAC meetings</p>
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							<p>and 6 multi-stakeholder workshops. Additionally, the project established three new multi-stakeholder governance platforms under the chairpersonship of District Collectors, bringing the total to 13 platforms since inception. These new platforms were established in Barpeta and Bongaigaon (Assam, NER) and West Khasi Hills (Meghalaya, NER) in May 2024.</p> <p>Overall, the project's proactive engagement with stakeholders and the establishment of additional governance platforms demonstrates significant progress towards achieving the EOP targets.</p>
	<p>Indicator 12: Landscape priority actions mainstreamed into local planning instruments, as indicated by the uptake priority actions</p>	<p>Under OP5, 63 Panchayats incorporated sustainable management practices into village level resource use plans</p>	<p>0 Panchayat development plans include at least one priority action from the landscape strategies by end</p>	<p>Priority actions described in the endorsed landscape strategies</p>	<p>14 Panchayats development plans include at least one priority action from the landscape strategies by end</p>	<p>13 Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) have been established to identify and prioritize actions within each landscape. During meetings with MSPs, representatives from the</p>	<p>EOP targets will be achieved, according to the latest PIR.</p> <p>Thirteen MSPs have been established to identify and prioritize actions within each landscape, with active engagement from panchayat-level representatives in reviewing priority areas for community-based projects. Additionally, eight new MSPs have been established in the Northeast Region, including Barpeta,</p>



	<p>outlined in the landscape strategies into Panchayati Raj development plans</p>		<p>of project.</p>		<p>of project</p>	<p>panchayat level are actively engaged in reviewing priority areas of action for community-based projects.</p>	<p>MS</p>	<p>Bongaigaon, West Khasi Hills, Udalguri, Ribhoi, and East Khasi Hills. A total of four stakeholder workshops and ten MSP workshops have been organized across three project regions, facilitating valuable discussions and planning. Since the project's inception, five meetings have been conducted with MSP members in the CSAR, ICR, and NER, focusing on district priority actions. Furthermore, three additional stakeholder workshops were held in Damoh and Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh, with participation from local NGOs and CBOs. The project plans to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to include these actions in the Gram Panchayat Development Plans. Seven capacity-building workshops have also been organized across the three project regions, covering topics such as effective monitoring and reporting, and Detailed Project Report presentations. While significant progress has been made, the moderately satisfactory rating reflects the need for continued efforts to ensure</p>
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								all MSPs are fully operational and effectively contributing to the project's goals. Enhanced coordination and follow-up actions will be crucial to achieving the EOP targets.
<p>Outcome 2.2: Strengthened capacities and systems for upscaling of successful community initiatives</p> <p>Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.2:</p> <p>Output 2.2.1: Partnerships between CBOs and government, civil society, private sector or donor programs and schemes strengthened, and resources leveraged for scale up and replication of good models/practices</p> <p>Output 2.2.2: Communities learn by doing and share experiences and good practices on business models and technology adoption</p> <p>Output 2.2.3: Best practices on adaptive management for landscape resilience identified, systematized and disseminated</p>	<p>Indicator 13: Enhanced financial sustainability, as indicated by the amount of cash co-financing obtained from hybrid grant or microcredit programs/schemes (in USD), disaggregated by gender</p>	<p>During OP5, direct cash cofinancing totalling more than USD 400,000 was obtained from a variety of sources, including the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), foundations, governmental programs and departments, and the private sector</p>	<p>USD 0 of cash co-financing.</p>	<p>USD 50,000 of cash co-financing included among approved projects from by midterm</p>	<p>USD 200,000 in cash co-financing, with 50% for women CBOs, for the cumulative portfolio of small grant projects under OP7</p>	<p>USD 100,000 in cash co-financing, with 0% for women CBOs, for the cumulative portfolio of small grant projects under OP7 (50% of the EOP target).</p>	S	<p>EOP targets will be achieved, according to the latest PIR.</p> <p>According to the latest evidence, USD 100,000 in cash co-financing, with 0% for women CBOs, for the cumulative portfolio of small grant projects under OP7 (50% of the EOP target).</p> <p>Since its inception, the project has actively engaged potential grantees to promote cash co-financing in the SGP portfolio, aiming for 50% participation from women-led CBOs. This included explaining co-financing requirements during three regional workshops, where representatives from government and local leaders explored synergies with existing government schemes. Additionally, the project identified organizations capable of mobilizing co-financing during regional training and</p>



							<p>capacity-building workshops across three landscapes.</p> <p>The 30 projects which have been approved by the NSC as of 30 June 2024 are under implementation stage have committed an amount of USD 1,809,042 (INR 149,861,022) of co-financing (cash and kind) with approximately 20% committed by women led NGOs/CBOs. Out of these 30 projects, 15 are projects of these, that are under implementation as of 30 June 2024. They stage since July 2023 have reported an amount of USD 183,372 of co-financing (USD 100,000 in cash and USD 83,372 in kind), with 0% for women CBOs, from various sources. (MoU SNEHPAD-AAUM, E24b-Aaranyak-In Kind, Green Valley Society). During the upcoming reporting year, 10 capacity-building workshops were held. In addition, the project identified organizations capable of mobilizing co-financing during regional training and capacity-building workshops across three landscapes. Such activities are expected to</p>
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							support reaching the EOP target for this indicator.
	<p>Indicator 14: Strengthened capacities of women groups to lead community development interventions, as indicated by the number of interventions upscaled or replicated by women's groups reported on the SGP Learning Forum e-platform</p>	<p>The SGP in India has facilitated the establishment and strengthening of many CBO women groups. The OP5 final report indicates that more than 2,000 women self-help groups were involved in 102 SGP projects across India</p>	<p>0 interventions upscaled or replicated by women's groups reported on the SGP Learning Forum e-platform</p>	<p>SGP Learning Forum e-platform operational</p>	<p>25 interventions upscaled or replicated by women's groups reported on the SGP Learning Forum e-platform</p>	<p>The SGP Learning Forum is in place, and it will be developed further in the upcoming reporting year which will have documentation regarding interventions undertaken by women's groups. At its third meeting, the NSC approved a Knowledge Management strategic grant. The grantee will be responsible for documenting all women-led interventions funded through</p>	<p>EOP target will be achieved, according to the latest PIR.</p> <p>The SGP Learning Forum is already in place and will be further developed in the upcoming reporting year to include documentation of interventions undertaken by women's groups. At its third meeting, the NSC approved a Knowledge Management (KM) strategic grant. The grantee will be responsible for documenting all women-led interventions funded through regular grants. This initiative is crucial for capturing and sharing valuable insights and best practices. The project has onboarded a partner to develop the SGP Forum e-platform, which is now operational. Moreover, the KM grantee will develop a strategy to facilitate the upscaling or replication of community development interventions, contributing to the achievement of the EOP target for this indicator. Overall, the proactive steps taken to establish and enhance the SGP Learning</p>



						regular grants.		Forum and the approval of strategic KM grants demonstrate significant progress and deserve a satisfactory rating.
<p>Component 3: Monitoring & Evaluation</p> <p>Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Outputs to achieve Outcome 3.1:</p> <p>Output 3.1.1: Project implementation effectively monitored and evaluated</p>	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	Although no indicator, midterm, nor end of project targets were set for this outcome, the project has, since inception, undertaken activities for fulfilling the same.	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	<i>(not set or not applicable)</i>	The project has, during the reporting period, undertaken the set activities contributing directly to this outcome. Specific indicators, midterm, or end-of-project targets are yet to be established for this outcome.	S	



4.2.2 Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

While there were no significant barriers preventing the achievement of the project's objectives, certain challenges persisted. One notable issue was the low level of engagement from respective local and state government authorities, which diminished the potential for the expected changes in the targeted landscapes. National public policies impacting communities relied, to some extent, on local government support for implementation, such as obtaining permissions and aligning with government-sponsored welfare schemes. Furthermore, the timely disbursement of funds, raising vouchers and invoices on the online financial management system, and dependency on state forest departments for resources (such as seeds and saplings) posed ongoing challenges that required resolution to facilitate smoother project implementation.

The low engagement from local government authorities was particularly concerning, as it directly impacted the project's ability to bring about desired landscape changes. For instance, NGO partners from the ICR region, such as PLANT, faced difficulties in securing permissions from local authorities for deploying artificial reefs in the targeted landscape. Similarly, another ICR NGO, SPEED, encountered challenges related to the high mortality rates of saplings provided by the forest department, which affected the survival rate of their project outcomes. This lack of engagement and awareness among government authorities resulted in delays and inefficiencies, ultimately hindering the project's progress. Greater participation and support from senior government authorities would have been instrumental in resolving these issues more promptly by streamlining processes and addressing community challenges in a timely manner. Without such support, the project risked struggling to achieve its full potential.

In addition, financial management processes presented further hurdles. Delays in the disbursement of funds and the mandatory requirement to raise vouchers and invoices on the online financial management system often disrupted project timelines. Several NGO partners, such as SPREAD, SPEED, and Bhagirath, highlighted these challenges during visits by the MTR team. In some landscapes, the situation was so severe that projects experienced financial shortfalls for up to six months, compelling team members to use personal funds to sustain project activities. While the project team recognized the importance of these financial processes, a need for enhanced technical capacity-building among NGO partners was evident, as partners varied in their preparedness to handle such requirements. These complications often jeopardized the overall project timeline.

For actions within the control of TERI and landscape strategic partners, specific areas such as gender issues, communication, and knowledge management required accelerated execution in the next project phase. Budget utilization also needed to improve to ensure objectives were met. Evidence of recent actions taken in these areas was provided; however, a more proactive approach, particularly in conducting gender sensitization workshops for men, was deemed critical to addressing the remaining barriers. Such efforts would be vital to overcoming challenges and ensuring the project's ultimate success.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.1 Management Arrangements

Over the years, the implementation of SGP in India has seen significant improvements in project management, making the implementation arrangements more robust. Responsibilities and reporting lines are clearly defined, and decision-making processes are transparent and timely. At the NSC level, management arrangements have been solidified with regular meetings convened as necessary. Monthly meetings are held between UNDP and the implementation partner to monitor project progress and address emerging issues. Additionally, the Project Board Meeting occurs at least once a year with the participation of key stakeholders, including the implementing partner, TERI, the GEF OFP MoEFCC, and UNDP. The technical team and consultants made regular visits to project sites to provide capacity strengthening, monitoring, and facilitate joint learning initiatives. The management arrangement at the project site level was context driven, innovative, fostering ongoing learning and innovation.



The implementation partner (TERI) was recognized by all key stakeholders as an experienced and reliable partner, essential for the success of the project due to its familiarity with the rules and operational dynamics of the involved institutions, its ability to meet deadlines, and its high-quality and transparent communication practices. The partner managed to connect technical and scientific accuracy with sensitivity to define the technology required by each specific project. TERI also provided field support, largely through its RCs located in the region at Goa, Bhopal and Guwahati. In addition, backstopping and monitoring support was also provided by the Team Leader, M&E specialist and Deputy Director, TERI.

The working methodology of the NGO partners was praised for encouraging debate within communities, valuing their local knowledge, respecting their autonomy, and involving them in resource management instead of simply offering ready-made solutions. Additionally, the partner demonstrated a willingness to collaborate with strategic partners and other key stakeholders, discussing solutions openly and inclusively to solve problems or take advantage of emerging opportunities. NSC members emphasized the high quality of presentations and information provided by the implementation partner TERI, either virtually or in face-to-face meetings. The GEF OFP highlighted the efforts from the partner to effectively engage them throughout the process. NSC members also acknowledged the partner's aptitude for integrating learning as a continuous endeavour. Strategic partners appreciated the partner's constant collaboration and assistance, including identifying areas for improvement and seeking out other funders and partners, training them on monitoring & evaluation, stimulating them to take bold steps towards performing a strategic role in their regions.

There was a high level of collaboration, openness, and transparency from the UNDP team in relation to the implementation partner and other key stakeholders. The MoEFCC (GEF OFP) views the UNDP role positively, noting its willingness to share documents and its agility in responding to any demands. UNDP participation in committee meetings was seen by GEF OFP as enlightening, providing insights into funding structures and procedures, and demonstrating good coordination with the implementation partner TERI. UNDP's communication area could more effectively support the visibility of innovations, learnings, and achievements of the SGP in India.

Most team members from the implementation partner, UNDP, and strategic partners were sufficiently aware of relevant gender inequality issues in their target communities and have made attempts to address them to achieve the project's objectives. However, there was a lack of knowledge within some NGO partners on methodologies and tools to approach gender inequalities in their contexts, which were being actively addressed by TERI and UNDP as part of its quality assurance function. Consultations on gender we conducted to review indicators by cross-referencing GEF indicators with those of the implementation partner and to elaborate a gender action plan for each project site.

To enhance local NGOs' capabilities, 1,924 capacity-building workshops and training programs have been conducted, addressing biodiversity conservation, land degradation, and climate change through community-led initiatives. Actions are based on co-financing and extensive local partner participation, with more than 50% of beneficiaries being women. The project ensures locally acceptable ways of stakeholder engagement, including for ST populations.

In terms of capacity building, access to positions of power, and income generation for women, the project was making satisfactory progress by effectively involving women in the design of projects, prioritizing women's economic enterprises, including measures to reduce women's workload, promoting women's training on innovative technologies, integrating women in key roles in the project teams at the field level, and stimulating women-led organizations to be active members in the partnerships networks and other instances of territorial and environmental monitoring and decision-making.

There were consistent practices for promoting women's participation in teams and decision-making instances of the project. The implementation partner's team directly working on the SGP is composed of women majority, although male colleagues also collaborate on specific aspects of the project. At the



project site level, strategic partners involve a significant number of women in the teams working directly on the project. For instance, in certain regions, partners have appointed mostly women as facilitators and coordinators. This confirmed that projects benefited women by ensuring their unique needs are understood and addressed. They also inspired and empowered other women, encouraging active participation in community projects. In all project sites, there were gender balance in strategic partners' teams and collaborators. Mechanisms for mainstreaming gender were in place at the programme level, such as the decision to appoint a gender focal point, however, the appointment for this position has not yet been made. There is also significant women's representation within the NSC, with 55% of women representatives.

4.3.2 Work Planning

The project was progressing on the right track, although there have been some delays in meeting the delivery targets for years 1 and 2, also leading to the postponement of this MTR. Several challenges had contributed to these delays. Firstly, the limited technical and management capabilities of NGOs and CBOs necessitated the establishment of regional offices in each of the three target landscapes to provide enhanced support for developing high-quality grant proposals. This support will continue in the upcoming years of the project timeline to assist CBOs in executing existing projects and new grants.

Continuous meetings with NGO-RAC-TAG for proposal preparation and project monitoring have been conducted. The project received approval for 15 additional community grants in addition to the 16 from cycle one from the NSC. Another call for proposals had also been advertised under the project, which will be final. For the Northeastern Region, the turnover for organizations applying for the RFP was reduced from INR 30 lakhs to INR 15 lakhs, as it was difficult to find partners meeting the turnover criteria working/ willing to work in the identified landscapes

Secondly, procedural delays in the approval and disbursement of community small grants have slowed project implementation. The first set of grants was approved by the NSC in June 2023, but the second and third tranche payments were delayed until January and May 2024, respectively. Similarly, the second set of community grants approved in November 2023 had their first tranche payments released only in May 2024, delaying the initiation of second cycle projects.

Additionally, to ensure effective oversight and performance monitoring, the project had established several mechanisms. Regular project team meetings are held between the UNDP CO and the project team to review financial and programmatic performance. Programme assurance visits were conducted to gain firsthand insights into project operations. Monthly meetings with the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) provided opportunities for in-depth discussions on project implementation progress. The UNDP CO was actively engaged with the project team to expedite activities, enhance project delivery, and address risks and challenges, utilizing corporate dashboards like Quantum (formerly Atlas) and PIMS+ for regular monitoring and updating of project social and environmental risks and mitigation measures.

Overall, the work-planning processes are results-based, with annual workplans clearly linked to outcomes and aligned with the project's results framework. The project team continuously reviews and updates the results framework in response to changes in the implementation context, ensuring that the work-planning processes remain focused on achieving the desired results.

4.3.3 Finance and Co-Finance

The financial management of the project had been strategically designed to leverage co-financing and ensure cost-effectiveness. For facilitating co-financing through project funding, the MoEFCC through the GEF OFP sent letters to the respective state Governments, introducing the project and directing them to issue letters to the respective district magistrates/ collectors for facilitating convergence with relevant Government programs.



The 30 projects that were undergoing implementation during this MTR had committed a total of USD 1,809,042 (INR 149,861,022) in co-financing, with approximately 20% allocated for women-led NGOs/CBOs. Among these, 15 projects that started in July 2023 have reported utilizing USD 183,372 in co-financing, comprising USD 100,000 in cash and USD 83,372 in kind from various sources. This strategic use of co-financing had been instrumental in advancing project objectives, particularly in enhancing gender equality and environmental resilience.

UNDP CO had also materialized in-kind co-finance of USD 300,000 through technical advisory support from ongoing UNDP projects, such as the Biodiversity Finance Initiative and the Northeast Bio-Cultural Conservation Initiative. However, the committed co-finance from NATWEST and EPCO had been delayed due to operational and political reasons, which have been escalated to senior management at CO and the UNDP Regional Bureau. An action plan was under preparation to resolve this issue promptly.

While the project was able to demonstrate high levels of co-finance, most of it flowed from the private sector (CSR grants), community level or international /national level NGOs/ Trusts, while funding from government agencies were still limited. All partners interviewed were confident of achieving the co-financing targets within the project timeframe. NGO partners were also confident of achieving other outcomes and goal level targets that they set for the project.

The project team had actively engaged with potential grantees to identify additional cash co-financing, with a target of 50% for women CBOs. During the reporting period, project requirements in terms of co-financing were explained to potential grantees, and representatives from other stakeholders, including government officials and panchayat leaders, were invited to workshops to explore potential collaboration with ongoing government schemes. Efforts were also made to mobilize co-financing from various corporates such as HCL Foundation and Reliance Foundation. Despite the project teams efforts sufficient levels of co-financing couldn't materialise timely.

The project had appropriate financial controls in place, including regular reporting and planning, which allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and ensure the timely flow of funds. Some NGO partners expressed discontent with the rigorous reporting requirement set by the implementation partner and requested for more training support to address inadequate technical capabilities.

The project team met regularly with all co-financing partners to align financing priorities and annual work plans. This collaborative approach ensured that co-financing is used strategically to support the project's objectives and contribute to sustainable development benefits and global environmental benefits, including gender equality. However, the efforts fell short of realising the set targets and promised co-finance couldn't be mobilized timely.

Overall, the financial management of the project was effective, with budget allocations appropriately aligned with planned outputs and any variances between planned and actual expenditures explained and addressed through budget revisions. The strategic use of co-financing that could be mobilized and the active engagement with stakeholders were the key to the project's success on most of the indicators and sustainability.

The table below shows the sources of co-financing, and the amount contributed during the MTR.

Table 6: Co-financing Balance by October 2024

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Mid Term Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	1,500,000	400,000	26.67%



Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	In-kind	1,200,000	0	0%
Recipient Country Government	Government of Madhya Pradesh, Environmental Planning & Coordination Organisation	Grant	700,000	0	0%
Civil Society Organization	CSO Grantees	Grant	700,000	100,000	14.28%
Civil Society Organization	CSO Grantees	In-kind	2,500,000	83,372	3.33%
Private Sector	NatWest Foundation	Grant	2,000,000	0	0%

4.3.4 Project Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The M&E plan developed at the project design stage appeared to be well-structured and well budgeted. It was indicated that adequate resources were allocated effectively for M&E at all project levels. Resources for M&E were allocated to mechanisms such as regular project team meetings, assurance visits, and bi-weekly meetings with the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), ensuring oversight and performance monitoring.

The M&E system was designed to provide timely, transparent, and cost-effective information with satisfactory stakeholder involvement. It included regular field visits, support from strategic partners, and innovative joint consultancy initiatives to address barriers faced by communities. This suggested that the M&E system was well-suited to the project's specific context. The system was also designed according to UNDP and GEF requirements, ensuring compliance with the necessary standards and guidelines.

UNDP, NSC members, and strategic partners acknowledged and respect the implementation partner's capacity for management, monitoring, and evaluation. The monitoring system was presented as a model for good practices, indicating high competencies and capabilities within the project team. Stakeholders were involved through meetings and regular information sharing, and local partners received guidelines for proposal writing and reporting, which included relevant indicators for M&E. The implementation partner's platform facilitated management, financial reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of projects.

The implementation partner's team completed a monitoring questionnaire as part of the grantee report analysis. Regular field visits by the implementation partner's team and support from strategic partners helped in mitigating barriers faced by communities, such as low literacy levels and technical challenges. Innovative joint consultancy initiatives also assisted in this process. Gender-sensitive goals were planned and monitored using baseline data, action plans, site-specific plans, and gender-sensitive indicators. Adequate resources were allocated effectively for M&E at all project levels. M&E of the implementation of the gender action plan was included in the project M&E plan, with costs allocated accordingly, and gender mainstreaming indicators are integrated into the project monitoring plan.

Table 7: Monitoring and evaluation plan and budget

GEF	Indicative Costs (US\$)	Time Frame	Adequacy
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Inception Workshop	19,080	Within 60 days of CEO endorsement of this project.	Adequate
Inception Report	None	Within 90 days of CEO endorsement of this project.	N/A
M&E of GEF core indicators and project results framework	51,110	Annually and at mid-point and closure	Adequate
GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)	None	Annually typically between June-August	N/A
Monitoring of gender action plan, SESP, ESMF, stakeholder engagement plan	64,960	At the Pro Doc stage	Adequate
Supervision missions	None	Annually	N/A
Independent Mid-term Review (MTR)	38,160	December 2023	Adequate
Independent Terminal Evaluation	38,160	May 2026	Adequate

4.3.5 Stakeholder Engagement

The project's stakeholder engagement plan was inclusive and developed a tailored approach to ensure constructive, responsive, accountable, and transparent stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders were engaged early during the design stage, and the plan prioritized socio-cultural values and ethics as a core principle to foster effective participation and achieve better results. The project team adhered to safeguards such as FPIC and conducted sensitization workshops to mitigate any potential negative impacts on local communities, their institutions, or the environment. These measures integrated local stakeholders' perspectives into the project design and implementation processes.

Long-term stakeholder engagement was ensured through several initiatives. A national inception workshop held on March 29, 2022, introduced stakeholders to the project's launch, objectives, and expected impacts. It also facilitated discussions to confirm roles, review risks, and agree on a multi-year work plan. Furthermore, three regional inception workshops conducted in September 2022 presented funding opportunities, ensured alignment with state policies, and encouraged collaboration among CSOs and government agencies. These workshops engaged NGOs, community-based organizations CBOs, and CSOs, enabling them to understand the program's objectives and explore potential co-financing opportunities.

The SGP NSC was established in 2022 and has since held five meetings, providing strategic guidance to the country programme management unit. Additionally, seven RAC meetings and three TAG meetings were convened during the reporting cycle. MSPs were established in 13 districts under the chairpersonship of District Collectors to guide the selection and prioritization of community-level projects. However, a notable shortcoming was highlighted by the Chairperson of RAC ICR, who expressed concern about weak linkages between RACs and the NSC. Only one joint meeting had been conducted, indicating a lack of coordination and siloed decision-making despite the presence of deliberative institutions.

The development of Landscape Strategy Reports followed the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) approach. This participatory methodology involved local communities in identifying issues, setting goals, and deciding on projects. Women's participation was actively encouraged through clear communication and involvement in



discussions. The 13 MSPs established in 13 districts under the leadership of District Collectors included equitable representation of women to promote broader awareness and engagement.

During the reporting period, 19 capacity-building workshops were conducted to identify organizations capable of making significant contributions and to familiarize them with the inclusion of women in project initiatives. These workshops highlighted six women-led NGOs that contributed to achieving the project's outcomes and inspired other women-led organizations to apply for grants. For example, CONCEPT Society partnered with three women's SHGs from scheduled tribes to generate income through alternative livelihoods such as backyard poultry farming. Through the SGP India program, CONCEPT Society also installed 100 solar-powered egg incubators and 100 chick brooders in Rajpur Block, Barwani District, Madhya Pradesh, directly benefiting 32 tribal women. These efforts not only enhanced local capacities but also promoted gender equity, creating pathways for sustainable community development and environmental conservation.

Three partners from the first cycle: Lotus Progressive Centre, Haritika, and Aaranyak, reported significant success stories highlighting the direct benefits to women involved in the project. Aaranyak's interventions in Budlapara village, Udalguri District, promoted incentive-based ecosystem management, particularly for women. The Lotus Progressive Centre introduced improved agricultural practices for women farmers in Nalbari and Baksa districts of Assam. Haritika's training on Soil Nutrient Management through Nature-based Solutions empowered 25 women farmers. Bhagirath from ICR has successfully provided a clean source of fuel to women who previously had to collect fuelwood for cooking. This initiative has led to better health outcomes and given these women extra time to pursue income-generating activities. Public awareness generated by the project resulted in demand for biogas from neighbouring villages, showcasing great potential for upscaling the project objectives. SPREAD from NER has 200 beneficiaries, 80% of whom are women. They have transformed the waste-equivalent water hyacinth into an income-generating resource. This allows women to earn additional livelihoods for their households, empowering them to improve their status in both private and public spheres. The NGO partner is also forming clusters of women in groups of 30-35 to further motivate them to establish their supply chains and reap economic benefits as a collective.

The effectiveness and durability of SGP interventions were ensured through establishing enduring partnerships with other government projects and programmes. The 30 ongoing projects established synergies with existing government schemes such as the National Rural Livelihood Mission, Aatma scheme in NER, Horticulture mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA), and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM – KUSUM).

To enhance gender-inclusive representation, socio-economic benefits for women, and promote increased participation and decision-making, gender mainstreaming was integrated into all project interventions. Active women participation and representation were encouraged during the selection of NGOs and project implementation. Six out of the 30 NGOs from the ongoing projects were led by women. Fifteen partners from the first cycle of grants reported direct benefits to 8,064 community members, with 32% being women. Capacity-building programmes enhanced the capacities of 1,106 individuals, with 34% being women.

4.3.6 Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

At the preparatory phase, the project was considered to have a high risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This assessment was revised at the beginning of implementation through the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) in consultation with the UNDP Country Office (CO) team and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia-Pacific (RBAP) in September 2023. The overall risk rating of the project was changed to 'Moderate' as five of the six project risks identified through the SESP were categorized as "Moderate." To meet the SES requirements, safeguard plans were prepared, including a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and a Gender Action Plan.



The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was also updated. Both the revised SESP and ESMF received official SES clearance from UNDP, ensuring compliance with environmental and social standards and enhancing project sustainability and impact. These documents were continuously monitored and updated to align with implementation learnings.

The project's Gender Action Plan was also updated and strengthened during the last reporting cycle. To enhance gender representation and socio-economic benefits for women, gender mainstreaming was integrated into all project interventions. This was evidenced by active women's participation and representation during the selection of NGOs and project implementation. Six out of the 30 NGOs involved in the ongoing projects were led by women. Success stories from partners such as Lotus Progressive Centre, Haritika, and Aaranyak highlighted the direct benefits to women through the SGP.

Trainings on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) were provided by the UNDP Country Office to the Implementing Partners and Grantees to strengthen the project's SES. No revisions were deemed necessary for the risks identified in the project's most recent SESP.

Grievance Mechanism

According to the latest PIR (June 2024), a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was proposed to be established for the project. The objective of the GRM was to provide a transparent and easily accessible platform for project stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, to address grievances and concerns related to the social and environmental impacts of the project.

The project team aimed to operationalize a grievance mechanism system for all key stakeholders to ensure their feedback regarding the impact of the project was registered and addressed. Due diligence was followed by local project representatives to resolve grievances locally in a culturally and socially appropriate manner through the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms. If the local process did not result in the resolution of a grievance, the case was escalated to the NSC.

Trainings on FPIC were conducted by the UNDP Country Office to further strengthen the project's Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

4.3.7 Reporting

UNDP considered that TERI adequately met the reporting requirements demanded by GEF. Up to the completion of the MTR, two PIRs were submitted and evaluated; first PIR was rated moderately satisfactory, while second PIR's rating will be known in 2025. Additionally, other documents produced by the implementing partner demonstrated high technical quality in their preparation. No adaptive management changes needing reporting were identified.

4.3.8 Communications & Knowledge Management

The project's communication strategy was meticulously designed to enhance both internal and external communication, ensuring the success and sustainability of its initiatives. Internally, the strategy prioritized regular and effective communication with stakeholders through accessible channels to keep them informed about project progress. Monthly virtual meetings were conducted with all key stakeholders to discuss updates and address concerns. Feedback mechanisms were established to ensure stakeholder input was received and acted upon, contributing to the continuous improvement of project outcomes. For example, feedback from community members during stakeholder meetings led to adjustments in project activities to better align with local needs.

Externally, the strategy focused on public outreach and awareness through a robust online presence and active engagement on social media platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Various outreach campaigns were implemented, such as the World Environment Day campaign, which showcased success stories emphasizing advancements in gender equality and environmental resilience. These stories were documented in the SGP Newsletter and widely shared on social media, reaching a broad audience. Knowledge products such as case studies and newsletters were also



developed and disseminated. One notable publication was the *SGP India, OP7 Booklet*, which documented key achievements and lessons learned.

The project also placed a strong emphasis on workshops, trade fairs, and partner gatherings to facilitate knowledge sharing. For instance, the annual workshop held in collaboration with local NGOs enabled participants to exchange best practices and innovative solutions. Advocacy events, stakeholder dialogues, and roundtables were supported to showcase learnings and outcomes. The project's impact was presented at global platforms such as the World Sustainable Development Summit in 2023 and 2024, fostering engagement with international stakeholders.

Learning exchanges were facilitated through South-South cooperation with neighbouring countries, including Bhutan and Sri Lanka, to enhance knowledge sharing. One example was a learning exchange program organized with the SGP in Bhutan, where project teams from both countries shared experiences and strategies. These efforts underscored the project's comprehensive communication strategy, which aimed to engage and inform stakeholders while significantly contributing to its sustainability and impact.

However, challenges in communication and implementation were observed. The Chairman of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for ICR, highlighted several shortcomings. While meetings with NGO partners followed a natural process, regular communication among NGOs was found to be lacking. He noted a need for more counselling and handholding to strengthen inter-NGO collaboration. Additionally, NGOs were observed to have varying levels of proposal-writing skills, which posed challenges in maintaining uniform quality. Structural issues, such as the limitation of providing only ₹50 lakhs to NGOs while expecting monumental changes, further constrained their ability to demonstrate significant impact. This RAC member recommended increasing the flexibility of funding to allow NGOs greater room to showcase their contributions and outcomes.

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Financial Risks to Sustainability

The project was rated as having a **Likely rating** for Financial Risk to Sustainability. Financial and operational continuity of the project was assured, as the Indian government confirmed its participation in the Operational Phase 8 of the program and committed significant funding. The government pledged substantial resources to ensure there were no gaps between the current and subsequent phases. While the overall funding portfolio of SGP OP 7 did not match the funding scope of other programs under the MoEFCC, there was interest in the program's sustainability, as it implemented over 60 projects across the three identified landscapes.

Regarding the sustainability of their achievements post-SGP, NGOs from the NER, such as SPREAD and SNEHPAD, were optimistic about sustaining their projects in vermicomposting and fruit-bearing tree plantations, respectively, if they could secure the right market linkages. SNEHPAD organized 150 Women Self-Help Groups and farmer clubs to maintain and continue the project after its completion. Similarly, NGOs like the Green Valley Society gained a competitive advantage in producing betel leaf plates for domestic and international markets. They were in the process of discovering market linkages to sustain their project beyond SGP. Furthermore, partnerships with financial institutions and private sector entities were being explored to co-finance the project. This collaboration was expected to continue into the next phase, attracting increased interest from major funders in critical landscapes.

Potential sources of government finance to sustain and build upon the project results beyond its duration were identified. These included commitments from the public sector, private sector partnerships, income-generating activities, and other funding sources. The likelihood of financial and economic resources becoming unavailable after GEF assistance ends was deemed low, given the diverse potential resources identified. This comprehensive approach ensured the availability of adequate financial resources for sustaining the project's outcomes.



No risks to financial sustainability were identified, as the project secured commitments from various stakeholders to support its long-term goals. Ongoing discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, and community stakeholders indicated strong support for the project's continuation and scaling up.

4.4.2 Socio-economic Risks to Sustainability

The project was rated as **Likely** for socio-economic risks to sustainability, with no significant risks identified. The management arrangement at the landscape level provided autonomy for local partners to set priorities, and significant efforts were made towards regularization and institutional strengthening of organizations. This was especially important in management, considering that many grantees were undergoing regular online reporting procedures for the first time.

The project aimed to leave a legacy of organizational strengthening with medium- and long-term benefits. Initial evidence suggested that communities would experience improvements in their livelihoods and access to clean energy sources.

Key stakeholders, including women, expressed interest in ensuring the continued flow of project benefits. There was sufficient public and stakeholder awareness to support the project's long-term objectives. Lessons learned were continually documented by the Project Team and shared with relevant parties to facilitate replication and/or scaling of the project in the future.

No social or political risks were identified that could jeopardize the sustainability of the project outcomes. The level of stakeholder ownership, including commitment from governments and other key stakeholders, was deemed sufficient to sustain the project's outcomes and benefits.

4.4.3 Institutional Framework & Governance Risks to Sustainability

The project was rated as having a **Moderately Likely to** Institutional Framework & Governance Risks to Sustainability. MTR team noted that the required systems and mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer have been implemented at various levels. The Indian government has taken significant steps to strengthen these frameworks, including the establishment of legislation for the protection of traditional communities and forest dwellers, as well as the integration of SDGs into national policies. Although many of these measures by the Government of India were introduced and implemented on their own, experience and findings from some SGP projects, such as the intervention from NGO partners Bhagirath and SPEED in ICR, have been well received by the government (communicated via RAC members, TERI and UNDP) and have enhanced the implementation effectiveness of these legislations.

The project's implementing partner, TERI, and its contribution to the National Steering Committee are well-regarded. The project's learnings have garnered attention from the Indian GEF Operational Focal Point, further solidifying its credibility. At the regional and local levels, demands from women and traditional communities received varying degrees of attention, and collaborations between communities and local governments in most landscapes were supportive. These partnerships have not only facilitated project activities but have also contributed to the creation of a new social fabric within the landscapes.

Efforts to mainstream project interventions and results into national and local policies are evident. TERI and RACs worked closely with government officials to ensure the transfer of technical knowledge and to implement accountability and transparency measures. Discussions with RAC members, including government officials, underscored the importance of leveraging their domain expertise to achieve higher resource mobilization and convergence. This cohesive network of management partners at landscape and national levels, supported by technical experts and recognition from the MoEFCC, significantly contributes to the institutional and governance sustainability of the project.



The legal frameworks, policies, and governance processes in place do not pose risks to the sustenance of project benefits. Institutional capacities at both the government and NGO partner levels are adequate to scale up project interventions beyond the project duration. However, specific recommendations were made to further enhance sustainability.

An RAC member from ICR highlighted certain gaps in institutional support. He emphasized the potential of provisions under the National Biodiversity Act, such as funding allocations by the National Biodiversity Authority for peer-to-peer learning initiatives to spread best practices nationwide. However, challenges such as lack of transparency and awareness of government procedures continue to hamper the full implementation of these provisions. To address these issues, this RAC member recommended the establishment of Biodiversity Management Committees and a peer-learning chain in coastal areas to facilitate stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing.

Additionally, while the project is not under immediate institutional risk, the MTR team underscored the need for senior government officials and TERI's senior management to utilize their social capital to meet co-financing requirements and strengthen resource mobilization capabilities. The project's advocacy efforts, policy influence, and strong partnerships provide a foundation for sustaining institutional frameworks and governance mechanisms, but continued emphasis on transparency, awareness, and multi-level engagement is essential to maximize impact and sustainability.

4.4.4 Environmental Risks to Sustainability

The project was rated as **Moderately Likely** for environmental risks to sustainability. Several environmental risks were identified that could jeopardize the sustainability of its outcomes. Climate factors, such as forest fires, were reported by two partners in the Northeast region. Specifically, SNEHPAD in Kakajana and Aaranyak in Bhairabkunda experienced significant disruptions due to forest fires. These incidents caused delays and required adjustments to project plans and timelines. Such challenges were to be documented and reported in the next reporting period to enable appropriate adjustments to the projects.

Additionally, salinization of the groundwater table was reported by SPEED in the Indian coastal region. This issue posed a risk to the sustainability of project outcomes, particularly in areas reliant on groundwater for agriculture and other uses. NGOs such as CCD from ICR observed low survival rates of the plant saplings provided under the program to enhance biodiversity. They distributed twenty varieties of saplings to communities, with the expectation of yielding benefits from their bark, leaves, fruits, and medicinal properties over the next ten to fifteen years. However, the six-month mortality rate posed a significant sustainability challenge. CCD requested prior informed consent from farmers who assumed responsibility for nurturing the young saplings to enhance accountability.

The likelihood of natural hazards such as droughts, floods, and earthquakes, as well as the ongoing impacts of climate change, remained significant concerns. These risks required continuous monitoring and mitigation efforts. Environmental risks were being addressed through proactive measures and adjustments to project plans to ensure the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

4.5 Rights-based approach and Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI)

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Women empowerment is a central focus across all landscapes. The project emphasizes the operation and management of women's Self-Help Groups, offering technical assistance and training in areas such as agriculture. This includes support in seed selection, microcredit management, value addition, marketing, savings, and investment, as well as training in innovative on-farm methods as part of collective programs. A gender action plan was developed during the project's preparation phase to ensure gender mainstreaming. The project's gender strategy, analysis, and action plan demonstrate robust and effective measures to ensure gender-positive and transformative outcomes. It acknowledges the differential roles and contributions of women in managing natural resources and the gender-specific



allocation of productive resources like land and water. Key actions include consulting with women's groups, promoting equitable representation, integrating gender considerations into landscape strategies, and ensuring equal opportunities in project employment. The project aims to ensure that women benefit equitably from its outcomes and that gender awareness is promoted throughout its implementation. This structured approach aims to address the socio-ecological challenges and promote sustainable livelihoods while providing significant environmental benefits at both local and global levels.”

The project has made significant strides in promoting gender equality and mainstreaming gender issues into its socio-economic and environmental benefits. A considerable number of team members from TERI, UNDP, and landscape implementing partners have sufficient awareness and knowledge of relevant gender issues, achieved through targeted capacity-building programs and continuous engagement. Active participation and representation of women were encouraged during the selection of NGOs and project implementation, with six out of the 30 NGOs from the ongoing projects being led by women. Since July 2023, 15 partners from the first cycle of grants have reported direct benefits to 8,064 community members, with 32% being women. Additionally, 19 capacity-building programs enhanced the capacities of 1,106 individuals, 34% of whom were women. These workshops have been instrumental in familiarizing NGOs/CBOs with the importance of including women in projects and mainstreaming gender in project interventions.

Despite a strong focus on women's inclusion, pre-existing social and cultural norms often limit their representation and participation. To address this, a gender assessment was conducted, and a Gender Action Plan was developed in alignment with the GEF policy on Gender Equality. Equal participation of men and women is targeted during training and knowledge dissemination programs, with more targeted interventions and workshops planned to address gender inequalities.

The project adopted several strategies to enhance gender benefits. The development of Landscape Strategy reports involved various communities identifying landscape issues, setting goals, and deciding on projects. Women's participation was ensured in FGDs, with 210 out of 471 participants being women. This involvement helped foster dialogue about their roles in achieving project outcomes. Thirteen MSPs were established in 13 districts, led by District Collectors with equitable representation of women to foster broader awareness and active engagement of local communities.

To address pre-existing social and cultural norms limiting women's participation, a gender assessment identified women's roles, responsibilities, and needs. Based on this, a Gender Action Plan was developed in alignment with the GEF policy on Gender Equality. Equal participation of women and men was targeted during training and knowledge dissemination programs. NGOs actively reach out to and educate women about project interventions, encouraging their participation. More targeted interventions and workshops are planned to address gender inequalities, considering social norms and cultural practices.

By incorporating gender dimensions into the project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, the project addresses critical gender considerations. It acknowledges the differential roles and contributions of women in managing natural resources and the gender-specific allocation of productive resources like land and water. The strategy also highlights the gender division of labour in livelihood opportunities and social responsibilities, ensuring that both men and women are equitably involved. Additionally, it considers the unique challenges faced by women-headed households in attending to household chores as well as to agricultural activities and the impact of social and cultural norms of fetching water or fuelwood for cooking and drinking purposes on women's economic empowerment. The project promotes women's participation in local governance and decision-making processes, encourages their involvement in training and planning meetings, and utilizes gender-disaggregated data to understand women's roles in natural resource management.

Observations from CONCEPT in Madhya Pradesh in integrating LNOB strategies with gender are well noted. They are collaborating with three Self-Help Group beneficiary groups from the Scheduled Tribe



community, primarily engaged in agriculture. With farm labourers outnumbering landowners and small land holdings, the seasonal agricultural income is insufficient to sustain families. To address this, the project aims to enhance income opportunities for 10 SHG members by introducing solar-powered Incubator and Brooder Centers. Backyard poultry, a lucrative livelihood option, especially for women in tribal regions, aligns with their traditional practices and allows them to maintain their routine activities undisturbed. In Barwani, a 100-egg chick hatching unit was provided by the project for improving incomes of the community members as chicken rearing is their traditional occupation. Through prior projects implemented by BAIF and the state livelihood mission, the community members were trained in multi-layered farming, raising Kadaknath chicken and managing a mobile hatchery of 500 eggs.

Six women-led NGOs are leading the way for more women-led organizations to apply for grants. For example, CONCEPT Society collaborates with three women SHGs from the scheduled tribe, focusing on generating income through alternative livelihood opportunities like backyard poultry. This initiative includes installing 100 solar-powered egg incubators and 100 chick brooders, benefiting 32 tribal women. **CCD from ICR have successfully engaged women self-help groups, and two-thirds of the members of the agriculture producer committees are women.** Partners like Lotus Progressive Centre, Haritika, and Aaranyak have reported significant success stories highlighting the direct benefits to women involved in the project through SGP initiatives. Aaranyak's interventions promote incentive-based ecosystem management, particularly for women in Budlapara village, Udaiguri District. A notable example is Sunashri Narzary, a 70-year-old woman, who has transitioned from being a daily wage earner in tea plantations to dedicating her time to the Jaikhlong Community Nursery during off-seasons, showcasing resilience and determination.

The project's gender equality and mainstreaming interventions have been effective, as evidenced by the increased participation and empowerment of women in project activities and decision-making processes. However, it was observed during field visits to some CSAR that there was limited scope of women's agency in species selection suggested for plantations, an important activity defined under the project. Another critical observation from the field on capacity building initiatives undertaken for women SHG members received funding from multiple sources through co-financing, the benefits accruing from the same cannot be directly attributed to the project. For effective women empowerment, it is a standard practice for providing gender training for men, however the MTR team could not get evidence of such trainings being conducted under the program.

Mainstreaming Social Inclusion and Effectiveness of Social Inclusion Activities

Social inclusion was mainstreamed through activities such as engaging marginalized groups in landscape planning, capacity-building programs, and sustainable livelihood initiatives. The establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms in 13 districts facilitated equitable representation and broader awareness among local communities. Training programs also targeted marginalized groups, ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes.

The effectiveness of social inclusion activities was evident in the increased participation and empowerment of marginalized groups. Livelihood initiatives, such as multi-layered farming and mobile hatcheries, provided economic benefits while respecting traditional practices. However, resource limitations and pre-existing social hierarchies occasionally restricted full participation, highlighting areas for improvement in future interventions.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Key Findings



- The project aligns closely with India's national and state-level priorities, demonstrating strong country ownership through meaningful stakeholder engagement and a participatory approach.
- The project's robust results framework, coupled with innovative and socially inclusive livelihood initiatives, such as biogas plants, solar-powered egg incubators and multi-layered farming, has laid a solid foundation for socio-economic and environmental transformation in the target landscapes.
- The project's ability to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, CBOs, and regional and national governments, highlights its strength in addressing complex, multi-sectoral challenges.
- The implementation partner's platform supports management, financial reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of projects.
- The inclusion of gender-sensitive strategies and measures to ensure community ownership highlights its progressive design. The project's key strength lies in its comprehensive integration of gender dimensions. By acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by women, such as access to productive resources and social norms that hinder their economic empowerment, the project has enabled transformative change.
- Women's participation in local governance, land restoration activities, and decision-making processes has increased significantly, with strategic partners appointing women as facilitators and coordinators in several regions. The use of gender-disaggregated data to monitor women's roles in natural resource management further reflects the project's commitment to gender mainstreaming and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles.
- The project has demonstrated significant socio-economic benefits through initiatives that respect traditional practices while introducing sustainable solutions. For instance, efforts like mobile hatcheries and vermicomposting projects have not only enhanced livelihoods but also built local capacities for long-term self-reliance.
- Furthermore, the project's commitment to engaging communities through inclusive approaches has fostered strong social cohesion and a sense of ownership among beneficiaries.

Challenges and gaps:

However, while the project has shown commendable progress, a few gaps that are listed below must be addressed to fully achieve its objectives and maximize its potential impact.

- MTR Team identified that implementation partner could provide more handholding and technical support for bookkeeping and accounting, especially for smaller NGOs with limited capabilities, to cope with the rigour of online systems.
- Additionally, a grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) needs to be implemented at the project level.
- A key issue to be considered is that the project's National Steering Committee (NSC) doesn't follow the recommended structure, with issues such as insufficient women members, and lack of a gender focal point of the NSC.
- Limited engagement of men in gender sensitization workshops to address societal barriers comprehensively. Scaling up these efforts is vital for achieving long-term gender equity in project outcomes.
- The project's sustainability can be enhanced further by increasing engagement with local and state government authorities in all landscapes. Local and state government engagement is stronger in some landscapes such as ICR but it can be enhanced in other landscapes too. Nevertheless, limited engagement with local and state governments in CSAR region has limited opportunities for greater resource mobilization as co-finance and policy convergence.
- Mobilization of co-finance has been lower than planned/estimated at CEO-ER stage. Significant efforts are necessary from all stakeholders, particularly from UNDP, MoEFCC and TERI, to mobilize the required amount of co-finance during the remaining project implementation period.



- Procedural delays during initial period of project implementation in the disbursement of funds have sometimes placed undue strain on NGO partners (especially smaller NGO partners) who have, in some cases, resorted to using personal funds to sustain project operations. However, these issues sometimes were also due to delays and gaps in reporting from NGO partners, which have largely been addressed now.
- Technical and managerial capacity gaps among local NGO partners have sometimes resulted in delays in reporting and financial disbursement timelines.
- A few targets as outlined in the results framework of CEO-ER, such as GHG emission reduction targets, renewable energy deployment capacity targets and energy savings targets, are deemed to be unrealistic at MTR stage, given their current level of achievement and prognosis based on ground realities.
- Additionally, the project's M&E system faced challenges in implementation during initial stages of the project due to insufficient offline training and technical support for NGO partners, which resulted in confusion around outcome mapping and reporting processes. Offline training, exposure visits, and extended reporting timelines have addressed some of these technical gaps, but more efforts in such training activities of NGO partners are required.
- Limited coordination between RAC members and the NSC often limits value addition via tapping into knowledge and expertise and strategic decision-making. Strengthening this coordination is important to ensure local oversight and knowledge of RAC members is improved.

Overall, the project serves as a model for integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions into a cohesive development framework. The project has already demonstrated its ability to identify and support high impact, innovative and inclusive interventions of several NGO partners in the communities they serve in all 3 project landscapes. By addressing the few gaps listed above, the project could create a scalable blueprint to address biodiversity, climate change and land degradation challenges faced in several landscapes across India, ensure sustainable development and long-term benefits to communities and ecosystems while aligning with global goals, including the SDGs.

5.2 Recommendations

Herein detailed recommendations are presented, these are curated based on insightful learnings from documentation review, MTR Team's field visits and discussions with stakeholders from UNDP, TERI and GEF OFF. While others were developed along with the draft report. Please find below MTR Teams recommendations, the related outcomes, and the actors to whom they are addressed.

(1). Recommendations on Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project, etc.

1. Recommendations on Mobilizing Co-finance

Recommendation for Outcome 1.2

Entity Responsible: TERI, Landscape Partner NGOs, UNDP and SGP NSC (as they are well-positioned to generate co-finance and collaborate with local communities to identify and prioritize projects that meet specific needs).

Proposed Actions: Facilitate adoption by providing financial support to scalable clean technology projects focusing on solar-based cold storage, solar-based irrigation, agrivoltaics, biomass energy systems, and solar-powered fish drying.

How?

Blended Finance Approach: Form strategic alliances with private sector partners and funding institutions to mobilize resources. Use grants or guarantees from public/philanthropic funding to de-risk



private investments, making projects more attractive. NGOs bring expertise in social and environmental impact, helping ensure that interventions are relevant to local contexts and meet target beneficiaries' needs.

Strengthen long-term co-finance generation by engaging local financial institutions and intermediaries (e.g., NABARD) – UNDP and MoEFCC could play a key role in mobilizing such co-finance and bridge the current gap in co-finance for the project. TERI can assist in building a pipeline of investable projects aligned with the local needs of landscape partners. Involve gender experts to integrate gender equality across all operations of blended finance funds, ensuring projects also contribute to women's empowerment.

Recommendation for Outcome 2.2

Indicator Covered:

- **Indicator 13:** Enhanced financial sustainability, as indicated by the amount of cash co-financing obtained from hybrid grant or microcredit programs/schemes (in USD), disaggregated by gender.

Entity Responsible: TERI, Landscape Partner NGOs, UNDP and SGP NSC

Proposed Actions: Leverage Government Schemes, Align program activities with significant budgetary allocations from the Government of India and state governments.

How?

Promote Convergence: Demonstrate convergence with government schemes and projects implemented by bilateral and multilateral agencies at scale. Activate district-level multistakeholder forums and ensure proactive engagement with district administrations by TERI's RCs and senior NGO staff.

This approach enhances co-financing outcomes, ensuring financial sustainability and scaling participatory governance mechanisms for socio-ecological resilience.

2. Recommendation on Project Implementation Arrangements

Entity Responsible: SGP NSC (particularly UNDP and MoEFCC)

A key gap in the project implementation arrangements is that the project's National Steering Committee (NSC) does not follow the recommended structure and hence it is recommended that the NSC include recommended number of women members, and also appoint a gender focal point.

3. Recommendations on Training and Capacity Building

Recommendation for Outcome 2.1

Entity Responsible: TERI/NGO Partners

Proposed Actions (Enhance Community-level Training and Capacity Building by NGO Partners):

To enhance socio-ecological resilience through participatory governance, it is recommended that community institutions be strengthened. TERI and its NGO partners should implement community level capacity-building initiatives aimed at raising awareness and integrating community members with the project's objectives across various landscapes. Evidence collected by MTR team from some NGO partners such as SPEED highlights a critical gap in community level training and capacity building. Additionally, a few mid-term level training sessions remain incomplete, specifically two leadership trainings, two gender sensitization trainings, and two stakeholder workshops.



Recommendation for Outcome 3.1

Entity Responsible: TERI/NGO Partners/UNDP

Proposed Actions: Capacity Building

How?

Organize regional workshops to provide bookkeeping and technical support to NGO partners. TERI could deploy accounting interns to assist NGOs in the initial reporting cycles. Ensure that NGOs designate a dedicated financial manager for effective financial management. Streamlining financial processes and building the capacity of NGO partners will enhance the project's sustainability and improve the efficiency of participatory M&E systems.

Recommendations on Training to Improve Project Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Entity Responsible for Implementation: TERI/NGO Partners

- NGO partners from ICR highlighted that the online training provided by TERI was insufficient, emphasizing the need for more meticulous offline training on TERI's audit and MEL processes. To improve system delivery and models, exposure visits, both domestic and international, are recommended.

How? It was recommended that TERI either conduct more on-ground training for NGOs or send staff to assist with documentation preparation, especially for case studies and other measures, as more handholding is required.

- The development of the TERI portal was acknowledged, despite facing some initial challenges. It is recommended that a provision be made to allow a slightly longer period for partner NGOs to submit utilization certificates and voucher reports.

- Increased field visit based engagement of RAC members is also recommended as a way enhance expert guidance and local oversight.

Right Based Approach, Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming

Entity Responsible for Implementation: TERI/NGO Partners

Gender Sensitization Training for men in the communities: Training on gender for men at the community level should be provided, as a better understanding of gender roles among men is crucial for empowering women and creating pathways for them to exercise their agency socially and economically.

Increased Gender Mainstreaming Training to NGO Partners: TERI should strengthen capacity-building initiatives under the programme by providing in-depth training on thematic aspects and gender mainstreaming topics for both NGOs and community institutions. Currently, the project has focused on building the capacities of NGO staff on programme-related aspects, but it is imperative to expand this training.

- **Strengthening Womens' Collectives:** Most of the women SHGs engaged with the programme work on organic/natural farming and are selling their produce in local markets, often at good prices. However, it is crucial to train these enterprising women SHG members on marketing skills and business planning to enable them to undertake activities professionally. Opportunities for linkages with NABARD, SFAC, and other agencies supporting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) of women collectives should be explored.



4. Revision of Midterm and End-of-Project Targets for Renewable Energy Indicators

Indicators Covered:

- **Core Indicator 6:** Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (million metric tons of CO₂e).
- **Indicator 9:** Energy saved due to adoption of low-emission, energy-efficient, and clean solutions (MJ).
- **Indicator 10:** Increase in installed renewable energy capacity across different RE solutions (MW).

Entity Responsible: UNDP, SGP NSC

Proposed Actions: Revise midterm and end-of-project targets to align with ground realities, considering the technical and financial constraints faced by implementing partners.

How?

Adjust targets to ensure GEF compliance and avoid poor ratings at the terminal evaluation (TE) stage. Ensure that revised targets reflect achievable milestones, considering the pace of technology adoption and the capacity of local stakeholders. Realistic targets will improve project performance ratings, ensure compliance with GEF requirements, and maintain credibility while addressing local challenges effectively.

Recommendation is to consider re-negotiating / revising renewable energy installed capacity, GHG emission reduction and energy saving targets by at least 50% from the targets included at CEO-ER approval stage.

5. Work Planning

Entity Responsible for Implementation: TERI/NGO Partners

- It is recommended that local NGOs prioritize expenditure on equipment and infrastructure over personnel-related costs, as concurred by GEF OFP. This approach ensures efficient use of funds and long-term sustainability.
- Addressing the shortfall of saplings in forest department nurseries is crucial. Despite the ministry's support through state department communications, local NGOs should proactively collaborate to meet community demands.

6. Finance / Disbursements

Entity Responsible for Implementation: UNDP/TERI

Several procedural delays and challenges during the initial stages of project implementation resulted in shortage of funds to some NGOs, which was also partly due to insufficient reporting from NGO partners. In addition, strategic grants, that are provisioned in the project at CEO-ER stage, have not yet been deployed.

How? To address these issues, TERI should consider simplifying and streamlining some of the procedures on reporting and fund disbursement, thereby expediting disbursement of funds to NGO partners. Besides, the project NSC needs to make decisions on deployment of strategic grants soon.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

Entity Responsible for Implementation: UNDP

- UNDP should prioritize the operationalization of a project level Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) as soon as possible. Given that the project is at its midpoint, it is imperative to implement the GRM promptly to address any grievances effectively and ensure smooth project execution. This mechanism will provide a structured process for stakeholders to voice their concerns and seek resolutions, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability within the project.



8. Communications & Knowledge Management

Entity Responsible for Implementation: TERI

- TERI could enhance its communication efforts by focusing more on case studies and human-interest stories to educate local communities, rather than just discussion workshops. Sharing 10-12 best practices from these projects with the global SGP project and potentially developing them into GCF projects holds immense potential.
- Additionally, the programme may consider identifying and nominating community members from the landscape who are doing exemplary work or demonstrating leadership in conservation for various national and international awards. This approach not only recognizes and motivates community members but also highlights successful initiatives that can be replicated elsewhere.
- UNDP and TERI should consider organizing exposure visits to areas outside the current landscapes on pertinent thematic areas. For example, the programme can learn from the Telangana Government's Haritha Haram and Prakriti Vanam programmes, which effectively manage cluster-based nurseries through innovative implementation of the MGNREGS programme by the gram panchayats. These visits can provide valuable insights and best practices that can be adapted and implemented within the programme landscapes, enhancing the overall effectiveness and impact of the initiatives.
- TERI should consider encouraging more cross-learning and knowledge exchanges between different NGO partners. While this was piloted in the NER region for accounts, it is imperative to promote cross-learning through field visits and discussions during workshops on common challenges, innovations, and best practices. This approach can foster a collaborative environment, enabling NGOs to learn from each other's experiences and improve their effectiveness in implementing the programme.

9. Sustainability

Entity Responsible for Implementation: UNDP/TERI & Multistakeholder Platforms

- Given the constraints of UNDP-supported funding, which is limited by budgetary allocations and extended overheads, it is imperative that the programme incorporates a robust exit strategy. TERI should play a pivotal role in assisting NGOs in developing sustainable financial pathways. This can be achieved through mechanisms such as crowdfunding and the preparation of proposals to secure CSR funds, ensuring the continuity of the project post-UNDP funding.
- Multistakeholder platforms and local administration need to deliberate on ensuring the sustainable continuation of operations in a post-project scenario and safeguard the assets created under the programme from elite capture.

Entity Responsible for Implementation: TERI/NGO Partners

- As per an RAC member of ICR landscape, the sustainability of the project outcomes could be enhanced by integrating the programme with Tamil Nadu state government-led Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) program. This integration would facilitate the collection and processing of coastal waste, thereby bolstering the project's impact.
- Additionally, a mechanism needs to be established to obtain permissions from the forest department for beach cleanup drives. This collaborative approach can enhance the effectiveness of initiatives and ensure that best practices are shared and implemented across different regions.

(2) Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project.

Recommendation on Inclusion of Women in Ghost Gear Clean Up

Entity Responsible for Implementation: NGO partner in ICR



MTR team noted that no women divers are currently employed in the ghost gear clean up drives, which is currently dominated by men. Providing training or financial incentives to women to join this cadre could promote gender inclusivity and economic empowerment and help in realising end of project targets.

(3). Recommendations for OP8

Entity Responsible for Implementation: UNDP

1. Proposed Action: Streamline Finance Functions, consider transferring the finance function to UNDP to enhance efficiency and avoid delays.

How? UNDP could directly handle disbursement mechanisms in future cycles (e.g., OP8), allowing TERI to focus on technical assistance, capacity building, and M&E processes. **Low Value Grant (LVG)** system could be explored as a promising financial model for OP8 to address project delays observed in OP7. UNDP and GEF may consider extending duration of each NGO partner project from two years to three years for better implementation and improved results and impact.



ANNEXES

Annex 1 MTR ToR

(attached separately)

Annex 2 MTR Evaluative Matrix

Evaluation Matrix, Relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Questions	Evaluation Datapoints, Sources and Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Project design: Problem Statement and underlying assumptions	Validity and relevance (at MTR stage) in problem analysis, barrier analysis and assumptions in ProDoc	What are the key problems addressed by the project? What were the key underlying assumptions during project design stage, including GESI lens? Are there any changes to the context or assumptions made during project design that may affect achievement of project results as outlined in Prodoc?	Problem statement of prodoc Assumptions described in prodoc and gender action plan Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners
Relevance of project strategy	Relevance of project strategy section in Prodoc at MTR stage Relevance for next operational phase (OP8) of SGP	Is the project strategy as designed in Prodoc still relevant? Does project strategy provide an effective route to achieve expected/intended results? Were lessons learned from previous/earlier projects incorporated into project design?	Project strategy section of prodoc Results and partnerships section of prodoc and gender action plan Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners
Country priorities and country ownership	Alignment with Govt of India policies, strategies & plans. Assessment of Govt involvement in steering committee meetings etc.	Is the project relevant to India's national and state-level priorities on biodiversity conservation, afforestation, access to renewable energy, access to clean water, ecosystem restoration, rural livelihoods and climate change adaptation and resilience?	Prodoc CPD PIRs Project Board / Review meeting attendance



		<p>Does the project correspond to Country Programme Document (CPD)?</p> <p>Is there sufficient country ownership of the project?</p> <p>What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation?</p> <p>Does the Project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional capacity and legal and policy frameworks?</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (MoEFCC)</p> <p>Project indicators mapped against national environmental objectives (GHG emissions, capacity of renewable energy deployed etc.)</p> <p>Level of Involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design process</p> <p>Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF Criteria</p>
<p>Project decision making process</p>	<p>Steering Committee meeting minutes</p> <p>Analysis of call for proposals (all 3 cycles completed so far), application review and NGO partner selection process</p> <p>Any issues raised and process of resolution as reported in PIRs</p>	<p>What are the key project implementation and governance mechanisms as per project design / prodoc?</p> <p>How are project decisions expected to be as per project design / prodoc?</p> <p>How are the project's governance mechanism, oversight and decision making progress during implementation stage?</p> <p>Were perspectives of key stakeholders who would be affected by project</p> <p>Decisions (such as beneficiary communities), those who could affect the outcomes (communities and NGO partners), and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process (NGO partners, RCs, RAC members), taken into account during project design processes?</p>	<p>Prodoc</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>



		Are their perspectives being taken into account during project implementation?	
Best Route towards Expected Results: Results framework (Logframe) Analysis of targets and indicators	<p>Completeness and coherence of Results Framework</p> <p>Alignment of Results Framework with Project Strategy narrative</p> <p>Ability to measure progress towards outcomes (i.e., quality of indicators, baselines, and targets)</p> <p>Quality of monitoring and reporting of indicators</p>	<p>Assess project results framework as provided in the Prodoc</p> <p>Are the project's objectives and outcomes / components clear, practical and feasible within the project duration?</p> <p>How SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound) are the midterm and end-of-project targets as defined in the prodoc?</p> <p>How has the progress been to achieve the project's mid-term and end of project targets?</p> <p>Is there a need to revise / amend project targets and indicators? If yes, how and why?</p>	<p>Prodoc Results Framework / Logframe</p> <p>Progress against mid-term targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p> <p>Progress against end of project targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Results framework (Logframe) progress leading to other beneficial impact and outcomes not covered in logframe	<p>Level of progress on delivery of outcomes and objectives beyond indicators</p> <p>Implementation challenges reported</p>	<p>Has the project implementation so far – and progress against targets/indicators – led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects, such as income/livelihood generation, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, improved governance etc, that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis?</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Results framework (Logframe) – GESI	<p>Monitoring against gender specific indicators in Results Framework and/or gender action plan</p> <p>Effective monitoring and reporting of gender and social inclusion metrics at</p>	<p>Are gender mainstreaming targets and indicators on track at mid-term?</p> <p>Are gender disaggregated results and impact data being monitored, collected and reported by project implementing agency and partners?</p>	<p>Prodoc Results Framework / Logframe</p> <p>Progress against mid-term gender and social inclusion targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p>



	<p>the project level and NGO partner level</p>	<p>How about meeting gender mainstreaming qualitative goals as outlined in gender action plan?</p> <p>Is there any risk to gender targets not being met at mid-term or end of project timeline?</p> <p>Are social inclusion targets and indicators on track at mid-term?</p> <p>Is there any risk to social inclusion targets not being met at mid-term or end of project timeline?</p> <p>Is there a need to include additional GESI related targets and indicators that need to be included at this stage (that were not included in the prodoc)?</p>	<p>Progress against end of project gender and social inclusion targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members (including FGDs with sufficient representation of women beneficiaries and stakeholders)</p>
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Progress towards results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?

<p>Project results framework (logframe) indicators achievement against mid-term and end of project targets and indicators</p>	<p>Indicator achievement versus milestones and targets (mid-term and completion).</p>	<p>Are project's logframe indicators (mid-term) being met?</p> <p>Detailed Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against mid-term and end-of project Targets) will be developed as per guidelines</p> <p>Colour coded traffic light system (indicator assessment key) based on level of progress achieved will be provided, including rating on progress against each outcome.</p> <p>Recommendations will be made for areas that are marked under "Not on target to be achieved" (colour coded red)</p>	<p>Prodoc Results Framework / Logframe</p> <p>Progress against mid-term gender and social inclusion targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p> <p>Progress against end of project gender and social inclusion targets and indicators at NGO partner level and project level</p> <p>PIRs</p>
<p>GEF Core Indicators</p>	<p>Baseline Targets versus Mid-term assessment target</p> <p>Assessment of ability to meet end of project targets</p>	<p>Progress towards achievement of GEF Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review?</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members (including FGDs with sufficient representation of women beneficiaries and stakeholders)</p>
<p>Barriers to achieving targets /</p>	<p>Any barriers identified by key stakeholders to achieve MTR and end of project</p>	<p>What are the remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project, including GESI barriers?</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members (including FGDs with sufficient representation of women beneficiaries and stakeholders)</p>



<p>indicator s</p>	<p>targets and indicators</p> <p>Any barriers identified during field visits with NGO partners</p>		
<p>What has worked well?</p>	<p>Results, which are on or above target</p> <p>Unplanned benefits/results as reported by key stakeholders and/or in project progress reports and reasons for these</p>	<p>What are the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.</p>	
<p>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?</p>			
<p>Management Arrangements</p>	<p>Clarity, transparency, and timeliness of decision-making and reporting processes (e.g., reporting lines, Project Steering Committee structure, RAC structure and their inputs, TORs, frequency of meetings)</p> <p>Rationale for any significant changes made to project management and implementation arrangements</p> <p>Realism in reporting and focus on risks and mitigation in reporting.</p> <p>Nature and frequency of UNDP oversight and quality</p>	<p>What is the overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document.</p> <p>Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear?</p> <p>Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Are there any areas for improvement.</p> <p>How is the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>How is the quality of support and quality assurance provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>What is the gender balance of the project staff?</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>



	<p>assurance meetings and visits.</p> <p>Allocation of staff by gender.</p>		
Work planning	<p>Progress against Multi Year / Annual Workplan, as reported in PIRs</p> <p>Reasons for delays, if any, and also is there a system to anticipate and mitigate delays?</p> <p>Annual workplans that are clearly linked to outcomes</p> <p>Number and nature of reviews/updates to Results Framework in response to changes in implementation context</p> <p>Alignment between Results Framework and Annual Workplans</p>	<p>Are there any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved?</p> <p>Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?</p> <p>Examine the use of project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Finance and Co-finance	<p>Use of implementing partners and stakeholders' own resources and capacities</p> <p>Achievement of actual co-finance leveraged against promised at project level at the time of CEO-ER/Prodoc approval</p> <p>Achievement of actual co-finance leveraged at individual grantee/NGO partner level against promised at the time</p>	<p>How has been the implementation effectiveness of financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions?</p> <p>Have there been any changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out,</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder</p>



	<p>of signing agreement</p> <p>Strategic use of co-financing</p> <p>Appropriateness of budget allocations to different planned outputs</p> <p>Explanation of variance between planned and actual expenditure</p>	<p>provide commentary on financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project?</p> <p>Is the project team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?</p>	<p>meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
<p>Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems</p>	<p>M&E reporting in PIRs, as well as reporting by the implementing partner and grantees/NGO partners</p> <p>Nature and quality of monitoring processes</p> <p>Alignment of monitoring system with good practice and national systems</p> <p>Project partners / staff involved in monitoring</p> <p>Types, quality and use of monitoring data to inform project implementation & management</p> <p>Adequacy of resources allocated to M&E</p> <p>Effectiveness of M&E tools and Processes</p> <p>Disaggregation by gender</p>	<p>Are the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information?</p> <p>Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems?</p> <p>Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required?</p> <p>How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>How are Gender issues included in the monitoring systems?</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>



	Monitoring and reporting of indicators by gender		
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>National & local government stakeholder engagement with the project and support of project objectives, as evidenced in steering committee meeting minutes, RAC meeting minutes, GEF Agency and Implementing Partner meeting minutes etc. (as reported in PIRs)</p> <p>Number of partnerships with NGO partners on relevant issues</p> <p>NGO reports / meeting records with communities on mobilization, consent, GESI, capacity building, ongoing engagement</p> <p>ProDoc Gender Action plan</p>	<p>Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders in particular women stakeholders through CBOs, WROs etc</p> <p>Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?</p> <p>Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?</p> <p>Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?</p>	<p>Prodoc Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguard)	<p>Number and appropriateness of SES risks revisions (if any) – as evidenced in revision of SESP</p> <p>Quality of Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) and revisions, if any</p>	<p>Are the project risks still valid or do any rating need revision?</p> <p>Are any revisions needed in the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings?</p> <p>What were and how were the revisions made (if any) to: The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.</p> <p>What was the progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted (and prepared during</p>	<p>Prodoc Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p>



	<p>Monitoring and reporting of SES safeguards related indicators and risks in PIRs</p> <p>Operationalization of a Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) at project level and at individual grantee/NGO level</p>	<p>implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures?</p> <p>Is there a GRM setup at the project level and at each individual grantee/NGO partner level, to address all project risks, but specifically SES risks</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p> <p>GRM documentation, if available</p>
Reporting	<p>Adaptive management changes reported to the Project Steering Committee (major ones presented to the Committee for approval)</p> <p>Quality of PIR and quarterly progress reporting including PIR ratings and response to PIR ratings</p> <p>Level of compliance with GEF reporting requirements</p> <p>Documentation, internalization and sharing of project lessons</p>	<p>How adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Steering Committee?.</p> <p>How well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)</p> <p>Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Communications	<p>Frequency and effectiveness of communication with stakeholders.</p> <p>Communication feedback mechanisms</p> <p>Contribution of project communication to the sustainability of project results</p> <p>Mechanisms of external</p>	<p>Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication accessible, regular and effective?</p> <p>Are there key stakeholders left out of communication, if so who and why? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received?</p> <p>Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?</p>	<p>Project Management / Governance and quarterly / annual work plan section</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p>



	<p>communication public outreach and awareness generation and their effectiveness</p>	<p>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?)</p> <p>For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits, including contribution to gender equality</p>	<p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
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Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?

<p>Overall / SES Risks to sustainability of project interventions during and beyond project duration</p>	<p>Relevance and significance of risks recorded in Project Document, UNDP Social and Environment Screening and the UNDP Risk Management Module</p> <p>Gaps in identified risks particularly financial resources.</p> <p>Appropriateness of risk mitigation and management measures an effectiveness of implementation.</p>	<p>Whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the Quantum Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.</p>	<p>Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
<p>Financial risks to sustainability</p>	<p>Potential sources of government finance to sustain and further build on project results beyond project duration.</p> <p>Identified sources of financing for scaling</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p>



	up of project interventions beyond project duration	resources for sustaining project's outcomes?	M&E reports Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members
Socio-economic risks to sustainability	Degree of key stakeholder ownership of project objective and outcomes	<p>Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Do the various key stakeholders, including women key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?</p> <p>Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?</p> <p>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?</p>	<p>Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>
Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability	<p>Supportiveness of the legal framework</p> <p>Appropriateness and supportiveness of governance structures and processes for sustainability of project interventions</p> <p>Status of institutional capacity by the end of the project</p> <p>Potential for mainstreaming project approaches/</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Are there sufficient institutional capacities at government and grantee/NGO partner level to sustain project interventions and scale up beyond project duration?</p> <p>Are there steps in the direction of mainstreaming project interventions</p>	<p>Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members,</p>



	strategies into government planning processes and policies at national and local level	and results into national/local level policies and planning processes of government?	stakeholder meetings/FGDs
Environmental risks to sustainability	Likelihood of natural hazards (drought, floods, earthquakes) Climate change impacts	Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?	Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP PIRs Project Board / Review meeting minutes Other project meeting minutes M&E reports Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs

Rights-based approach and Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI) Effectiveness: To which extent did the project achieve its GESI results and impact? Has the project incorporated UNDP's Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles in its implementation?

Gender Equality	Percentage of members of teams (TERI, UNDP, and landscapes implementing partners) with sufficient awareness and knowledge of relevant gender issues. Degree of participation of women and girls in project activities and decision-making process at community level Strategies adopted by the project to ensure the	How has the project contributed to the expected impact with regards to: Gender equality Mainstreaming of gender equality in achieving the project's socio-economic and environmental benefits What are the key gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and activities implemented by the project? How effective have been the project's gender equality and mainstreaming interventions?	Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP PIRs Project Board / Review meeting minutes Other project meeting minutes M&E reports Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members
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	enhancement of gender benefits.		
Social Inclusion (LNOB)	<p>Strategies adopted by the Project to ensure inclusion of marginalized groups</p> <p>Strategies adopted by the Project to ensure the targeted delivery of outcome to vulnerable groups</p>	<p>How has the project contributed to the expected impact with regards to:</p> <p>Social inclusion of marginalized groups</p> <p>Mainstreaming of social inclusion of marginalized groups within target communities in achieving the project's socio-economic and environmental benefits</p> <p>What are the key social inclusion activities implemented by the project and how effective have they been?</p>	<p>Prodoc Risks section of prodoc and SESP</p> <p>PIRs</p> <p>Project Board / Review meeting minutes</p> <p>Other project meeting minutes</p> <p>M&E reports</p> <p>Discussions and interviews with TERI, UNDP, NGO partners, RCs, RAC members, stakeholder meetings/FGDs with community members</p>



Annex 3 Example Interview Guide used for Data Collection

To be attached separately.

Annex 4 Ratings Scale

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components leads to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only



		few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components leads to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)

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

The progress towards the objective/outcome will be presented as:



Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term Target	End-of-project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Objective	Indicator (if applicable)							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1							
	Indicator 2							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3							
	Indicator 3							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green = Achieved	Yellow = on target to be achieved	Red = Not on target to be achieved
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Annex 5 MTR Mission Itinerary

Mission Report to be attached separately

Serial No	Summary of MTR Mission	Date
1	Alignment meeting with the teams from UNDP and TERI	29 th August
2	MTR inception report shared with UNDP and TERI	16 th September
3	Field visit and stakeholder consultation: ICR	27 th of September
4	Field visit and stakeholder consultation: CSAR	29 th and 30 th September
5	Field visit and stakeholder consultation: ICR	3-5 th October
6	Interviews with Stakeholders in Delhi: TERI, UNDP and GEF OFF	9 th and 10 th of October
7	Field visit and stakeholder consultation: CSAR	6 th October
8	Field visit and stakeholder consultation: NER	22 nd and 23 rd of October
9	Shared the first Draft MTR Report with UNDP and TERI teams	6 th of November
10	Online Stakeholder Consultation with RAC members from ICR	14 th and 15 th of November
11	Online Stakeholder Consultation with NGO Partners: ICR and NER	18 th November
12	Shared the Final MTR Report with teams from UNDP and TERI	20 th November
13	Full MTR Completion	30 th Nov



Annex 6 List of Person Interviewed

Detailed List Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholder	Participant	Mode	Role in Project	Date
ICR-Partner	Bhagirath Sindhudurg, Maharashtra	Offline	Partner NGO	27 th September
CSAR-Partner	Haritika, Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh	Offline	Partner NGO	29 th September
CSAR-Partner	DMKS, Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh	Offline	Partner NGO	30 th September
ICR-Partner	MSSRF, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu	Offline	Partner NGO	3 rd October
ICR-Partner	SPEED, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu	Offline	Partner NGO	4 th and 5 th October
CSAR-Partner	Concept Society, Badwani, Madhya Pradesh	Offline	Partner NGO	6 th October
UNDP CO Team	Dr. Ruchi Pant: Chief- Climate Change, Resilience and Energy Urjaswi Sondhi: Project Associate Mr. Ashish Chaturvedi: Head of the Environment, Energy, and Resilience Ms. Anusha from PMSU Ms Nupur: Finance UNDP	In-Person (Delhi)	GEF Implementing Agency Oversight /	9 th October
Senior Director, TERI	Dr Dipankar Saharia	In-Person (Delhi)	National Host Institution	9 th October
SGP CPMU Team	Tanvi and Aradhana	In-Person (Delhi)	National Host Institution	9 th October
National Coordinator	Mr Manish Pandey	In-Person (Delhi)	National Host Institution	9 th October
GEF-OFF, MoEFCC	Mr Neelesh Kumar Sah	In-Person (Delhi)	GEF Operational Focal Point	10 th October
NER-Partner	LOTUS, Nalbari, Assam	Offline	Partner NGO	22 nd October
NER-Partner	Arayanak, Udalgiri, Assam	Offline	Partner NGO	23 rd October
Meeting with RAC Member	Dr. Pradip V. Sarmokadam	Online	Regional Coordinator	14 th November
Meeting with RAC Member (Government Representative)	Deepak Bilji	Online	Regional Coordinator	14 th November



Meeting with RAC Member	Dr Nambi Appadurai	Online	Regional Coordinator	15 th November
ICR-Partner	PLANT	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
ICR-Partner	The Covenant Centre for Development (CCD)	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
ICR-Partner	SKECH	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
NER-Partner	SPREAD	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
NER-Partner	SNEHPAD	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
NER-Partner	Green Valley Society	Online	Partner NGO	18 th November
UNDP BBPS-RTA	Hugo Remaury	Online	RTA	26 th November



Annex 7 List of Documents Reviewed

Project related documents that provided the bulk of material for the desk review. These included:

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. 9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm:
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project:
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team
13. Project operational guidelines, manuals, and systems
14. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
15. Minutes of the Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e., Project Appraisal Committee meetings).
16. Project site location maps
17. Consultant Reports (if any)
18. Gender analysis and gender action plan
19. Monitoring plan



Annex 8 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form

ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants

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.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

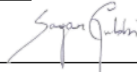
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: Sagar Gubbi

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Ecoforge Advisors Private Limited

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

Signed at Bangalore, India (Place) on 13th December 2024 (Date)

Signature: 



ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants¹³

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.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: Devanshu Chakravarti

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): N.A.

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

Signed at Maslandpur, West Bengal (Place) on December 03, 2024 (Date)

Signature:



Annex 9 MTR Report Clearance Form

MTR Report Clearance Form

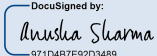
Mid-Term Review Report for: Seventh Operational Phase of GEF Small Grants Programme in India

Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

(Head- Programme Management and Support Unit, UNDP in India)

Name: Anusha Sharma

Signature: 

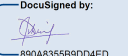
Date: 26-Dec-2024

For

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Principal Technical Advisor- Biodiversity

Name: Doley Tshering

Signature: 

Date: 27-Dec-2024