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## Mid-Term Review Final Report

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### UNDP-GEF Project: Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment

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GEF Project ID: 10021 / UNDP Project ID: 6081

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Final Draft  
17 April – 6 September

<b>Country:</b>	Lesotho
<b>Region:</b>	Southern Africa
<b>Focal Area:</b>	GEF-6: Land Degradation
<b>GEF Agency:</b>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF)
<b>MTR Team:</b>	Francis Hurst and Ramochaha Lethola

## Opening Page

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### PROJECT DETAILS:

<b>Project Name:</b>	Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment	
<b>Project ID:</b>	UNDP PIMS: 6081	GEF Project ID: 10021
<b>Country:</b>	Lesotho	
<b>Region:</b>	Southern Africa	
<b>Focal Area:</b>	GEF-6: Land Degradation	
<b>Focal Area Objectives:</b>	<b>LD-1:</b> Agriculture and Rangeland Systems: Maintain or improve flow of agroecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods; <b>Program 1:</b> Agroecological intensification; <b>Outcome 1.2:</b> Functionality and cover of agro-ecosystems maintained	
<b>Funding Source:</b>	GEF Trust Fund (GEF 6)	
<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	United Nations Development Programme	
<b>Implementation Modality:</b>	National Implementation	
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF). Formerly the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC)	

### FINANCIALS:

<b>Project Preparation Grant:</b>	US\$ 109,500
<b>GEF Project Grant:</b>	US\$ 2,101,826
<b>Co-financing Total:</b>	US\$ 2,400,000
<b>GEF Agency Fees:</b>	US\$ 199,673
<b>Total Cost:</b>	US\$ 4,810,999

### PROJECT TIMELINE

<b>Received by GEF:</b>	07 March 2018
<b>Preparation Grant Approved:</b>	03 September 2018
<b>Concepted Approved:</b>	26 June 2018
<b>Project Approved for Implementation:</b>	11 November 2021
<b>Start Date:</b>	09 May 2022
<b>Closing Date (Planned):</b>	11 May 2026

### MIDTERM REVIEW DETAILS:

<b>Mid-Term Review Timeframe:</b>	17 April - 20 July 2024
<b>MTR Consultants:</b>	Francis Hurst and Ramochaha Lethola
<b>MTR Reporting Language:</b>	English

## **Acknowledgements**

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Others include the Administration of Quthing district, comprising of the District Administrator, District Council Secretary and Heads of different government ministries and departments, in particular the District Coordinator from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry as well as the District Agricultural Officer from the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN). Tosing Community Council secretary and the Community Councillors are also acknowledged as well as the people and communities living within Sepabala catchment were instrumental in this exercise. Their comments and active participation contributed significantly to this mid-term review.

We also thank all other project partners, stakeholders and members of different committees participating in the project. They include committees at national district and community level. All your support and efforts will contribute to building the resilience and the capacity of the people of Sepabala to the impacts of climate change and will help the country to meet its domestic and international climate change obligations, commitments and actions for the benefit of humanity and the environment.

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## Abbreviations & acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
CWT	Community Watershed Teams
DAC	Drakensberg Alpine Centre of Endemism
DOE	Department of Environment
DPIT	District Project Implementation Team
DRR	Deputy Resident Representative
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
EA	Executing Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanisms
Ha	Hectare
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HDG	High-Density Grazing
HDOK	High-Density Overnight Kraaling
HLLM	Holistic Land and Livestock Management
IA	Implementing Agency
IACOV	Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
IWMP	Integrated Water Management Plan
LRP	Land Rehabilitation Programme
MAFSN	Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition
MAP	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
MASL	Metres above sea level
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MFRSC	Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation
MGYSR	Ministry of Gender Youth Sports and Recreation
MLGCHAP	Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MoNR	Ministry of Natural Resources (Department of Water Affairs)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PMU	Project Management Unit
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RTA	Regional Technical Adviser
STAP	Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel
SES	Social & Environmental Screening
SESP	Social & Environmental Screening Procedure
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SLWM	Sustainable Land & Water Management
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
SWM	Sustainable Water Management
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ORASECOM	Orange-Senqu River Commission
UNCCC	United Nations Commission on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VWT	Village Watershed Teams
WFP	World Food Programme

## 1 Executive Summary

Table 1 Project Information Table

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment	PIF Approval Date:	01/06/2018
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	6081	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	03/18/2018
GEF Project ID:	10021	ProDoc Signature: Date:	09/05/2022
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	Award ID: 00097375 Project ID: 00101128	Date Project Manager hired:	01/10/2022
Country/Countries:	Lesotho	Inception Workshop:	21/09/2022
Region:	Southern Africa	Expected Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	11/05/2024
Focal Area:	Land Degradation	Expected Terminal Evaluation date:	11/02/2026
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives:	LD-1, Programme 1	Planned Operational Closure Date:	05/11/2026
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust fund		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Previously Forestry Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC)) Ministry of Natural Resources (formerly MoW) - Department of Water Affairs (Formerly Ministry of Water) Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) Ministry of Local Government Chieftainship Home Affairs and Police (MLGCHAP)		
Development Agency	World Food Programme – IACOV project Food and Agriculture Organisation		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	World Vision Lesotho Catchment Watershed Teams Grazing Associations Water Minders		
Private sector involvement:	-		
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:	The Sepabala sub-catchment is located between longitudes 28° 55' 27" and 28° 10' 56 East, and Latitudes 30° 25' 48" and 30° 40' 40 South, with altitude ranging from 1,750 to 3,015 masl. This sub-catchment is a 49,425 hectare, multiple-use landscape made up of five minor drainage basins.		

### Brief Project description

1. The *Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment* project<sup>1</sup> responds to the ambitious national programme for integrated watershed management being followed by the Government of Lesotho, the purpose of which is to address the interlinked issues of land degradation, livelihoods, food and water security in critical catchments across the country. This programme promotes catchment-wide planning and community-driven action at sub-catchment level to ensure integrated management of land and water resources.
2. The Sepabala River Watershed in the Lower Senqu Catchment is a Strategic Water Source Area in the Orange-Senqu River system. Its ecosystems are fragile due to inherent physical and biological characteristics<sup>2</sup>. As a result of mainly anthropomorphic factors, the condition of both land and water resources are deteriorating. Ecosystem degradation is driven largely by over-cultivation, overgrazing, and over-harvesting of natural resources – exacerbated by climate change and the effects of deep-rooted poverty. The delivery of critical watershed services is being compromised and the productive capacity of the land is being depleted, undermining local agro-pastoral livelihoods and causing escalating food and water insecurity.
3. Within the Sepabala Watershed, which is largely contained within the Tosing Community Council, the project is establishing the enabling environment for overcoming the narrowly-focused, sectoral approaches to natural resource management that currently prevail. Working at watershed, sub-catchment and lower levels, the project is applying the guidelines and institutional model established through the National Integrated Catchment Management Programme (ReNOKA programme) to enhance multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder collaboration and integrated management of land and water resources.

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth referred to as the "IWMP" or "Sepabala project".

<sup>2</sup> Topography, type and pattern of rainfall, erodibility of soils, land-use patterns, and prevalence of vulnerable habitats such as wetlands.

<p><b>Objective:</b> to mainstream sustainable rangeland management and land restoration into the use of watersheds, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities in the Sepabala Watershed (Tosing Community Council) in the Lower Senqu Basin.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Outcome 1: Integrated Watershed Management Plan, with community action plans, facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management practices in the Sepabala Watershed.</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Institutional arrangements for coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring of the Sepabala IWM master Plan and community action plans. <b>Output 1.2:</b> Integrated Watershed Master Plan<sup>3</sup>, complemented by sub-catchment-level community action plans, to facilitate implementation of land restoration, soil and water conservation, and SLM practices in productive landscapes in the Sepabala Watershed (Tosing Community Council).</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Outcome 2: District level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacitated to implement IWM plans and enforce rules to prevent land and ecosystem degradation.</p>	<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Community Council by-laws developed to enforce implementation of Community Action Plans for integrated watershed management. <b>Output 2.2:</b> Establishment and strengthening of community-level resource user groups (WUAs, Farmers' Associations, Farmer field Schools, Grazing Associations etc.) supported. <b>Output 2.3:</b> District technical officers, village-level institutions, farmers' associations, and members of the community trained on SLWM practices for application at landscape and farm levels.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM and SWM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sepabala River Watershed, with ecosystem, climate resilience and livelihood benefits.</p>	<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Soil and water conservation measures implemented to combat soil erosion and promote water infiltration (including hillside terracing, stone-bunding, gully rehabilitation, re-seeding, tree-planting and soil improvement). <b>Output 3.2:</b> Rangeland restoration measures implemented to promote improved productivity and vegetative cover (measures including enforcement of rotational grazing plans, selective reseeded, resting and natural regeneration, removal of invasive species, pasture resting). <b>Output 3.3:</b> SLWM practices piloted by land users at selected sites to improve agricultural productivity (and strengthen resilience) measures including climate-smart agriculture, crop diversification, mixed crop-livestock systems, agroforestry). <b>Output 3.4:</b> Integrated water resources management promoted to augment water supply for community and household food production (measures including rainwater harvesting, in-field planting pits and keyhole gardens).</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Lessons learnt by the project through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&amp;E are used to promote SLWM in the wider Sepabala Watershed and nationally.</p>	<p><b>Output 4.1:</b> Project gender strategy and action plan implemented, monitored and reported on. <b>Output 4.2:</b> Knowledge management system to facilitate participatory M&amp;E, ongoing learning and adaptive management in the watershed and nationally, with active participation of key project stakeholders and project partners.</p>

4. The project is structured under three components: (i) Institutional capacity at national and local levels for integrated watershed management (IWM); (ii) Integrated watershed management practices in the Sepabala Watershed; and (iii) Gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and M&E.
5. The four project outcomes, are being delivered via four impact pathways:
  - An Integrated Watershed Management Plan with community action plans to facilitate implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices in the Sepabala River Watershed (covering 121,996 ha);
  - Building district-level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacity to implement IWM plans and to enforce regulations to prevent land and ecosystem degradation;
  - Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sepabala Watershed (with pilot sites in the 52,388 ha Sepabala Sub-catchment), with ecosystem and livelihood benefits;
  - Lessons learned through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&E promoting integrated watershed management in the wider Sepabala Watershed, and the wider national constituency.
6. The project is intending to deliver these outcomes through a structured, participatory and gender-responsive process that balances consideration of ecological, social and economic parameters, and establishes the conditions for sustainability and upscaling.
7. The project will be executed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF), working in close collaboration with departments in other line ministries, their district counterparts, partners in the development community and civil society, and with the participation of communities.

<sup>3</sup> In the Project Document there is an inconsistency in these plans being referred to as "master" and "management" plans. For the avoidance of doubt, the MTR refers to these as management plans.



8. It is being implemented over four years, with a GEF investment of \$2,101,826 and co-finance from government and UNDP \$3,400,000.

## Project Progress Summary

Table 2 Progress Towards Results Matrix

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
<b>Objective: to mainstream sustainable rangeland management and land restoration into the use of watersheds, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities in the Sepapala Watershed (Tosing Community Council) in the Lower Senqu Basin.</b>								
Indicator 1: (Mandatory GEF 7 Core Indicator 3). Area of land restored (in ha), including:	In Tosing Community Council: 106, 282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54),	To-date, mapping of major landscapes and verification of biophysical data covering an area 63,863Ha reflected below per land use categories within the Sepapala catchment to inform land and wetlands restoration activities has been completed. Based on the mapping and verification exercise, there is not much change except that, in the baseline wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats cover 847 ha and 751 ha respectively, while the mapping exercise reflects 14,787 ha for wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats combined. For rangeland, the mapping exercise recorded 49,076 ha for rangeland (grazing areas) as opposed to 47,091 ha reported in the baseline. This difference implies that the targets need to be manipulated such that they accommodate the changes. Mapped Land Use Category. Size area(hectares): Wetland areas (14787 ha); Class-A grazing Area (cattle post areas) - 26512 ha; Class-B Grazing Area - 14857 ha; Class-C grazing Area - 7707 ha; Agricultural land - 473 ha; Forests - 48.96 ha; Residences - 210.3 ha.  The actual land and wetlands restoration is scheduled in the next reporting period starting August 2023 as most of the preparatory works are finalized. Following the landscape mapping and biophysical data verification exercise, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions were also confirmed during community engagements as follows: Ha Thibella: Rangeland Fire management to curb unprescribed rangeland burning; Rangeland seeding to regrass cattle post areas within the sub-catchment;	(Total area restored is 4,000ha) At least 3,800 ha restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone-bunds, water furrows, cross-slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures, and improved rangeland management (40% of EOP target)	2,228.7	(Total area restored is 11,500 ha) At least 10,000 ha of land restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone-bunds, water furrows, cross-slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures and improved rangeland management	<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	On track (56%) according to PMU reporting on GEF-8 Core Indicators. However, the MTR questions the extent of the MTR status figures – wetlands is only 7% and if the brush removal is included in these figures then there are issues of appropriate treatment and sustainability. Therefore, the MTR considers this to be <b>NOT ON TRACK</b> with the provision that these targets can be achieved if the project accelerates implementation as treatments can be extensively applied. The MTR notes that the extent degraded at inception was not determined and confirmed. This can still be retrofitted.
Sub-indicator 1.1: natural grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands) (Core Indicator 3.3)	90,339 ha used for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54188,696 ha rangelands incorporating grasslands and shrublands)	and biophysical data verification exercise, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions were also confirmed during community engagements as follows: Ha Thibella: Rangeland Fire management to curb unprescribed rangeland burning; Rangeland seeding to regrass cattle post areas within the sub-catchment;	Not given	2,228.7		<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	As above

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Sub-indicator 1.2: Areas of wetlands restored (Core Indicator 3.4)	847 ha wetlands, and 751 ha other associated aquatic and riparian habitats	<p>Development of grazing management plans in order to rest some parts of rangeland when appropriate for all cattle post areas within the sub catchment.</p> <p>Within the whole sub-catchment Training of herders at Tsatsane;</p> <p>Support ecotourism at Morataleng;</p> <p>Control of invader plant species/ Brush control Within the sub catchment at Morataleng.</p> <p>Pilot high density grazing some selected areas in summer and winter grazing areas.</p> <p>Stakeholder mobilization through sensitization campaigns and workshops has been undertaken covering i) Tosing Community Council, ii) Principal chief, iii) Chiefs; Implementation partners; Communities; Government officials at local level (District) and Government Ministries and Departments.</p>	At least 200 ha of wetlands restored and under IWRM	14	At least 1,500 ha of wetland and riparian habitat restored and under IWRM productive water use and productive water use	<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	As above
Indicator 2: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4). Area of landscape under improved practices, outside of protected areas Sub-indicator 2.1: Area of landscape (ha) under SLM in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3), including: Cultivated lands; rangelands; grasslands	In Tosing Community Council: 8,000 ha cultivated lands. 106,282 ha rangelands	<p>Sensitization campaigns, knowledge exchange tours and workshops on improved land use practices were conducted in Tosing Community Council and in some selected sites in Mochales Hoek, Maseru and Mokhotlong districts covering key stakeholders including Principal chief, Area and local chiefs, Implementation partners (Departments of Forestry, Rangeland Resources management, Soil and Water Conservation, Meteorology, Disaster Management Authority, Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, Ministry of Water and Ministry of Local Government).</p> <p>Communities' sensitizations and community engagement workshops were carried out in the following village groupings, where each group was consisting of about 5 smaller villages on average in both Sepabala upper catchment and Lower catchments as follows:</p> <p>Upper Sepabala</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ha France</li> <li>2. Liphapang</li> <li>3. Matsela Ha beli</li> <li>5. Morataleng</li> </ol>	At least 8,000 ha under improved practices, as follows: Cultivated lands: at least 2,000 ha (farmlands in SC54 to be targeted first) under improved practices, with agreed plan in place for roll-out in remaining 6,000 ha across TCC Rangelands: at least 6,000 ha under improved practices (targeting SC54)	9,000	At least 23,000 ha under improved practices 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under SLM/IWM practices and productive water use, across Sepabala River Watershed At least 15,000ha of rangelands/grasslands under improved practices	<b>ON TARGET</b>	S	The project has been very active in sensitizing stakeholders and utilizing district structures for coordination as well as getting work underway in wetland rehabilitation, brush clearance, etc. However, the MTR raises concerns regarding the croplands and raises issues with the lateness of agricultural interventions and the need to develop scalable regenerative agricultural approaches before rolling out this intervention

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		Lower Sepabala 1. Letlapeng 2. Moseneke 3. Tosing The next or further engagement will target herders, grazing associations, Watershed Teams (Village and Community) and Watershed supervisors (yet to be engaged as a consequence of the decision made by the Board). However, communities have started organizing themselves to embark on land rehabilitation works particularly brush control at the beginning of next reporting period.						
Indicator 3: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 11) No. of direct and indirect beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, as co-benefit of the GEF investment	Total population of potential beneficiaries in Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	To-date, a total of 613 (women 341; men 272) equivalent to 0.03% of midterm target have benefited from project activities including community and local authorities' sensitization, learning exchange tours and, trainings of technical teams to backstop implementation of substantive activities scheduled in the next reporting period.	At least 50% of population of TCC participating directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	Women 2,569 Men 2,128 Total 4,697	At least 80% of Tosing Community Council population (19,071 total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sepabala Watershed At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	MU	Numerically the indicator is on track, however, the MTR has concerns that without acceleration of the planning process and material strengthening of the gender strategy, intervention and support the end result will be weak ownership and effectiveness of the resulting plans. Furthermore, training has taken place but this still needs considerable facilitation at the community level to develop the plans.
<b>Outcome 1: Integrated Watershed Management Plan, with community action plans, facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management practices in the Sepabala Watershed.</b>								
Indicator 4: Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Sepabala Watershed (including community action plans for land restoration, soil	No IWMP plan or community action plans in place in Tosing CC or its sub-catchments	The Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) Plan and IWM Community Action Plans for the Sepabala watershed are not yet developed as focus of the project during this first reporting period was on recruitment of a technical team of experts (consortium) to facilitate and provide guidance for establishment of necessary institutional arrangements and structures to support development of the IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans.	IW Master Plan developed and endorsed by National ICM Technical Secretariat and at least two community action plans for drainage basins	Capacity building/ Training of Implementing Partners and CWTs on ICM planning processes relevant for IWM Master	IWM Plan and at least 5 community action plans at sub-catchment level completed, endorsed by the National ICM Steering Committee and local governance	<b>NOT ON TRACK.</b>	MU	Training has taken place and this is quite impressive and the planning is well understood from similar projects, however, the MTR expectation was for the WCM to be in place with the CWM plans to guide the

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
and water conservation, and SLM in production landscapes) developed and adopted Seabapala IWM Master Plan covering 121,699 ha (Tosing Community Council) Community Action Plans covering at least 49,425 ha (Seabapala Sub-catchment SC54)		<p>In the initial plan a service provider (consortium of experts) was to be engaged to facilitate development of Seabapala IWM plans (Master plan and community action plans). Since the plans to be developed should be aligned to the national Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) framework a program under the custodianship of ICM unit and joint implementation with ReNOKA initiative (A national inclusive and holistic movement for protecting and conserving soil and water resources), following a number of consultations, it was decided that ICM unit/Renoka will be engaged to lead development of ICM plans instead of the consortium of experts. To-date, the project in collaboration with a technical team from ICM/ReNOKA Unit within the Ministry of Water has undertaken the following preparatory activities towards development of the IWM master plan and community action plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Consultations, engagement and planning with ICM structures which include catchment management committees and community councils);</li> <li>ii) Establishment of Institutional arrangements necessary for the development of Seabapala IWM structures/teams/forums are in progress.</li> <li>iii) A recommendation for engagement of ICM/ReNoka Unit to lead development of the IWM plans was approved PSC/Board of 9 June 2023 (Indicator 4-5: PSC Minutes).</li> <li>iv) Following the approval by PSC, revision of the workplan and budget to reflect changes in implementation modality for development of the plans were developed and are to be presented in an adhoc PSC meeting scheduled in September 12th 2023.</li> </ul> <p>Most of necessary preliminary and capacity building works to ensure achievement of this outcome were carried out including the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successful engagements with ICM/ReNOKA (Custodian of the National IWM Programme) and subsequent development of IWM structures both at District and at Sub-catchment levels A.</li> <li>2. Training of personnel from implementing partners on IWM.</li> <li>3. Development of IWM Master plan followed by Community Action Plans will</li> </ol>	in SC54 drafted and approved by District and local authorities	plan and Community Action plans in collaboration with ICM (National custodian of ICM/IWM National Programme) was conducted for 15 Implementing Partners. 52 Community Watershed Teams were trained also on integral catchment management planning processes.	structures and guiding management, with at least one Monitoring Report completed and informing adaptive management			remaining interventions and the plans have not been developed. However, the planning process is well integrated into the larger national ICM planning process from design through to the delays (due to the elections) necessary to embed it at the Community Council level and the formation of CWT and VWTs allowed a fast tracking of some village level watershed management activities.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		Commence in the fourth quarter.						
Indicator 5: Institutional arrangements for co-ordination of IWM planning, implementation and monitoring	No institutional arrangements for IWM planning in place in Sepapala Watershed	To-date, an institutional framework for IWM has been established. The institutional framework includes: 1. ICM National Technical Secretariat (NTS) adapted. 2. Project Board second sitting convened. 3. Technical Advisory Committee validated TORs for consultants. 4. FRSC Sepapala Field Team Operational 5. District Projects implementation Team / Field Implementation (PIT) second meeting attended. 6. PIT second meeting attended. 7. Districts Heads of Department team second meeting attended.  A plan and budget adjustment proposal to accommodate the new approach has been successfully presented to the Board for approval. This has also been covered in the draft delivery plan to be presented to the Board in the proposed extraordinary sitting in September 2023.	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination team in place and meeting regularly, according to agreed TORs, with minutes of all meetings kept	The project has actively developed the institutional arrangements at the district level and these are embedded in the existing institutional arrangements	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination Team capacitated to interface with Sepapala CPU and transfer skills, knowledge and capacity to implement the IWM Plan M&E system	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	MU	(see comments above) as dependent on having the IWM plans in place. This is not in place, however, at the District level there is certainly the understanding for the need for this, but it is dependent upon the first and second degree plans (catchment and watershed) being in place.
<b>Outcome 2: Outcome 2: District level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacitated to implement IWM plans and enforce rules to prevent land and ecosystem degradation.</b>								
Indicator 6: Number of effective bylaws providing legal basis for local-level implementation of IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans	Tosing Community Council and local-level structures currently have no bylaws for enforcing IWM	Development of the bylaws to provide a legal basis for implementation of the IWM plans requires a full scoping assessment to review legal instruments and regulatory frameworks. The assessment in turn needs to be as participatory as possible, hence, requires contribution and involvement of active IWM structures and technical expertise to lead the process. In preparation for this critical process, the project has initiated recruitment of Project Technical Advisor and establishment of IWM structures such as Community Watershed and Village Water Teams to facilitate scoping assessment and consultative processes scheduled during the next reporting period.	Full scoping assessment (review of legal instruments and identification of gaps in local-level regulatory framework) completed and consultative processes concluded for identification of new bylaws for ICM (number of bylaws to be determined during scoping)	Training of trainers workshop on bylaws guidelines and development in collaboration with ICM, GIZ and Ministry of Local Government (Department of Decentralization) for 37 officers (Legal Officers and Community Councils Secretaries) from Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Environment and	At least three* by-laws developed by CC, adopted and in force as the legal basis for local-scale implementation of IWM plans (*number and type to be refined based on scoping study to be carried out in second year of implementation)	<b>ON TRACK -</b>	S	There is a clear understanding at all levels for the need for by-laws as instruments to legitimize rules at a community level and provide the “levers of control” for the governance structures (associations, CWT, CC, DC, etc...). Approximately 5 by-laws are anticipated which seems reasonable and achievable figure by EOP.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
				Forestry was conducted.				
Indicator 7: Improved capacity scores of key resource management institutions responsible for implementation of IWM Master Plan and community action Plans at Quthing District, TCC and local levels: Systemic, institutional and individual capacities will be assessed using: The UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for District-level institutions (Quthing District Officials, extension staff, and all other relevant entities under the approved National Governance Framework for ICM – such as the Catchment Management Joint Committee)	Baseline for District officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 55%	Capacity scores will be administered at MTR in line with the M&E framework.  Notwithstanding, capacity building activities towards this indicator are budgeted and scheduled for next reporting period.	Midterm score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 60%	62.2%	End-of-project score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 65%	<b>ON TRACK</b>	S	Capacity Score Cards show improvement
Modified Capacity Development Scorecard for Tosing Community Council (Standing Committees on Finance, Planning and Environment;	Baseline for local-level institutions 70%		Midterm score for local-level institutions: 75%	70%	End-of-project score for local-level institutions: 80%	<b>ON TRACK</b>	S	As above. This is not as advanced as the District level but is still impressive and there is a clear commitment for local governance (CC) to engage with environmental

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
officials; extension staff), and local-level institutions (water supply groups, Grazing Associations, wool and mohair groups, vegetable growers, beekeepers, etc)								sustainability. The MTR is confident that with the additional training planned the predicted score will be reached by the TE.
<b>Outcome 3: Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM and SWM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sepapala River Watershed, with ecosystem, climate resilience and livelihood benefits.</b>								
Indicator 8: Area of land restored or under improved land use practices, measured in total, and separately for: Sub-indicator 8.1: Agricultural lands  Targets to be disaggregated for the whole Sepapala River Watershed (=Tosing Community Council - TCC) and the Sepapala Sub-catchment (No. 54 in catchment map – SC54)	Total area under different kinds of landcover: <b>(Extent degraded to be determined at inception)</b> – this needs to be retrofitted	In situ biophysical data validation, mapping and re-drawing of upper Sepapala major landscapes as well as verification of Agricultural lands, rangeland, wetland areas and riparian habitats degraded hot spots where improved soil and water conservation measures will be implemented to combat soil erosion and promote water infiltration was undertaken.  The reports identified areas to be reclaimed, different landscapes, including wetland areas where shrubs are turning into a thicket. The reports are important because they provide a base upon which resource users priorities will be anored and furthermore will guide future rehabilitation interventions since they provide a picture and base for rehabilitation works.  In an effort to fast-track the work, a drat Delivery Plan to be presented to the Board for approval in an extraordinary Board meeting in September has been prepared.	Total area under restoration or under improved practices by midterm: 12,000ha Agricultural lands: 2, 000 ha under improved practices - 400 ha in SC54, with agreed plans in place for roll out over a further 1,600 ha in TCC	Sub-indicator 8.1: 124.4 ha is area under improved agriculture.  Assessment of areas/place suitable for Fruit trees establishment was undertaken by Ministerial team	At least 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under improved SLM practices	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	MU	The agricultural component is behind schedule and it is not clear to what extent the climate smart agriculture will address the soil conservation and restoration aspects facing the crop lands.
Sub-indicator 8.2: Grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands)	Agricultural lands 8,181 ha in TCC, of which 612 ha are inSC54 106, 282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54), with 90,339 ha used for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54)	Since the project area is a hard-to-reach compounded by inadequate implementing partners' officials operating on-ground, the Board in its sitting of June 2023 approved engagement of Field Supervisors (These are graduates who will be trained and stationed within targeted communities to supervise SLWM works). To this end, TORs for Field Supervisors have been drafted. To facilitate engagement of Field Supervisors, the project will identify sources of funds from savings to pay for the allowances of the 6 Field Supervisors.	At least 6,000 ha of rangelands under improved practices At least 3,800 ha of rangelands under fast tracked'' restoration, targeting hotpots in SC54 first, with plans in place for roll-out of soil and water	Sub-indicator 8.2: A total of 2228.7 ha of which 1680.7 is rested rangeland at Selomomg, Ha Liphapang, Thoteng, Matsela-Habeli, Motse-mocha, Daliwe, Mathambekeng and Ha Matiase. 482.1 ha is area under brush	At least 34,500 ha restored or under improved practices: 15,000 ha of degraded rangelands under improved practices 10,000ha degraded rangelands restored through improved soil and water conservation and grazing	<b>ON TRACK</b>	S	As above -here are concerns with regards the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of the community enterprises (e.g. the orchards, etc.).



Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
			conservation measures in remainder of SC54 and TCC, as appropriate	control at Mapopong, Khorong Ha Ranomoro, Ha Thaha, Ha Hlaela, Ha `Mako, Ha Raemile, Ha Frans, Mathaheng, Patiseng, Lits`oeneng, Mateleng, Qoaling Ha Liphapang, Merataleng, Ha Sekonyela, Mabele a tlala, Selomong, Tosing, Matsela-Habeli and Thibella, Sekolong Motse-mocha.	management measures			
Sub-indicator 8.3: Wetlands and riparian habitats	847 ha of wetlands in TCC (of which 496 ha are in SC54), and 953 ha of other riparian/aquatic habitats in TCC (of which 202 ha are in SC54)		At least 200 ha of headwater wetlands under emergency restoration (targeting wetlands in Upper Sepabala and Tsatsane minor drainage basins in SC54 first), with sites for further roll-out identified	Sub-indicator 8.3: 124.4 ha is area under improved agriculture. Assessment of areas/place suitable for Fruit trees establishment was undertaken by Ministerial team	At least 1,500 ha of wetlands and riparian habitats under IWRM (including 496 ha of restored wetlands)	ON TRACK	S	As above there are still issues regarding the compliance issues within the community and related to different tenure regimes. This is for sub indicator 8.1. There seem to be no record of how much work has taken place in the wetlands in 2023 PIR and the 2024 physical progress report submitted to the MTR. However, during the mission, protection of wetlands was reported by all communities, including the reasons for doing it and some of the techniques and specific problems faced

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
								such as preventing livestock entering.
<b>Outcome 4: Lessons learnt by the project through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&amp;E are used to promote SLWM in the wider Sepabala Watershed and nationally.</b>								
Indicator 9: Ratio of women/ men benefitting from project interventions, in accordance with Gender Action Plan	Total population of potential beneficiaries in Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	Recruitment of a Gender specialist to update the Gender Action Plan and its strategy is at advance stage and will be concluded during the third quarter. However, through sensitization activities, the project reached a total of 623 beneficiaries (228 M: 345 F) which is about 17.1% of Mid-term target and very close to proposed ratio (1:0.95) of men and women estimated to benefit from project interventions.	At least 50% of population of TCC participating directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	Core indicator 11 achievement of a total of 4,697 (women 2,569 and men 2,128) of which 3,525 benefited from ecosystem goods and services accrued from improving management of land resources and 1,172 land restoration volunteers benefited through provision of food parcels, protective clothing, restoration equipment and trainings	At least 80% of Tosing Community Council population (19,071 total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sepabala Watershed (11,786M, 12,053F) At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)	NOT ON TRACK	MU	The project may have engaged with this number of men and women; however, it would be unrealistic to state that they have benefited from improved ecosystem goods and services yet. The MTR does not accept direct beneficiaries of project incentives (food parcels, tools, etc...) as accounting for this indicator on the basis that these are project bound and not necessarily sustainable. The MTR considers that the benefit should be from the outcome of the intervention and not due to direct "payments" from the project which are for a specific purpose and not necessarily sustainable. Furthermore, benefits to women can be characterised as "targeted" whereas it should be expected to see more "transformational" benefits both from a rights perspective and in the interests of SLM.
Indicator 10: Number of manuals, policy briefs, reports and	Currently there are no policy-briefs or SLM knowledge	1. 1 farmer to farmer learning knowledge-exchange trip facilitated. This Team consisted of Community Watershed Teams, Council and Chiefs	Sepabala Communications Knowledge Framework in	The project is generating useful lessons but as yet these	Sepabala Catchment Communications and Knowledge	NOT ON TRACK	MU	The self-reported achievements for this indicator are essentially activities, some of which

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>lessons on SLWM in Sepapala Watershed collated and shared, and learning exchanges convened</p>	<p>products specific to the Sepapala Watershed, and no comprehensive knowledge management or M&amp;E system for IWM/SLM. An SLM Toolkit for Lesotho (based on work in the Maseru District) is available, and a booklet capturing lessons on Rangeland Rehabilitation in the Mount Moorosi area</p> <p>Stakeholders in the Sepapala have not yet benefitted from SLWM learning exchanges</p>	<p>representatives. These were accompanied by personnel from implementing partner Ministries.</p> <p>23 (10 female) people participated in the farmer to farmer learning exchange.</p> <p>2. Beaded Vulture Bilateral Task Force meeting in Mokhotlong                      3. Delivery fast-tracking plan prepared</p> <p>The meeting was organized by the Department of Environment and the project was invited.</p>	<p>place and guiding development and distribution of policy briefs and lessons learnt, and participation in learning exchanges:</p> <p>At least:                      1 Technical Report/Policy Brief                      4 Best-practice/lessons learnt communications pieces (at least one of which should have a specific gender focus)                      At least five local-level learning exchanges facilitated                      Participation by Sepapala stakeholders in at least one national or regional knowledge-exchange event, with a report prepared on lessons learnt</p>	<p>need to be made conclusive and the experience collated in such a way that they become transferable knowledge products.</p>	<p>management Framework fully implemented, Web-based knowledge management system in place and serving information and knowledge products on ICM in Sepapala Catchment, including at least:                      4 Technical Reports                      56 /Policy Briefs                      8 best-practice/lessons learnt communications pieces                      At least one national knowledge-sharing workshop convened, ahead of TE, with proceedings collated as a technical lessons-learnt report                      Participation in at least 2 regional or national knowledge-exchange events, with reports prepared on lessons learnt</p> <p>Community-led advocacy programme operational</p>			<p>have a very weak alignment with the project's objectives (e.g. the attending the bearded vulture meeting and therefore do not constitute effective or efficient use of project resources). Certainly, the MTR considers that the project does have the intellectual capacities and enthusiasm to deliver on this indicator, however these results are not evident at the time of the MTR.</p>



9. Progress as measured against the MTR targets in the project's strategic results framework (SRF) has been slow. This has been due in the most part to a delay in establishing the project's management and TA resources following the project start up and the disruption of the national elections in September 2022 with a subsequent re-organisation of the key project partners<sup>4</sup>, including the MEF.
10. However, the project has still delivered some good results in terms of training and organisation at the District and community level. There has been significant work carried out on the wetlands with the community and rangeland brush clearance, although the latter has concerns regarding its ecological and financial sustainability.
11. The project has produced a good Inception Report and has carried out a significant and good-quality training of project partners and stakeholders. With regards to the restoration efforts, as measured by the MTR targets, the project is behind schedule. Outcome 1 which involves a substantive catchment plan and two Community Watershed Plans is behind schedule and the project will need to significantly increase the speed of the planning process which in itself, especially at the community level, has significant risks. The climate-smart agriculture has not yet begun and it is important that this does not default to conventional agricultural support, but remains innovative and in-line with the climate-smart principles. At the District level there is an enthusiasm for the planning, but this needs to be supported and resourced urgently.
12. The project has not yet produced any By-laws; however, it has carried out substantive training in this area and there are clear signs that the District and Community Councils are capable of taking on this challenge. Overall, the project has considerably increased District and Community level capacities.
13. The MTR has concerns that the agricultural component which will focus largely on the croplands is behind schedule. Furthermore, there are concerns that the climate-smart agriculture needs to be well-thought through with regards to the ecological aspects of the Sepabala catchment. The problem of soil loss from crop lands is unlikely to be resolved using conventional agricultural techniques and more holistic approaches need to be tried, some of which may impart short-term opportunity costs on farmers. However, there are serious problems, and some challenges, facing the croplands in the project area and these need to be tackled by the project urgently for the purpose of informing and tracking purposes on interventions to address such serious problems and challenges.
14. There are concerns that the project's policy and activities with regards women's empowerment, while well-thought through and technically very good, need to have greater resources invested in their implementations. Given the quality of TA and espoused government support to women's equality, the MTR would expect to have seen better progress in this area and reasonably assumes that this is because it is being under-resourced and weakly-supported logistically.
15. To date the project has the potential to generate very important and interesting experience, as importantly, it has the human resource capacities, intellect and enthusiasm to capture this knowledge and produce good quality knowledge products. However, due to the slow progress these are not available at the midterm.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, the hiatus in having a Principal Secretary as signatory of the project bank account led to its closure until a new PS was appointed

Table 3 MTR Ratings & Achievements Summary

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A at MTR	The MTR is not required to rate the project’s strategy. However, it is worth mentioning that the Project Document, the primary strategy document for a GEF project is of remarkably good technical quality, notwithstanding the absence of any operational risks.
Progress Towards Results	Objective MU	Four of the five indicators/ sub-indicators are barely on track or not on track. The MTR status is just over 50% of the expected extent of restored area and wetlands are only 7% of the anticipated area. The project has undertaken considerable training and capacity building and certainly has considerable support at the District level. Both indicators (1 & 2) are not on track, although indicator 2 relating to the institutional arrangements is much more advanced but still needs to be consolidated. The ICM plan still has to be developed along with the CWM plans. The amount of landscape under improved practices is greater than expected at the mid-term, but the MTR has concerns about the quality of this given that the climate-smart agricultural activities have not begun in earnest and these need to be defined to confirm that they are really climate-smart and agroecologically sound in practice. The total number of beneficiaries is numerically on track, however, the MTR has concerns that without acceleration of the planning process and material strengthening of the gender strategy and action plan, intervention and support the end result will be weak ownership and effectiveness of the resulting plans.
Outcome 1:	MU	Neither indicators are on track. Training has taken place and this is quite impressive and the planning is well understood from similar projects, however, the MTR expectation was for the ICM to be in place with the CWM plans to guide the remaining interventions and the plans have not yet been developed. A decision was taken early on that the ICM and CWPs should be facilitated and guided by the larger government led initiative under Integrated Catchment Management (ICM)/ ReNOKA (Custodian of the national ICM programme) and not by an external Consultant. However, development of the plans could not take place without the necessary structures including the Community Councils (CC) that were coming to the end of their tenure ahead of the elections. Once the elections were over the CC was able to establish the IWM structures such as the Community Watershed Teams (CWT) and Village Watershed Teams (VWT). When the CC and watershed Teams came into being and were capacitated, gatherings to initiate establishment of plans were conducted whereby developmental priorities and aspiration of communities were gathered. It is through these village and communities’ priority list that fast-tracked activities were implemented according to the community priorities and broadly in line with the future ICM plan. While delays in the project (largely due to the elections) are partially responsible for this, the MTR also considers that the timeframe of the project (four years) was probably unrealistic given the complexity of ICM planning. The institutional arrangements are now advanced but they are dependent on having the IWM plans in place by the end of the project to receive a higher, possibly by two levels, rating. At the District level there is certainly the understanding for the need for this, but it is dependent upon the first and second degree plans (catchment and watershed) being in place.
Outcome 2:	S	There is a clear understanding at all levels for the need for by-laws as instruments to legitimize rules at a community level and provide the “levers of control” for the governance structures (associations, CWT, CC, DC, etc...). Approximately 5 by-laws are anticipated which seems a reasonable and achievable figure by EOP. The training and capacity building has had a considerable impact especially at the district level with the Score Card results reflecting this effort.
Outcome 3:	MS	The project has had some successes with rangeland and wetlands, but this is taking place outside the structure of the ICM and CWM plans. There are still issues regarding the compliance issues within the community and related to different tenure regimes. This is for sub indicator 8.1. There seem to be no record of how much work has taken place in the wetlands in 2023 PIR and the 2024 physical progress report submitted to the MTR. However, during the mission, protection of wetlands was reported by all communities, including the reasons for doing it and some of the techniques and specific problems faced such as preventing livestock entering. The agricultural component is behind schedule and it is not clear to what extent the climate smart agriculture will address the soil conservation and restoration aspects

		facing the crop lands and there are concerns with regards the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of the community enterprises (e.g. the orchards, etc.).
Outcome 4:	MU	Both indicators are not on track for this outcome. The project may have engaged with a large number <sup>5</sup> of men and women; however, it would be unrealistic to state that they have all benefited from improved ecosystem goods and services yet. The MTR does not accept direct beneficiaries of project incentives (food parcels, tools, etc...) as accounting for this indicator on the basis that these are project bound and not necessarily sustainable. The MTR considers that the benefit should be from the outcome of the intervention and not due to direct “payments” from the project which are for a specific purpose and not necessarily sustainable. Furthermore, benefits to women can be characterised as “targeted” whereas it should be expected to see more “transformational” benefits both from a rights perspective and in the interests of SLM. The self-reported achievements for this indicator are essentially activities, some of which have a very weak alignment with the project’s objectives (e.g. the attending the bearded vulture meeting and therefore do not constitute effective or efficient use of project resources). Certainly, the MTR considers that the project does have the intellectual capacities and enthusiasm to deliver on this indicator, however these results are not evident at the time of the MTR.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	MU	The project has experienced significant delays and at times appears unable to recover quickly from these. Project implementation issues such as procurement are acting like brakes on the activities at the District level and within the catchment. A lack of operational risks <sup>6</sup> , late payments and other procurement issues are slowing the project down. Budget execution is low and there has been a very low delivery of co-financing. Decision-making is slow and the PSC which should serve as an executive for the project is unwieldy, as a result, ownership of risks and decision-making appears to be diffused across the project leading to indecisiveness. The centre of operations is at the District level; however, the decision-making and operational aspects of the project are based in Maseru. Small inefficiencies such as releasing a vehicle for use in the project area are slowing the project’s progress and reducing the effectiveness of the project’s considerable strengths in its human resources which are more than capable of carrying out their tasks to a very high standard because the project has considerable intellectual and human resources. Many of the challenges and solutions are self-identified, but it would appear that the project <i>per se</i> is unable to make decisions and act decisively. If these issues could be addressed by, <i>inter alia</i> : restructuring the PSC and moving the centre of operations and much of the day to day decision-making to the District level and by resolving very simple procurement issues such as commissioning the project vehicle, it is likely that this rating could be raised by two levels to satisfactory by the end of the project.
Sustainability	ML	The project results are all considered moderately sustainable in terms of the financial, socio-economic, institutional framework and governance and environmental criteria. However, risk monitoring within the project needs to be strengthened with more attention to the SESP. The project outcomes are firmly embedded at the District and community (Councils) level, improving soils and pastures will build resilience into the livelihoods of local communities and reduce their risks, environmentally the improved pasture management, wetland protection and providing that the climate-smart agricultural interventions are of good quality the outcomes are environmentally sustainable. The MTR is most concerned about the financial sustainability. The shortfall in co-financing commitments and the apparent lack of resources at the District level suggests that overall there is a high dependence on external project financing for anything other than the core activities of local government.

<sup>5</sup> 4,697 (women 2,569 and men 2,128) of which 3,525 benefited from ecosystem goods and services accrued from improving management of land resources and 1,172 land restoration volunteers benefited through provision of food parcels, protective clothing, restoration equipment and trainings

<sup>6</sup> A risk to the operations of the project itself and not necessarily the impact. An example of an operational risk might be upcoming elections, availability of technical advice or procurement challenges, etc.

### **Summary of conclusions**

The Sepabala project has a number of things to recommend it. A strong and progressive project design, considerable intellectual resources, alignment with the overall policy framework as well being a part a larger government and donor-funded suite of projects addressing water issues through ICM.

16. Internally it has a number of strengths including well-trained and motivated officers and very good TA. At the District level it has an element of enthusiasm and energy, which is not always matched by the flow of resources to this level.
17. At the catchment level it is having an impact despite considerable delays and the challenges, especially logistical challenges at this level. However, interactions with the community at this level must be based upon regular contact to build the relationships based on mutual trust in order to jointly solve problems and mitigate associated with new approaches. Currently, at the MTR, the project doesn't have this type of presence in the field due to the slow disposition of resources, especially logistical resources.
18. Weaknesses within the project management, in particular the efficiency of procurement processes, but also the speed at which risks are identified, decisions made and actions to mitigate are put in place are too slow to meet the restricted timeframe of the project and to respond to systemic timeframes (e.g. seasonal aspect, etc.).
19. The logistical challenges presented by the project area are considerable; even if the resources at the project's disposal were effectively and efficiently deployed, which presently they are not and issues such as procurement procedural details take priority over project activities which are timebound and sequential in nature causing delays to accumulate and compound within the project cycle.
20. PSC meetings are attended by a larger number of project partners, sometimes delegated and attending without necessarily having decision-making powers. Agendas are not always circulated, decisions are not followed up or allocated to specific parties in a way that demonstrates the PSC's executive function. The project's decision-making has to be accelerated with decisions turned into adequately and timely resourced actions. The PSC is the project's principle decision-making structure and needs to be made more effective in addressing the challenges faced by the project.
21. The focus of the project's operations needs to be decentralised to the District level with tactical decisions made in the field. Resources need to be deployed in a timely manner and to where they are really needed.
22. Despite its many strengths and significant achievements to date, if the project continues without revision and without addressing these challenges it is unlikely to deliver the anticipated outcomes and achieve the objective by the close of the GEF fund. However, it is important to stress that the project has very significant potential to deliver due to its good strategic design, considerable human resource capacities and intellect and a clear desire to make it work at the District level.



Table 4 Recommendation Summary Table

#	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Project implementation		
A.1	<p>Restructure the PSC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PSC should consist of a seven-member executive made up of Principal Secretary (PS) MEF, UNDP (Resident Representative [RR] or Deputy RR [DRR]), Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ministry of Agriculture (MA), District Council (DC), Community Council (CC) and the GEF Focal Point.</li> <li>A quorum shall consist of the five executive members.</li> <li>All other project partners to be <i>ex officio</i> members in a non-executive (voting) capacity.</li> <li>The PSC should meet quarterly and the Executive Committee as needed by special request.</li> <li>The project PM to continue as the Secretary to the PSC.</li> <li>All members to submit agendas to the Secretary six weeks prior to the next meeting.</li> <li>The Secretary (PM) to circulate the last Minutes of Meeting and Agenda for the next meeting two weeks before the meeting date.</li> <li>Executive Members should submit a delegation note to the Secretary one week before the next meeting indicating their delegated voting powers.</li> <li>An extraordinary <i>ad hoc</i> meeting can be called by the PS MEF and UNDP as necessary and at short notice.</li> </ul>	PS MEF & UNDP CO.	Immediate
A.2	MEF and UNDP to move to a supported NIM – the PS MEF and UNDP to agree on project implementation roles to be supported by UNDP. Critically the procurement role should be supported by the UNDP CO.	RTA, PS MEF UNDP CO	Immediate
B	Category 2: Operational		
B.1	Move the operational activities to the District level in Quthing. Office space should be provided and the project should be equipped with the office.	PS MEF	Next Quarter
B.2	Appoint a substantive Operational Manager to be permanently based in Quthing to drive the project activities in the catchment area	MEF	Immediate
B.3	Register and insure the new project vehicle which is currently off the road in Maseru and station it in Quthing. The vehicle contributes nothing to the project if it is not in use and therefore it cannot be considered as satisfactory budget expenditure until it is in use.	PS	With immediate effect.
B.3	<p>The project should resolve the logistical challenges by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that there is sufficient transport available for field work.</li> <li>Consider purchasing/ acquiring a second vehicle to be based in Quthing.</li> </ul> <p>Logistics are a particular feature of this project and successful engagement with local communities and implementation of field activities is dependent upon transport<sup>7</sup>.</p>	PMU, MA & MENR	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024
C	Category 3: Financial		
C.1	PMU to improve delivery and reporting on co-financing. The PMU should issue a standard template to all project partners to record co-financing on a monthly basis against the item or activity. PMU to collate and include it in Quarterly Reports.	Project Partners	Quarterly

<sup>7</sup> This could be preceded by a rapid assessment of how much the project is currently spending on vehicle hire.

#	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
C.2	<p>Review the remaining budget against the Acceleration Plan and remaining commitments to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgetary requirements of the Management Response to the MTR.</li> <li>Prepare a brief financial report with forecast cost implications to May 2026.</li> <li>PMU to present findings with likely scenarios to the PSC Executive.</li> <li>Focus on strategies to accelerate delivery (e.g. more effective PSC, streamlined procurement, etc.)</li> <li>End of Year 3 The project carries out a thorough assessment of the remaining budgetary commitments until May 2026 with a view to requesting an extension of at least one year in order to complete the project activities due to the likelihood of unspent funds at the predicted close of the project and to allow more time to engage with communities including a feasibility study of the extended costs of an extension.</li> </ul> <p>According to the Project Document<sup>8</sup> a no-cost extension can be granted not exceeding six months. The MTR recommends at least one year to accommodate growing seasons and ecological cycles.</p>	MEFT & assisted by UNDP CO	Immediate  Extension decision – end Year 3
C.3	All expenditures to be directly aligned with the project strategy and achieving agreed outputs and outcomes in the project area. The project can achieve good results, but it will have to work very efficiently and effectively to do so. It will be necessary to ensure that all project resources are focused in the Sepabala catchment and directly contribute to a project Output.	MEFT & UNDP	Quarter 3 2024
C.4	In light of the expenditure on COP participation, the CO should undertake a financial spot check as an interim measure to mitigate potential risks.	UNDP CO	Immediate
D	Category 4: Technical		
D.1	<p>Strengthen the project's support to women in the project area by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the number of days per month available for the Gender TA and extending the length of the Contract to run until the close of the project.</li> <li>UNDP providing mentoring support and sharing resources with the Gender Officer from the Department of Gender.</li> <li>Updating the project's gender strategy and action plan.</li> <li>Document agreed arrangement between the project and Department of Gender regarding the Gender Officer.</li> <li>Gender TA and project Gender Officer to produce a lessons learned knowledge product specifically documenting the issues of ecosystem management and the role of women in Quarter 4 2026</li> </ul>	MEFT, Department of Gender, UNDP CO	Quarter 2 2024
D.2	<p>Review the GRM in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of the newly appointed Community Supervisors.</li> <li>Ensure that there are clear and direct grievance reporting pathways and that these are widely understood at all levels within the project and addressed.</li> </ul>	MEFT	Immediate
D.3	Review the upcoming climate smart activities and ensure that there is sufficient TA to ensure that any project-funded activities are innovative, ecologically sustainable and that there is expert M&E of the economic viability as well as the climate resilience benefits. An important aspect of this should be the collaboration between farmer, agronomist and scientist. Linkages with national Universities would be ideal	MEFT	Quarter 3 2024

<sup>8</sup> Project Document, p. 62: "all extensions incur costs and the GEF project budget cannot be increased. A single extension may be granted on an exceptional basis and only if the following conditions are met: one extension only for a project for a maximum of six months; the project management costs during the extension period must remain within the originally approved amount, and any increase in PMC costs will be covered by non-GEF resources; the UNDP Country Office oversight costs in excess of the CO's Agency fee specified in the DOA during the extension period must be covered by non-GEF resources".

#	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
D.4	Engage a TA to assist at the community District and community level to develop the functional efficiency of CBNRM, in particular to ensure that the VWT plans and overall Catchment Plan meets the criteria that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The costs do not exceed the benefits of catchment management at the individual and community level</li> <li>• Differential inputs result in differential benefits.</li> <li>• There must be a positive correlation between quality of management and the magnitude of benefit.</li> <li>• The unit of proprietorship should be the unit of production, management and benefit</li> <li>• The unit for collective management should be as small as practicable and functionally efficient within ecological and socio-political constraints.</li> </ul>	MEFT	Quarter 4 2024

## 2 Introduction

### Purpose of MTR and objectives

23. The UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policies and procedures require all full-sized UNDP-implemented and GEF-funded projects to undergo a Mid-Term Review (MTR) upon reaching the halfway point of the project's implementation. Therefore, UNDP has commissioned the MTR by contracting an independent evaluation team consisting of a National Consultant and an International Consultant to facilitate this process. The MTR was conducted following the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and facilitated by the commissioning office, the UNDP Country Office, Lesotho.
24. The purpose of the "Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sebapala Sub-catchment"<sup>9</sup> Project MTR as per TORs (Annex 1), is to assess the achievement of project results and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of the benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP and Government programming.
25. The MTR is primarily a monitoring and adaptive management tool to identify challenges and outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve maximum results by its completion. The primary output/deliverable of this MTR process is the MTR report. The MTR report will provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

### 2.1 Mid-Term Review Approach, Methodology and Scope

#### 2.1.1 Scope of the Mid-Term Review

26. The review focuses primarily on assessing the performance of the project in light of the accomplished outcomes, objectives and effects using the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported and GEF-financed Projects<sup>10</sup>. These are:

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

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

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

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

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

27. Using these evaluation criteria, the MTR covers all activities supported by UNDP-GEF and completed by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Government agencies as well as activities that other collaborating partners including beneficiaries are participating in.
28. The temporal scope of the MTR covers all activities of the project beginning with the Project Identification Form (PIF) dated June 2018 through to the current period of implementation evaluation in mid 2024.
29. The review was conducted in an ethical and participatory manner and in order to provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

### 2.2 Approach and Methodology

30. The MTR utilized three sources of primary data and information:

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<sup>9</sup> Henceforth referred to as the "IWMP" or "Sebapala project".

<sup>10</sup> [https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance\\_Midterm%20Review%20EN\\_2014.pdf](https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20EN_2014.pdf)

31. **Desk review:** the documentation covering project design, implementation progress, monitoring and review studies, local and national development plans, policies and regulatory instruments. This covers and elaborates on the documents listed in the UNDP ToR and other documentation reviewed during the process, a list of which is presented in Annex 8.
32. **Interviews, stakeholder consultations and field missions:** additional information collection and validation took place through remote and face-to-face consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (Annex 6), using semi-structured interviews with a key set of questions in a conversational format. Key informants were selected according to their involvement in the project's implementation, or as project beneficiaries. This included: the GEF Agency, government ministries and departments, academics, community councils, civil society associations, non-governmental organizations, individual farmers and livestock owners. The MTR endeavors to ensure that the views and opinions of women, youth and disadvantaged groups are solicited and included in the analysis. This was accompanied by site visits to the project area/sites. The questions asked aimed to provide answers to the points listed in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2. An initial list of generic questions was refined according to specific stakeholder interviews during the field mission and by any follow up Skype/Zoom, WhatsApp, etc., calls as necessary. Interviews were confidential and the information is used discreetly without accreditation where necessary. Information from interviews was triangulated and validated, where necessary, before inclusion in the analysis and reporting. Interviews started with an introduction about the aims and nature of the review and informing the interviewee that they have the right not to respond if they so wished.
33. Interviews, and the information collected was disaggregated to reflect the different stakeholders (e.g. Implementing Agency – Executing Agency – PMU – implementing partners – beneficiaries as well as by gender). Information from the interviews was collated and analyzed to provide evidence-based conclusions on the overall performance, progress towards impact and achievements of the project as well as crosscutting issues.
34. **Direct observations of project results and activities** were made wherever possible from the project area including consultations with local government and local agencies, local community representatives, project partners, CSOs and participants in field activities. A list of stakeholders interviewed is in Annex 5. The MTR visited a range of pilot sites (lightly degraded – heavily degraded, according to restoration interventions and performance of Community Action Plans) with a view to identifying project achievements and challenges. The mission itinerary is provided in Annex 3.
35. **The MTR reviewed the project's Theory of Change** prepared during the project's formulation.
36. Gender equality and women's empowerment was assessed through collecting gender-disaggregated results, wherever possible, arising from project activities, inclusion of women participants and relevant women's groups in the evaluation interviews and specific questions regarding the extent to which they were included in project's design and implementation and/or benefiting from the project. Gender and disadvantaged groups were included in all appropriate questions and crosschecked against specific questions related to these issues. Specific attention was given to analyzing examples, best practices and lessons learned regarding women's empowerment arising through the project's scope of activities.
37. Following the data collection phase, the MTR analyzed the information according to the MTR guidelines and the ToR in order to draw conclusions and propose recommendations. The draft MTR Report was circulated to key stakeholders for comment and feedback (between 29/06/2024 and 23/07/2024). The final MTR Report is submitted accompanied by an audit trail documenting the feedback from stakeholders and how these have been addressed by the MTR.
38. Key aspects of the MTR approach include:
  - Defining the scope of the Review's focus:* through discussions with the PMU and UNDP and partner agencies, the areas and extent of inquiry to be defined.
  - Emphasis on constructive analytical dialogue:* with the project partners; providing the project participants with an opportunity to explain the strategies applied to date, the challenges that have been faced and the inevitable nuances that affect a project. In this way the MTR is able to deepen the partner's conceptual understanding of the key issues underlying the project and the driving forces that have shaped, and continue, shaping events.
  - Critical analysis of the project design:* the original design and strategic approach will be challenged against best practices and in light of the project's experience to consider whether there were flaws in its logic and approach or whether there were assumptions, known or unknown, that have not proven correct.

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

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

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

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

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

39. There were no substantive limitations or constraints to the MTR, notwithstanding weather conditions in Maseru, although the MTR was not able to access the more remote parts of the Sebapala catchment and in particular the summer pasture areas, it was possible to speak with stakeholders from these areas.
40. The findings of the MTR have been rated against the criteria listed in Table 4 below and according to the UNDP-GEF MTR Guidelines.

#### Structure of the report

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

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

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

**Section 3** describes the background and context of the Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sebapala Sub-catchment project including the problems that the project sought to address, the objectives, outcomes and means of monitoring and evaluation, the implementation arrangements, a timeline and key milestones as well as a summary of project stakeholders.

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

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

Table 5 Ratings

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

### 3. Project Description and Background Context

42. The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small, mountainous country located between the coordinates 29.6100° S, and 28.2336° E, and completely landlocked by South Africa. It straddles the highest parts of the Drakensberg Escarpment, with the highest and lowest points being at 3,482 and 1,400 meters above sea level (masl), respectively. The country has a total surface area of 30,648 km<sup>2</sup>, a population of 2.07 million people<sup>11</sup>, and a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1,31812. About 70% of Lesotho's population is rural, and dependent on livestock-keeping (predominantly) or rain-fed, subsistence agriculture for their food and livelihoods. About two-thirds of households live on land that is degraded, and socio-economic vulnerability is widespread<sup>13</sup>.
43. Lesotho's landscape is dominated by highlands which host a rich fauna and flora, and several endemic, rare and endangered plant and animal species. Floristically, Lesotho falls into the Drakensberg Alpine Centre (DAC) of Endemism, a globally-recognized 'biodiversity hotspot' in the Maloti-Drakensberg mountains. The Centre is estimated to host about 1,750 high-altitude plant species, of which 30% are endemic, and a significant proportion are classed as threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.
44. The DAC is also home to a unique wetland ecosystem, the Drakensberg Afroalpine Heathlands, made up of high-altitude bogs and seeps that act as sponges, retaining and slowly releasing water into the watershed. These bogs play a crucial role in maintaining hydrological cycles, and are important suppliers of surface water that feeds headwater streams of the country's three main river systems. They also provide essential ecosystem goods and services on which rural communities depend.
45. The Senqu River (previously called the Orange and now the Gariep, in South Africa), is shared with South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana, and provides the water required to drive the most economically active area in southern Africa, supporting large-scale irrigation and domestic water needs of some 19 million people<sup>14</sup>. In spite of making up only 3.4% of the Senqu basin area, Lesotho contributes over 40% of the Orange-Senqu's natural runoff (ibid). It follows, that degradation of Lesotho's high-altitude grasslands – and the wetlands they contain – poses a serious risk not only to maintaining the ecological integrity of a global biodiversity hotspot, but also to national and regional water security, and the agro-pastoral livelihoods of most Basotho.
46. The Seapala River Watershed in the Lower Senqu Catchment is a Strategic Water Source Area in the Orange-Senqu River system, but its ecosystems are fragile due to inherent characteristics and the condition of both land and water resources is deteriorating. Ecosystem degradation is driven by over-cultivation, overgrazing, and over-harvesting of natural resources – the impacts of which are worsened by climate change and the effects of deep-rooted poverty. The delivery of critical watershed services is being compromised and the productive capacity of the land is being depleted, undermining local agro-pastoral livelihoods and causing escalating food and water insecurity.
47. The Government of Lesotho has identified land degradation and watershed management as strategic priorities in several policies, strategies and plans that guide Lesotho's national development agenda, and contribute to meeting the country's commitments under the CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC. Key amongst these are: (i) the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II - 2018/19-2022/23); (ii) the Long Term Water and Sanitation Strategy, Volume II, Water Sector Programme (2014); and, (iii) the National Action Programme in Natural Resource Management: Combating Desertification and Mitigating the Effects of Drought, as outlined in the UNCCD National Action Plan (2015). The country has developed a Climate Change Strategy and a Resilience Framework, both of which recognize the need for integrated approaches for building resilience to climate-induced shocks and disturbances.
48. Responsibility for addressing land degradation falls within the mandate of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF). An important delivery mechanism for this - among other interventions - is the Ministry's flagship Land Rehabilitation Programme (LRP), which has been under implementation since 2007. Because poverty is recognized by the government as one of the key drivers of degradation, the LRP seeks to address

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<sup>11</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/lesotho>

<sup>12</sup> The World Bank In Lesotho, 2019: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lesotho/overview>

<sup>13</sup> EU/GIZ (2019). Support to Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho: Operational Plan for the first year of Implementation (2020): Towards a Multistakeholder Partnership. GIZ, Lesotho.

<sup>14</sup>ORASECOM (Orange–Senqu River Commission), 2014. Rehabilitating rangelands for healthy headwaters: Steps Basotho Communities are taking to reverse land degradation at the source of the Orange–Senqu River. Report 007/2014, produced by the Orange–Senqu Strategic Action Programme for ORASE COM. Pretoria.

the dual challenges of ecosystem degradation and rural poverty by implementing catchment-based rehabilitation in participation with local communities. The objectives of the of the LRP are to: i) increase the total area of rehabilitated and protected watersheds; ii) increase the area of productive rangelands under appropriate management plans; iii) protect wetlands to enhance the availability and quality of water resources; iv) contribute to the reduction of unemployment and resultant poverty; v) increase honey production; and vi) increase fruit tree production.

49. Responsibility for managing water resources falls to the Ministry Natural Resources (MoNR). A key strategy for addressing management of water resources has been through transboundary management of the Orange-Senqu River Basin, under the auspices of the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM). Over the years, significant investments have been made in understanding the hydrology and ecology of the river basin, leading to specific joint interventions towards its sustainable management, including through community-led rehabilitation of rangelands. Through this work, land degradation has been identified as one of the major risks to the ecological integrity of this critical river basin, highlighting the importance of adopting an integrated water resources management approach. The concept of ICM has now been fully embraced by the Government of Lesotho but implementation is still in its infancy.
50. At the national scale, the Government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Natural Resources working in partnership with the European Union (EU), the Government of Germany and GIZ, has embarked on an ambitious National Programme for Integrated Catchment Management. Its aim is to rehabilitate degraded watersheds across the Country and to put in place prevention measures that will halt the further degradation of Lesotho's catchment areas. This will be the major channel through which investments in integrated watershed management are being channelled<sup>15</sup>.
51. The project's planning domain is the Seapala River Watershed (Seapala Watershed), which falls within the Lower Senqu Catchment, as defined on the National Catchment Map of Lesotho. The boundaries of the watershed align more or less with those of the Tosing Community Council (TCC), which falls within the Seapala electoral constituency. It is one of five community councils in the Quthing District, and has a population of 121,996 people (11,785 males, 12,053 females). The headwaters of the Seapala River arise in the Seapala Sub-catchment, which is Sub-catchment 54 (SC54) on the National Catchment Map. This sub-catchment is the focal area for piloting on-the-ground interventions, some of which will also be rolled out in other parts of the Seapala Watershed.
52. The Seapala Sub-catchment is located between *longitudes 28° 55' 27"* and *28° 10' 56 East*, and *Latitudes 30° 25' 48"* and *30° 40' 40 South*, with altitude ranging from 1,750 to 3,015 masl<sup>16</sup>. This Sub-catchment is a 49,425 hectare<sup>17</sup>, multiple-use landscape made up of five minor drainage basins: Tsatsane, Tsatsanyane, Upper Seapala, Merataleng, and Mats'ela-Habeli – each of which is drained by a stream of the same name. Only 1.4% of its land area is made up of wetlands and other riparian and aquatic habitats<sup>18</sup>, but this sub-catchment supplies a disproportionately high volume of water per unit area when compared to other areas – this is due to the prevailing climatic and physical conditions, such as rainfall, soil conditions and the presence of Afroalpine Heathland wetlands and bogs. For this reason, it has been identified as one of 22 Strategic Water Source Areas in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland<sup>19</sup> – this makes it especially important for both local, national and international water security. Land cover is dominated by grasslands (62% of total area) and shrublands (32.9% of total area), there is minimal natural tree cover (only 51 ha) and settlements account for only 206 ha of total land surface.
53. The population of the sub-catchment is 2,397 people (1,125 males and 1,272 females)<sup>20</sup> most of whom depend on agro-pastoral livelihoods to meet their subsistence and income needs. Land use within the Sub-catchment is dominated by livestock-keeping, with cultivated lands accounting for a little over 1% (612 ha) of total land area – most cultivation takes place lower down in the Seapala Watershed in the foothills and along alluvial plains, in areas with more arable soil and closer to villages. Although the bulk of the population

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Project Document

<sup>16</sup> See details in: Baseline Assessment Report: Biophysical Characterization of the Seapala sub-catchment (undertaken during Project Preparation)

<sup>17</sup> Lesotho Bureau of Statistics/UNDP. (2018). District Profiles Handbook. The total area of the sub-catchment was calculated to be 52,388 ha during the baseline studies, due to slight variances in the exact alignment of the sub-catchment boundaries. In this project document the official figures published in the District Profiles Handbook are used.

<sup>18</sup> All landcover statistics are taken from the Land Cover Atlas of Lesotho, which was developed by FAO under the National Catchment Management Programme.

<sup>19</sup> Le Maitre, D; Seyler, H; Holland, M; Smith-Adao, L; Maherry, J; Nel, J and Witthüser, K (2018). Identification, delineation and importance of the Strategic Water Source Areas of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland for surface water and groundwater. WRC Report TT 754/1; Water Research Commission, Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>20</sup> Bureau of Statistics. (2016) Lesotho National Census of 2016: Maseru.



of the Sebakala Watershed lives outside of the Sebakala Sub-catchment, all of them rely on the watershed services it provides. People from outside of the sub-catchment also make use of the summer cattle posts that are concentrated in the high-altitude grasslands of the Tsatsane and Upper Sebakala minor drainage basins.

### 3.1 Drivers of Land Degradation (Threats)

54. The Project Document identifies four key drivers of land degradation stating that the Ecosystems in the Sebakala Watershed, as elsewhere in Lesotho, are fragile due to the steep topography, type and pattern of rainfall, erodibility of soils<sup>21</sup>, land-use patterns, and prevalence of vulnerable habitats such as bogs and sponges. Some of the key drivers of land- and water-resource degradation are over-stocking and overgrazing, unsustainable and inappropriate agricultural practices, over-use of natural resources and the impacts of climate change. These are all compounded by high levels of socio-economic vulnerability and other societal changes that force people to adopt coping responses that damage ecosystems and decrease the productivity of the land. These are quantified as:
55. Overgrazing, resulting in rangeland degradation – which is widespread and chronic in Lesotho – is mostly associated with poor grazing control, characterized by continuous grazing and over-stocking, leading to loss of palatable species, decreased basal cover, increased erosion and susceptibility to invasion by weedy shrubs, such as *Chrysocoma ciliata*<sup>22</sup>. The MEF estimates soil loss at about 50 tons per hectare per year<sup>23</sup> and, nationally, over 100,000 hectares of arable land have been lost annually for the last 25 years, representing a 25% decrease in land available for the production of food and fodder<sup>24</sup>.
56. Inappropriate and unsustainable farming practices - cropland in the Tosing Community Council (TCC) covers only 6.7 percent the landscape (and only 1.2 percent in Sebakala Sub-catchment), but over 90 percent of the people are fully dependent on crops for food. Maize and sorghum are the dominant crops<sup>25</sup>, with most households growing vegetables only for home consumption – though cabbages are grown commercially. Cultivation of wheat, which was previously a staple, has mostly been abandoned. In rural villages, households with a home garden and/or fruit trees are in a clear minority and agroforestry practices are rarely practiced. Home compounds, where they exist, used to be fenced to protect against grazing animals, but, this is no longer the practice which means that produce is at risk of being eaten or trampled by livestock.
57. Farming systems are of the extensive type, with cultivation taking place mostly on semi-privatized lands, which are concentrated along drainage lines and access routes, often close to settlements. Cropping-land is mostly inherited, farms are small (between one and two hectares in extent), and most families own no more than two farms. Even though women are largely engaged in cropping, most women work on fields owned by their husbands, and decisions on the farming patterns are made by men, except in female-headed households. Due to a lack of knowledge and experience, a large proportion of cultivation occurs on erosion-prone hillsides, often using inappropriate practices, such as ploughing down-slope, with no use of terracing or bunds. This leads to worsening soil erosion, resulting in lowered productivity of lands and increased sedimentation of water bodies. Cultivation on marginal lands results in lands being abandoned – these are left fallow and are prone to erosion and infestation by invasive shrubs.
58. Over-harvesting and over-use of natural resources - typical to Lesotho, the rural population in the project area depends almost entirely on natural resources for livelihoods and survival. In both the greater Sebakala Watershed, and the Sub-catchment, natural woody cover is less than 1% of the total landscape. Despite this, more than 80% of households use wood as the main fuel source for cooking and heating, only 10% use kerosene, and 3% use animal dung<sup>26</sup>. Naturally forested or wooded areas are located in the valleys, while

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<sup>21</sup> The geology of the Sebakala Sub-catchment, which comprises rocks of the Elliot, Clarens and Lesotho Formations, renders it particularly prone to degradation. The prevalence of sedimentary rocks such as mudstones, siltstones and sandstones, inter-posed with dolerite dykes and basaltic intrusions, gives rise to particular erodibility characteristics and erosion patterns. This is described in more detail in the Biophysical Assessment Report that was produced during the Project Preparation phase.

<sup>22</sup> Orange-Senqu Strategic Action Programme. (2013). Vegetation Baseline Survey: Demonstration Project on Community-based Rangeland Management in Lesotho. Technical Report 24

<sup>23</sup> Puri, S. (2016). Lesotho: Planning Integrated Water Management – Guidelines and Strategies. Technical Report submitted under the EU-supported Support of Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho. (Accurate figures for the TCC and SC54 will be obtained during the ICM Master Planning process).

<sup>24</sup> ORASECOM (Orange–Senqu River Commission), 2014. *Rehabilitating rangelands for healthy headwaters: Steps Basotho Communities are taking to reverse land degradation at the source of the Orange–Senqu River*. Report 007/2014 produced by the Orange–Senqu Strategic Action Programme for ORASECOM. Pretoria.

<sup>25</sup> A Profile of Stakeholders and Community Institutions that Govern the Access to and Control over Natural Resources; 2019. Chapter 2: Baseline Assessment Reports

<sup>26</sup> A Profile of Stakeholders and Community Institutions that Govern the Access to and Control over Natural Resources; 2019. Chapter 2: The Baseline Assessment Reports

planted woodlots are evident close to villages. The decline in the productivity of land and livestock in recent years has, in turn, driven over-harvesting of rangeland resources as people seek alternative sources of food and income.

59. Climate change - Lesotho is highly vulnerable to climate change, the most significant hazards being drought (which poses the highest climate risks), high temperatures and heat waves, floods, hail, and frost. This vulnerability is compounded by poverty as well as land degradation, soil erosion and the hilly topography that hamper agricultural production<sup>27</sup>. All production systems are expected to be affected by climatic shifts due to impacts on the supply of ecosystem goods and services, particularly watershed services<sup>28</sup>, with the risk that they may be pushed beyond the stability range required to support agro-pastoral livelihoods.

### 3.2 Barriers

60. The Project Document provides a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the key barriers including the gendered aspects of land use challenge, institutional roles and the complex cause and effect relationships which determine the livelihood decision-making of rural communities. It identifies three barriers to sustainable land and water management which are further articulated in the Project Document<sup>29</sup>:

***Barrier 1:*** *Technical institutions, local authorities, community institutions and land managers have limited skills and institutional capacity to coordinate cross-sectoral action, enforce policies and regulations and undertake transparent planning for integrated management of watersheds.*

***Barrier 2:*** *Lack of practical skills and knowledge among land users to directly address local-level environmental challenges and climate risks, leading to limited investments in and uptake of sustainable land and water management practices:*

***Barrier 3:*** *Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management systems for ICM at the watershed level are lacking, and gender mainstreaming is limited.*

### 3.3 Project strategy – Objective, Outcomes & Results

61. According to the Project Document<sup>30</sup>, the project strategy is centred on an Integrated Catchment Management approach<sup>31</sup> to put in place plans, systems and capacities to catalyze and sustain the integrated landscape management practices required to shift the Sebakala Watershed and Sub-catchment towards land degradation neutrality. Under this approach, stable institutional arrangements for watershed-governance will be put in place, and stakeholders will be equipped to identify, interpret, address and manage drivers of landscape degradation in their watershed, through adaptive application of sustainable land and water resource management measures and effective knowledge-sharing.
62. The expected results and means of measurement (indicators) are set out in Table 5 below. It should be noted that the mandatory GEF Core Indicators for Land Degradation 1 (LD-1), Programme 1, are incorporated into the SRF objective-level indicators.

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<sup>27</sup> World Bank/CIAT. 2018. Climate Smart Agriculture in Lesotho: CSA Country Profiles: Lesotho. World Bank Group, Washington D.C.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Energy, Meteorology and Water Affairs, 2015. **VULNERABILITY MAPPING: Tosing Community Council:** For the Improvement of early warning system to reduce impacts of climate change and capacity building to integrate climate change into development plans

<sup>29</sup> Project Document, pp. 16 - 19

<sup>30</sup> Project Document, p.19

<sup>31</sup> The MTR notes that Box 1 describing this approach in the Project Document is missing.

Table 6 Project Components, Objective, Outcomes and Indicators

<p><b>Objective:</b> to mainstream sustainable rangeland management and land restoration into the use of watersheds, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities in the Sebapala Watershed (Tosing Community Council) in the Lower Senqu Basin.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1 (Mandatory GEF 7 Core Indicator 3):</b> Area of land restored (in ha), including:  <u>Sub-indicator 1.1:</u> natural grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands) (Core Indicator 3.3)  <u>Sub-indicator 1.2:</u> Areas of wetlands restored (Core Indicator 3.4)  <b>Indicator 2: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4):</b> Area of landscape under improved practices, outside of protected areas  <u>Sub-indicator 2.1:</u> Area of landscape (ha) under SLM in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3), including: Cultivated lands; rangelands; grasslands  <b>Indicator 3: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 11):</b> Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, as co-benefit of the GEF investment</p>
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Outcome 1: Integrated Watershed Management Plan, with community action plans, facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management practices in the Sebapala Watershed.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 4:</b> Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Sebapala Watershed (including community action plans for land restoration, soil and water conservation, and SLM in production landscapes) developed and adopted</p>
<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Institutional arrangements for coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring of the Sebapala IWM master Plan and community action plans.  <b>Output 1.2:</b> Integrated Watershed Master Plan<sup>32</sup>, complemented by sub-catchment-level community action plans, to facilitate implementation of land restoration, soil and water conservation, and SLM practices in productive landscapes in the Sebapala Watershed (Tosing Community Council).</p>	<p>Sebapala IWM Master Plan covering 121,699 ha (Tosing Community Council)                  Community Action Plans covering at least 49,425 ha (Sebapala Sub-catchment SC54)  <b>Indicator 5:</b> Institutional arrangements for coordination of IWM planning, implementation and monitoring</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Outcome 2: District level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacitated to implement IWM plans and enforce rules to prevent land and ecosystem degradation.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 6:</b> Number of effective bylaws providing legal basis for local-level implementation of IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans  <b>Indicator 7:</b> Improved capacity scores of key resource management institutions responsible for implementation of IWM Master Plan and community action Plans at Quthing District, TCC and local levels:</p>
<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Community Council by-laws developed to enforce implementation of Community Action Plans for integrated watershed management.  <b>Output 2.2:</b> Establishment and strengthening of community-level resource user groups (WUAs, Farmers’ Associations, Farmer field Schools, Grazing Associations etc.) supported.  <b>Output 2.3:</b> District technical officers, village-level institutions, farmers’ associations, and members of the community trained on SLWM practices for application at landscape and farm levels.</p>	<p>Systemic, institutional and individual capacities will be assessed using:                  The UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for District-level institutions (Quthing District Officials, extension staff, and all other relevant entities under the approved National Governance Framework for ICM – such as the Catchment Management Joint Committees)                  Modified Capacity Development Scorecard<sup>33</sup> for Tosing Community Council (Standing Committees on Finance, Planning and Environment; officials; extension staff), and local-level institutions (water supply groups, Grazing Associations, wool and mohair groups, vegetable growers, beekeepers etc)</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM and SWM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sebapala River Watershed, with ecosystem, climate resilience and livelihood benefits.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 8:</b> Area of land restored or under improved land use practices, measured in total, and separately for:  <u>Sub-indicator 8.1:</u> Agricultural lands  <u>Sub-indicator 8.2:</u> Grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands)</p>

<sup>32</sup> In the Project Document there is an inconsistency in these plans being referred to as “master” and “management” plans. For the avoidance of doubt, the MTR refers to these as management plans

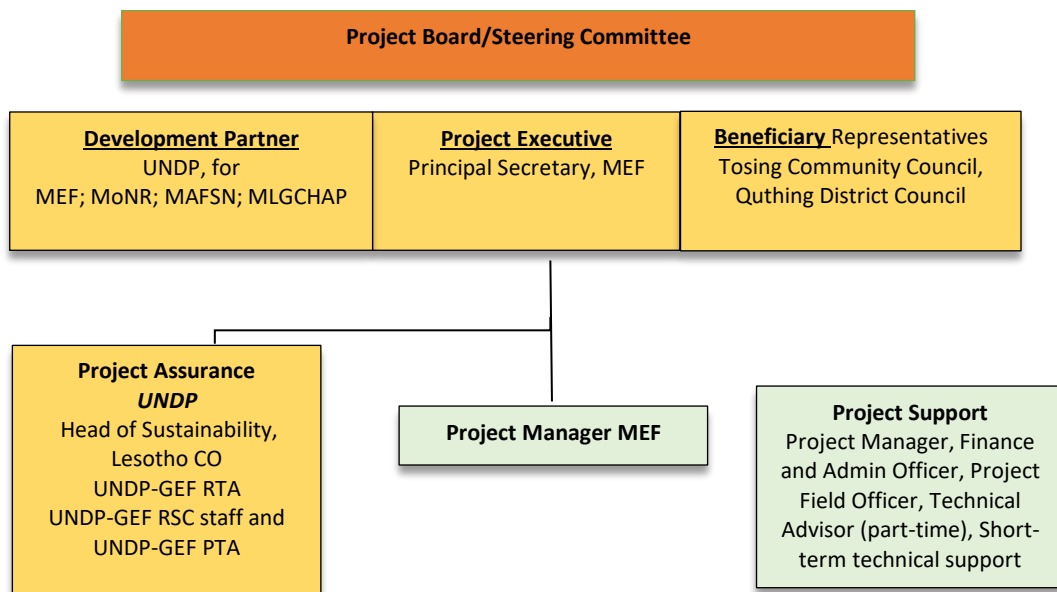
<sup>33</sup> During the PPG, and based on consultation with stakeholders, a simplified version of the Scorecard was developed that targets key capacities required at local level, and that will be practicable for local-level stakeholders to update.

<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Soil and water conservation measures implemented to combat soil erosion and promote water infiltration (including hillside terracing, stone-bunding, gully rehabilitation, re-seeding, tree-planting and soil improvement).</p> <p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Rangeland restoration measures implemented to promote improved productivity and vegetative cover (measures including enforcement of rotational grazing plans, selective reseeding, resting and natural regeneration, removal of invasive species, pasture resting).</p> <p><b>Output 3.3:</b> SLWM practices piloted by land users at selected sites to improve agricultural productivity (and strengthen resilience) measures including climate-smart agriculture, crop diversification, mixed crop-livestock systems, agroforestry).</p> <p><b>Output 3.4:</b> Integrated water resources management promoted to augment water supply for community and household food production (measures including rainwater harvesting, in-field planting pits and keyhole gardens).</p>	<p><b>Sub-indicator 8.3:</b> Wetlands and riparian habitats                  Targets to be disaggregated for the whole Sebapala River Watershed (=Tosing Community Council - TCC) and the Sebapala Sub-catchment (No. 54 in catchment map – SC54)</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Lessons learnt by the project through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&amp;E are used to promote SLWM in the wider Sebapala Watershed and nationally.</p> <p><b>Output 4.1:</b> Project gender strategy and action plan implemented, monitored and reported on.</p> <p><b>Output 4.2:</b> Knowledge management system to facilitate participatory M&amp;E, ongoing learning and adaptive management in the watershed and nationally, with active participation of key project stakeholders and project partners.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 9:</b> Ratio of women/ men benefitting from project interventions, in accordance with Gender Action Plan</p> <p><b>Indicator 10:</b> Number of manuals, policy briefs, reports and lessons on SLWM in Sebapala Watershed collated and shared, and learning exchanges convened</p>

### 3.4 Implementation Arrangements

63. Implementation is through National Implementation modality (NIM). UNDP is the Implementing Agency providing a quality assurance role and supporting the Project Board and Project Management Unit by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions and accountable to the GEF. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF) is the Executing Agency with the following implementing Partners: Ministry of Natural Resources (MoNR) - Department of Water Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN), and Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Police and Home Affairs (MLGCHAP).
64. According to the Project Document, implementation was to be in very close collaboration with the MAFS (output 3.2 and 3.4), WR (Outcome 1) and the Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs (Output 2.2) guided by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).
65. According to the Project Document<sup>34</sup>, the Project Board (PB) or Project Steering Committee (SC) is composed of the Project Executive, an individual who represents ownership of the project and chairs the Project Board. In this instance the Principal Secretary (PS), is the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation<sup>35</sup>, now Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The Beneficiary Representative is Tosing Community Council and Development Partner(s), who are individuals or groups representing the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding and/or technical expertise to the project.
66. In practice there is a Project Management Unit based in Maseru and District officers based in Quthing close to the Sebakala catchment, implementing the bulk of the activities.

Figure 1 Project implementation arrangements



#### 3.4.1 Project stakeholders

67. The Project Document stakeholder analysis was comprehensive and well-researched<sup>36</sup>. Clearly there is the expertise and methodological approaches in place for stakeholder analysis and mapping.
68. Broadly speaking these can be aggregated into:
69. Government ministries of which five were identified, the MEF (then MFRSC) taking the lead and institutionally and responsible for institutional management (e.g. MEF, MAFSN) and governance (e.g. MLGCHAP, DoG)

<sup>34</sup> Project Document, p. 62

<sup>35</sup> The PS has changed three times since the start of the project.

<sup>36</sup> Project Document, Annex 4

70. Development agencies including the UNDP but significantly GIZ which organisationally forms an umbrella for a suite of water related and ICM projects and initiatives in Lesotho and as such is a significant “player” and trusted partner with the government and amongst technicians.
71. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were identified as effective partners especially at the community level in the areas of rural development, environment and livelihoods and in the case of the Lesotho Council of Non- Governmental organizations (LCN), a role strengthening local community governance by building the “capacity of NGOs and CBOs, coordinating their work and providing supportive services (networking, leadership training, information dissemination, etc.) and advocacy and representation when dealing with the national and international community.
72. Community-based organizations (CBOs) which were identified were essentially community-level user groups arranged into associations reflecting their specific interests e.g. grazing, or committees established under the organizational structure of ICM in Lesotho<sup>37</sup>.
73. The National University of Lesotho is identified as an academical institutional stakeholder providing technical services, research and development and M&E capacities and services to the project.
74. A final group termed as “traditional communities” in the stakeholder engagement annex includes the grazing associations and a broad range of different interests such as “traditional healers, thatchers and all other resource-user groups across the land-use spectrum (e.g. farmer’s groups, beekeepers, vegetable growers, women’s groups)”.
75. The Project Document, in line with its other good qualities was very thorough in its stakeholder analysis and the subsequent engagement plan, remarkably so in comparison to the MTR’s collective experience of project designs.
76. Therefore, this last category is of particular interests because it represents the diverse and complex membership of the various common properties and it is at this level where arguably, the greatest effects can be achieved in terms of common property management and community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). Furthermore, it is at this level of internal organization that is often disrupted and it is important to understand the relationships between, for instance, the private property – a sheep – and the common property – the pasture plants, soil and other physical and biological components of the system. Similarly, a collected and processed medicinal and aromatic plant (MAP) and the diverse plant communities where they grow.

Table 7 Summary of Stakeholders Listed in Project Document

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder <sup>38</sup>
Government Ministry	Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF), all technical Departments
Government Ministry	The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFSN), all technical Departments
Government Ministry	Ministry of Energy (MoE)
Government Ministry	Ministry of Local Government Chieftainship Home Affairs and Police (MLGCHAP)
Government Ministry	Ministry of Gender Youth Sports and Recreation (MGYSR), Department of Gender (DoG)
Development Agency	United Nations Development Programme
Development Agency	GiZ is managing Lesotho’s National Integrated Catchment Management programme
NGO	Lesotho Council of Non- Governmental organizations (LCN)
INGO	Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP)
INGO	World Vision Lesotho
Academic	The National University of Lesotho
CBO	Grazing Associations
CBO	Water committees
CBO	Catchment Watershed Teams
Individuals	Herders
Individuals	Traditional healers, thatchers and all other resource-user groups across the land-use spectrum (e.g. farmer’s groups, beekeepers, vegetable growers, women’s groups)

<sup>37</sup> Project Document, p. 27, fig. 2

<sup>38</sup> For a more extensive stakeholder review see Annex 5

Figure 2 Project Theory of Change

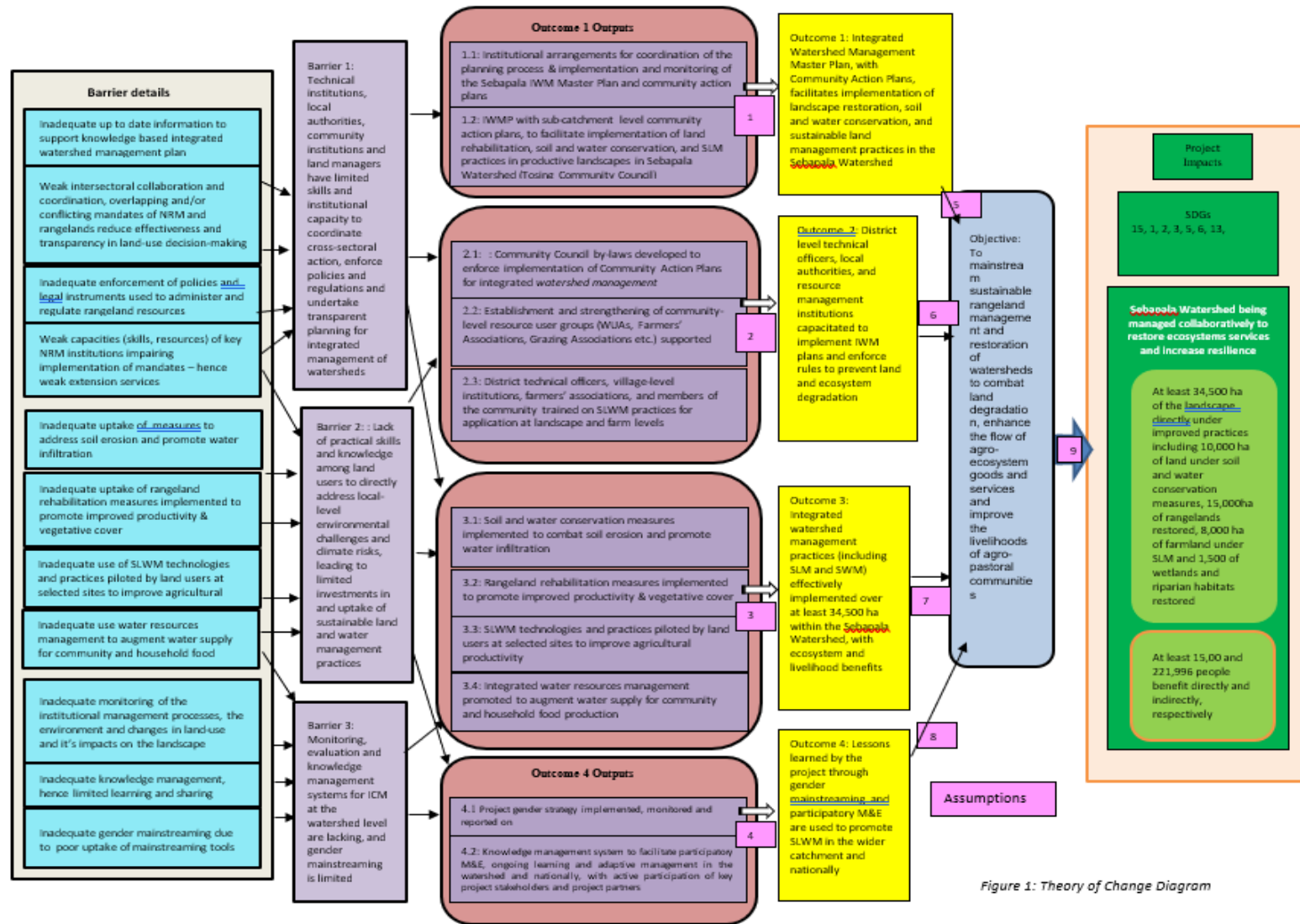


Figure 1: Theory of Change Diagram

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Project Strategy, Formulation and Design

77. The Project Document provides a well-thought through and technically progressive approach building on existing integrated catchment management (ICM) and sustainable land management (SLM) interventions which have been implemented in other parts of Lesotho and taking these to the watershed level to develop Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) plans which include Community Action Plans which would adopt and operationalise the nationally developed principles and guidelines.
78. Additionally, the project proposed to introduce innovative approaches; taking a more holistic view of water and soil management incorporating ecological aspects (for instance, experimenting with using indigenous pasture species to increase resilience through biological diversity) and supporting the socio-economic livelihood development of local communities.
79. The project's TOC<sup>39</sup> indicates that the objective will be achieved through four impact pathways: Pathway 1: involves removing barriers to collaboration between the land and water management sectors and different land users, through participatory development of planning instruments that enable multiple stakeholders to agree on common management objectives for the watershed, reduce land-use conflicts, identifying options and actions to address landscape degradation and productivity, and monitoring their impact; Pathway 2: addresses the current deficiencies in the local regulatory framework for ICM, and building the institutional capacities and skills-based to adopt the integrated watershed approach, enforcing regulations and implementing IWM action plans. Pathway 3: would empower communities as the principal agents of change to bring at least 34,500 ha under improved landscape management practices, including through rehabilitation of degraded sites and prevention of future degradation in all landscapes across the watershed; and, Pathway 4: would ensure that widespread knowledge-sharing, participatory monitoring, and gender empowerment creates the conditions for adaptive management, ongoing uptake, and scaling up of sustainable land and water management practices across the Sebakala watershed and elsewhere in Lesotho.
80. The strategy, as set out in the Project Document is coherent and relevant within the national policy and firmly embedded in a suite supporting policy (see Section 3) and ongoing implementation initiatives<sup>40</sup> framed within the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) framework. Furthermore, the Government of Lesotho has already embarked on an ambitious national programme for integrated watershed management, the purpose of which is to address the interlinked issues of land degradation, livelihoods, food and water security in critical catchments across the country. This national programme promotes catchment-wide planning and community-driven action at sub-catchment level to ensure integrated management of land and water resources. The Sebakala project conforms to and supports this programme.
81. The project conforms with the United Nations Development Agreement Framework (UNDAF 2019 – 2023) Pillar 3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth for Poverty Reduction, Outcome 3.2: By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient as well as cross-cutting benefits supporting Outcomes 2.1 (governance) and 2.2. (vulnerability and gender responsive social policies).
82. Other cross-cutting relevance relates to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 15 (Life on land); SDG 1 (No poverty); SDG 2 (Zero hunger); SDG 3 (Health and Well-Being); SDG 5 (Gender Equality); SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); SDG 13 (Climate Action) and; SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
83. The project strategy aligns with the GEF 6 Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy, LD-1: Agriculture and Rangeland Systems, Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustain food production and

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<sup>39</sup> Project Document, p. 25

<sup>40</sup> *Inter alia*: Capacity Building and Knowledge Management for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Lesotho (2009 – 2015) (GEF-financed) Orange-Senqu River Basin/ORASECOM Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) (2013), Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Plan (2014) and Strategic Action Programme (2014) (EU and GIZ financed), 'Support to the Orange-Senqu River Strategic Action Programme Implementation' (2017-2023) (UNDP-GEF financed), EU support to address land erosion through Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho (2014 – present), Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change in the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin (2015 – 2021) GEF-LDCF-financed, FAO-GEF/LDCF project on Strengthening Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation through Support to Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Lesotho (2015 – 2018), European Union (EU) and Swiss Development Corporation-funded FAO Land Cover project (2016), Land Degradation Neutrality Target-Setting Programme (2018 – 2025) supported by the Global Mechanism of the secretariat of the UNCCD.



livelihoods. It has particular relevance to Program 1: Agro-ecological Intensification, specifically targeting the outcome 'integrated watershed management, including wetlands where SLM interventions can improve hydrological functions and services for agro-ecosystem productivity. It contributes to the LD Focal Area indicator 1.1: Land area under effective agricultural, rangeland and pastoral management practices and/or supporting climate-smart agriculture.

84. Furthermore, the project approach, as set out in the Project Document, supports and strengthens the decentralisation process by working closely through District-level structures and human resources and strengthening community-based management of land and natural resources.
85. While the project strategy, as described in the Project Document is technically strong, progressive, coherent and relevant it is important to consider that the intervention required a mix of technical and adaptive interventions to address collective action challenges, of which the latter would be time-consuming and require a number of outputs or products to be in place very early on in the project cycle (e.g. sufficient transport to provide logistical support, Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), gender strategy, recruitment of all field-related staff, etc.) to support implementation of other aspects. Given that the project was scheduled for four years implementation and that inherent in addressing adaptive challenges are the need to become comfortable with not knowing what the next move might be, dealing with uncertainty - adaptive challenges require time for adaptive solutions to have an effect and stakeholders cannot expect to react too quickly because of the discomfort that comes with not knowing<sup>41</sup>; four years was arguably an underestimate.
86. In relation to this the Project Document develops a risk assessment based upon the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) which is a necessary part of the design and is quite reasonable. However, while the Project Document lists<sup>42</sup> a number of assumptions related to the TOC, it does not identify any operational risks which in a project such as this, with so many "moving parts", suggesting that nothing would go wrong. Whereas, it could be argued that the only safe assumption should have been that something would go wrong or at the very least, not go as planned. As a result, the project's design, while technical very strong and innovative, was operationally vulnerable.

#### 4.1.1 Results Framework and Planned Monitoring and Evaluation

87. The Project Document provides a very reasonable representation of the project's logical hierarchy – outputs, outcomes, objective and indicators. Annex 9 provides an analysis of the indicators against SMART<sup>43</sup> criteria. There are no significant issues with the SRF. It utilises the GEF LDN-1 Programme Core Indicators to measure progress and impact at the objective level and Outcome 2 utilises the UNDP Capacity Scorecard as a means to measure capacity building aspects of the project. It would appear that at the inception phase there was an attempt to increase the number of indicators for Outcome 3 by adding sub-indicators to provide finer-grained detail<sup>44</sup> although this has not been carried through to the SRF submitted with the 2023 PIR. The additional sub-indicators suggested in the Inception Report appear to be an attempt to measure any improvements in ecosystem function, for instance: water quality and quantity, species diversity, soil and soil organic carbon.
88. The larger project monitoring framework in the Project Document (Table 2 Budgeted M&E Plan)<sup>45</sup> provides a standard UNDP-GEF M&E framework although it doesn't include a project audit, however this is included under the roles and responsibilities of the UNDP CO where \$12,000 is provided under the UNDP co-financing<sup>46</sup> for an annual audit as per the UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules<sup>47</sup>. The total budget for the project M&E at entry was \$68,000 (3% of the total UNDP and GEF grants) which arguably is quite low given the complexity and logistics of the required monitoring and evaluation resulting from the project's inherent complexity and scale. Therefore, the M&E costs are probably underestimated especially in areas such as monitoring the gender action plan, etc.
89. Overall, the Project Document provides a very reasonable SRF and operational M&E plan with the one minor criticism. The measurement of any adaptive change, this is the social capital and the changes in conceptual understanding of the Sebapala system and the translation of this into an epistemological change in approaches to problem solving, governance and working practices. However, such change is problematic

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<sup>41</sup> Heifetz, Ronald A.; *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1994)

<sup>42</sup> Project Document, Table 1, pp. 21 – 22

<sup>43</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound

<sup>44</sup> IWM Inception Report, October 2022, p. 9

<sup>45</sup> Project Document, p. 59

<sup>46</sup> Project Document, p. 62, para. 199

<sup>47</sup> In fact, these regulations only required an audit every two years.

within a standard SRF and with SMART criteria and indicators, therefore, it is understandable that these indicators are not included and the Capacity Scorecards serve as a reasonable proxy.

#### 4.2 Progress Towards Results

Table 8 MTR Rating Progress Towards Results

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Progress Towards Results	Objective MU	Four of the five indicators/ sub-indicators are barely on track or not on track. The MTR status is just over 50% of the expected extent of restored area and wetlands are only 7% of the anticipated area. The project has undertaken considerable training and capacity building and certainly has considerable support at the District level. Both indicators (1 & 2) are not on track, although indicator 2 relating to the institutional arrangements is much more advanced but still needs to be consolidated. The ICM plan still has to be developed along with the CWM plans. The amount of landscape under improved practices is greater than expected at the mid-term, but the MTR has concerns about the quality of this given that the climate-smart agricultural activities have not begun in earnest and these need to be defined to confirm that they are really climate-smart and agroecologically sound in practice. The total number of beneficiaries is numerically on track, however, the MTR has concerns that without acceleration of the planning process and material strengthening of the gender strategy and action plan, intervention and support the end result will be weak ownership and effectiveness of the resulting plans.

##### 4.2.1 GEF-8 Core Indicators

Table 9 Core Indicators

GEF-8 Land Degradation Results Framework <sup>48</sup>				
Programme	Indicator	Expected		Reported
		PIF	Endorsement	MTR <sup>49</sup>
Conserving & Sustainably Using Biodiversity.	Core Indicator 4: Area (ha) of landscapes under improved practices.	24,500	23,500	9,000
	Core Indicator 4.3: Area (ha) of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems.	24,500	23,500	9,000
Sustainably Managing & Restoring Land.	Core Indicator 3: Area (ha) of land and ecosystems under restoration.	10,000	11,500	2,228.7
	Core Indicator 3.2: Area (ha) of forest and forest land under restoration.			4
	Core Indicator 3.3: Area (ha) of natural grass and woodlands under restoration	10,000	10,000	2,228.7
	Core Indicator 3.4: Area (ha) of wetlands under restoration.	0	1,500	14
Cross-cutting Strategic Areas	Core Indicator 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investment.			
	Female	-	7,298	2,569
	Male	-	7,298	2,128
	Total	14,957	14,596	4,697

##### 4.2.2 Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

90. **Objective:** To mainstream sustainable rangeland management and land restoration into the use of watersheds, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities in the Sebapala Watershed (Tosing Community Council) in the Lower Senqu Basin.

<sup>48</sup> Note that the GEF Core Indicator now in use is the GEF-8 but the Project Document uses the GEF-7

<sup>49</sup> Reported by PMU

Table 10 Progress Towards Results Matrix, Objective

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Indicator 1: (Mandatory GEF 7 Core Indicator 3). Area of land restored (in ha), including:	In Tosing Community Council: 106, 282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54),  (extent degraded to be determined at inception)	To-date, mapping of major landscapes and verification of biophysical data covering an area 63,863Ha reflected below per land use categories within the Sebapala catchment to inform land and wetlands restoration activities has been completed. Based on the mapping and verification exercise, there is not much change except that, in the baseline wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats cover 847 ha and 751 ha respectively, while the mapping exercise reflects 14,787 ha for wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats combined. For rangeland, the mapping exercise recorded 49,076 ha for rangeland (grazing areas) as opposed to 47,091 ha reported in the baseline. This difference implies that the targets need to be manipulated such that they accommodate the changes. Mapped Land Use Category. Size area(hectares): Wetland areas (14787 ha); Class-A grazing Area (cattle post areas) - 26512 ha; Class-B Grazing Area - 14857 ha; Class-C grazing Area - 7707 ha; Agricultural land - 473 ha; Forests - 48.96 ha; Residences - 210.3 ha.  The actual land and wetlands restoration is scheduled in the next reporting period starting August 2023 as most of the preparatory works are finalized. Following the landscape mapping and biophysical data verification exercise, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions were also confirmed during community engagements as follows:	(Total area restored is 4,000ha) At least 3,800 ha restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone-bunds, water furrows, cross-slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures, and improved rangeland management <b>(40% of EOP target)</b>	2,228.7	(Total area restored is 11,500 ha) At least 10,000 ha of land restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone-bunds, water furrows, cross-slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures and improved rangeland management	<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	On track (56%) according to PMU reporting on GEF-8 Core Indicators. However, the MTR questions the extent of the MTR status figures – wetlands is only 7% and if the brush removal is included in these figures then there are issues of appropriate treatment and sustainability. Therefore, the MTR considers this to be <b>NOT ON TRACK</b> with the provision that these targets can be achieved if the project accelerates implementation as treatments can be extensively applied. The MTR notes that the extent degraded at inception was not determined and confirmed. This can still be retrofitted.
Sub-indicator 1.1: natural grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands) (Core Indicator 3.3)	90,339 ha used for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54188,696 ha rangelands incorporating grasslands and shrublands)	Ha Thibella: Rangeland Fire management to curb unprescribed rangeland burning; Rangeland seeding to regrass cattle post areas within the sub-catchment; Development of grazing management plans in order to rest some parts of rangeland when appropriate for all cattle post areas within the sub catchment.  Within the whole sub-catchment Training of herders at Tsatsane;	Not given	2,228.7		<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	As above
Sub-indicator 1.2: Areas of wetlands restored (Core Indicator 3.4)	847 ha wetlands, and 751 ha other associated aquatic and riparian habitats	Support ecotourism at Morataleng;  Control of invader plant species/ Brush control Within the sub catchment at Morataleng.	At least 200 ha of wetlands restored and under IWRM	14	At least 1,500 ha of wetland and riparian habitat restored and under IWRM productive water use and productive water use	<b>Not on Track</b>	MU	As above

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		<p>Pilot high density grazing some selected areas in summer and winter grazing areas.</p> <p>Stakeholder mobilization through sensitization campaigns and workshops has been undertaken covering i) Tosing Community Council, ii) Principal chief, iii) Chiefs; Implementation partners; Communities; Government officials at local level (District) and Government Ministries and Departments.</p>						
<p>Indicator 2: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4). Area of landscape under improved practices, outside of protected areas Sub-indicator 2.1: Area of landscape (ha) under SLM in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3), including: Cultivated lands; rangelands; grasslands</p>	<p>In Tosing Community Council: 8,000 ha cultivated lands. 106,282 ha rangelands</p>	<p>Sensitization campaigns, knowledge exchange tours and workshops on improved land use practices were conducted in Tosing Community Council and in some selected sites in Mohales Hoek, Maseru and Mokhotlong districts covering key stakeholders including Principal chief, Area and local chiefs, Implementation partners (Departments of Forestry, Rangeland Resources management, Soil and Water Conservation, Meteorology, Disaster Management Authority, Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, Ministry of Water and Ministry of Local Government). Communities' sensitizations and community engagement workshops were carried out in the following village groupings, where each group was consisting of about 5 smaller villages on average in both Sebapala upper catchment and Lower catchments as follows:</p> <p>Upper Sebapala</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ha France</li> <li>2. Liphapang</li> <li>3. Matsela Ha beli</li> <li>5. Morataleng</li> </ol> <p>Lower Sebapala</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letlapeng</li> <li>2. Moseneke</li> <li>3. Tosing</li> </ol> <p>The next or further engagement will target herders, grazing associations, Watershed Teams (Village and Community) and Watershed supervisors (yet to be engaged as a consequence of the decision made by the Board). However, communities have started organizing themselves to embark on land rehabilitation works particularly brush control at the beginning of next reporting period.</p>	<p>At least 8,000 ha under improved practices, as follows:</p> <p>Cultivated lands: at least 2,000 ha (farmlands in SC54 to be targeted first) under improved practices, with agreed plan in place for roll-out in remaining 6,000 ha across TCC</p> <p>Rangelands: at least 6,000 ha under improved practices (targeting SC54)</p>	9,000	<p>At least 23,000 ha under improved practices 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under SLM/IWM practices and productive water use, across Sebapala River Watershed</p> <p>At least 15,000ha of rangelands/grasslands under improved practices</p>	<b>ON TARGET</b>	<b>S</b>	<p>The project has been very active in sensitizing stakeholders and utilizing district structures for coordination as well as getting work underway in wetland rehabilitation, brush clearance, etc. However, the MTR raises concerns regarding the croplands and raises issues with the lateness of agricultural interventions and the need to develop scalable regenerative agricultural approaches before rolling out this intervention</p>
<p>Indicator 3: (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 11)</p>	<p>Total population of potential beneficiaries in</p>	<p>To-date, a total of 613 (women 341; men 272) equivalent to 0.03% of midterm target have benefited from project activities including community and local</p>	<p>At least 50% of population of TCC participating</p>	<p>Women 2,569</p>	<p>At least 80% of Tosing Community Council population (19,071</p>	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	<b>MU</b>	<p>Numerically the indicator is on track, however, the MTR has</p>

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Target	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
No. of direct and indirect beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, as co-benefit of the GEF investment	Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	authorities' sensitization, learning exchange tours and trainings of technical teams to backstop implementation of substantive activities scheduled in the next reporting period.	directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	Men 2,128 Total 4,697	total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sebapala Watershed At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)			concerns that without acceleration of the planning process and material strengthening of the gender strategy, intervention and support the end result will be weak ownership and effectiveness of the resulting plans. Furthermore, training has taken place but this still needs considerable facilitation at the community level to develop the plans.

91. **Outcome 1:** Integrated Watershed Management Plan, with community action plans, facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management practices in the Sebapala Watershed.

Table 11 Progress Towards Results Matrix, Outcome 1

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Indicator 4: Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Sebapala Watershed (including community action plans for land restoration, soil and water conservation, and SLM in production landscapes) developed and adopted Sebapala IWM Master Plan covering 121,699 ha (Tosing	No IWMP plan or community action plans in place in Tosing CC or its sub-catchments	The Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) Plan and IWM Community Action Plans for the Sebapala watershed are not yet developed as focus of the project during this first reporting period was on recruitment of a technical team of experts (consortium) to facilitate and provide guidance for establishment of necessary institutional arrangements and structures to support development of the IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans. In the initial plan a service provider (consortium of experts) was to be engaged to facilitate development of Sebapala IWM plans (Master plan and community action plans). Since the plans to be developed should be aligned to the national Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) framework a program under the custodianship of ICM unit and joint implementation with ReNOKA initiative (A national inclusive and holistic movement for protecting and conserving soil and water resources), following a number of consultations, it was decided that ICM unit/ReNoka will be engaged to lead development of ICM plans instead of the consortium of experts. To-date, the	IW Master Plan developed and endorsed by National ICM Technical Secretariat and at least two community action plans for drainage basins in SC54 drafted and approved by District and local authorities	Capacity building/ Training of Implementing Partners and CWTs on ICM planning processes relevant for IWM Master plan and Community Action plans in collaboration with ICM (National custodian of ICM/IWM National	IWM Plan and at least 5 community action plans at sub-catchment level completed, endorsed by the National ICM Steering Committee and local governance structures and guiding management, with at least one Monitoring Report completed and informing adaptive management	<b>NOT ON TRACK.</b>	<b>MU</b>	Training has taken place and this is quite impressive and the planning is well understood from similar projects, however, the MTR expectation was for the WCM to be in place with the CWM plans to guide the remaining interventions and the plans have not been developed. However, the planning process is well integrated into the larger national ICM planning process from design through to the delays (due to the

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Community Council) Community Action Plans covering at least 49,425 ha (Sebapala Sub-catchment SC54)		<p>project in collaboration with a technical team from ICM/ReNOKA Unit within the Ministry of Water has undertaken the following preparatory activities towards development of the IWM master plan and community action plans:</p> <p>i) Consultations, engagement and planning with ICM structures which include catchment management committees and community councils);                      ii) Establishment of Institutional arrangements necessary for the development of Sebapala IWM structures/teams/forums are in progress.                      iii) A recommendation for engagement of ICM/ReNoka Unit to lead development of the IWM plans was approved PSC/Board of 9 June 2023 (Indicator 4-5: PSC Minutes).                      iv) Following the approval by PSC, revision of the workplan and budget to reflect changes in implementation modality for development of the plans were developed and are to be presented in an adhoc PSC meeting scheduled in September 12th 2023.</p> <p>Most of necessary preliminary and capacity building works to ensure achievement of this outcome were carried out including the following:</p> <p>1. Successful engagements with ICM/ReNOKA (Custodian of the National IWM Programme) and subsequent development of IWM structures both at District and at Sub-catchment levels A.                      2. Training of personnel from implementing partners on IWM.                      3. Development of IWM Master plan followed by Community Action Plans will Commence in the fourth quarter.</p>		Programme) was conducted for 15 Implementing Partners. 52 Community Watershed Teams were trained also on integral catchment management planning processes.				elections) necessary to embed it at the Community Council level and the formation of CWT and VWTs allowed a fast tracking of some village level watershed management activities.
Indicator 5: Institutional arrangements for co-ordination of IWM planning, implementation and monitoring	No institutional arrangements for IWM planning in place in Sebapala Watershed	<p>To-date, an institutional framework for IWM has been established. The institutional framework includes:</p> <p>1. ICM National Technical Secretariat (NTS) adapted.                      2. Project Board second sitting convened.                      3. Technical Advisory Committee validated TORs for consultants.                      4. FRSC Sebapala Field Team Operational                      5. District Projects implementation Team / Field Implementation (PIT) second meeting attended.                      6. PIT second meeting attended.                      7. Districts Heads of Department team second meeting attended.                      A plan and budget adjustment proposal to accommodate the new approach has been successfully presented to the</p>	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination team in place and meeting regularly, according to agreed TORs, with minutes of all meetings kept	The project has actively developed the institutional arrangements at the district level and these are embedded in the existing institutional arrangements	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination Team capacitated to interface with Sebapala CPU and transfer skills, knowledge and capacity to implement the IWM Plan M&E system	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	<b>MU</b>	(see comments above) as dependent on having the IWM plans in place. This is not in place, however, at the District level there is certainly the understanding for the need for this, but it is dependent upon the first and second degree plans (catchment and watershed) being in place.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
		Board for approval. This has also been covered in the draft delivery plan to be presented to the Board in the proposed extraordinary sitting in September 2023.						

92. **Output 1.1:** Institutional arrangements for coordination, planning, implementation, and monitoring of the Sebapala IWM master Plan and community action plans in place.

- The project has carried out considerable training of the various institutional agencies (15 implementing partners) at the District level through the ICM/IWM National Programme including training of the Community Watershed Teams (at the community level) who will be tasked with developing the localised watershed plans. At the institutional level there is a good understanding of the planning process.
- Mapping of major landscapes and verification of biophysical data per land use categories within the Sebapala catchment to inform land and wetlands restoration activities which have been completed covering 6,3476 ha.

93. **Output 1.2:** IWM Management Plan and Community (Watershed) Action Plans developed.

- A decision was taken early on that the ICM and CWP should be facilitated and guided by the larger government led initiative under Integrated Catchment Management (ICM)/ ReNOKA (Custodian of the national ICM programme) and not by an external Consultant. However, development of the plans could not take place without the necessary structures including the CC that were coming to the end of their tenure ahead of the elections. Once the elections were over the CC was able to establish the IWM structures such as the Community Watershed Teams (CWT) and Village Watershed Teams (VWT). When the CC and watershed Teams came into being and were capacitated, gatherings to initiate establishment of plans were conducted whereby developmental priorities and aspiration of communities were gathered. It is through these village and communities' priority list fast-tracked activities were implemented according to the community priorities and broadly in line with the future ICM plan. The plans (ICM and IWM) have yet to be developed and will likely need considerable facilitation including planning "tools" relevant for the community members (participatory techniques, flip charts, etc.) and significant facilitation.

94. **Outcome 2:** District level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacitated to implement IWM plans and enforce rules to prevent land and ecosystem degradation.

Table 12 Progress Towards Results Matrix, Outcome 2

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
Indicator 6: Number of effective bylaws providing legal basis for local-level implementation of IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans	Tosing Community Council and local-level structures currently have no bylaws for enforcing IWM	Development of the bylaws to provide a legal basis for implementation of the IWM plans requires a full scoping assessment to review legal instruments and regulatory frameworks. The assessment in turn needs to be as participatory as possible, hence, requires contribution and involvement of active IWM structures and technical expertise to lead the process. In preparation for this critical process, the project has initiated recruitment of Project Technical Advisor and establishment of IWM structures such as Community Watershed and Village Water Teams to facilitate scoping	Full scoping assessment (review of legal instruments and identification of gaps in local-level regulatory framework) completed and	Training of trainers workshop on bylaws guidelines and development in collaboration with ICM, GIZ and Ministry of Local Government (Department of Decentralization)	At least three* by-laws developed by CC, adopted and in force as the legal basis for local-scale implementation of IWM plans (*number and type to be refined based on scoping study to be carried out in second year of implementation)	<b>ON TRACK -</b>	<b>S</b>	There is a clear understanding at all levels for the need for by-laws as instruments to legitimize rules at a community level and provide the "levers of control" for the governance structures (associations, CWT, CC, DC, etc...). Approximately 5 by-laws are anticipated which seems reasonable

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
		assessment and consultative processes scheduled during the next reporting period.	consultative processes concluded for identification of new bylaws for ICM (number of bylaws to be determined during scoping)	for 37 officers (Legal Officers and Community Council Secretaries) from Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Environment and Forestry was conducted.				and achievable figure by EOP.
Indicator 7: Improved capacity scores of key resource management institutions responsible for implementation of IWM Master Plan and community action Plans at Quthing District, TCC and local levels: Systemic, institutional and individual capacities will be assessed using: The UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for District-level institutions (Quthing District Officials, extension staff, and all other relevant entities under the approved National Governance Framework for ICM – such as the Catchment	Baseline for District officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 55%	Capacity scores will be administered at MTR in line with the M&E framework. Notwithstanding, capacity building activities towards this indicator are budgeted and scheduled for next reporting period.	Midterm score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 60%	62.2%	End-of-project score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 65%	<b>ON TRACK</b>	<b>S</b>	Capacity Score Cards show improvement



Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for rating
Management Joint Committee)								
Modified Capacity Development Scorecard for Tosing Community Council (Standing Committees on Finance, Planning and Environment; officials; extension staff), and local-level institutions (water supply groups, Grazing Associations, wool and mohair groups, vegetable growers, beekeepers, etc)	Baseline for local-level institutions 70%		Midterm score for local-level institutions: 75%	70%	End-of-project score for local-level institutions: 80%	<b>ON TRACK</b>	<b>S</b>	As above. This is not as advanced as the District level but is still impressive and there is a clear commitment for local governance (CC) to engage with environmental sustainability. The MTR is confident that with the additional training planned the predicted score will be reached by the TE.

95. **Output 2.1:** Community Council by-laws developed to enforce implementation of Community Action Plans for integrated watershed management.
- Training of trainers workshop on bylaws guidelines and development in collaboration with ICM, GIZ and Ministry of Local Government (Department of Decentralization) for 37 officers (Legal Officers and Community Councils Secretaries) from Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Environment and Forestry was conducted. However, no bylaws have been developed yet, but the process appears to be understood.
96. **Output 2.2:** Establishment and strengthening of community-level resource user groups.
- Two grazing associations (Tsatsane Kopanang Basotho and Mosehle grazing Associations) were supported.
  - Four were developed (Maokeng, Tosing, Daliwe and Mafura Grazing Associations<sup>50</sup>)
  - The MTR has concerns that there are issues at the community level relating to tenure regimes which will affect the motivation, level of investment by individuals, equitable sharing of costs and benefits, etc. Recommendation D.4 is provided in section 5.2 to address these concerns.
97. **Output 2.3:** District technical officers, village-level institutions, farmers’ associations, and members of the community trained on sustainable land and water management (SLWM) practices.
- 150 farmers and 50 District implementing partners’ officials have been trained on indigenous grass seed harvesting.
  - Other SLWM approaches have been introduced to the communities such as gabions, water diversion, stone-bunding, gully rehabilitation, etc. These need to be expanded especially with relation to the crop lands.
  - Six male community-level Project Supervisors have been appointed and trained to support communities.
  - There are strong indications that the District officers and community understand the importance of ICM and IWM and are enthusiastic and receptive to support in addressing land use challenges.

<sup>50</sup> Mafura GA is important because the Mafura Community was initially reluctant and recused itself from the project and supports a recommendation of this MTR.

98. **Outcome 3:** Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM and SWM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sebapala River Watershed, with ecosystem, climate resilience and livelihood benefits.

Table 13 Progress Towards Results Matrix, Outcome 3

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 8: Area of land restored or under improved land use practices, measured in total, and separately for: Sub-indicator 8.1: Agricultural lands</p> <p>Targets to be disaggregated for the whole Sebapala River Watershed (=Tosing Community Council - TCC) and the Sebapala Sub-catchment (No. 54 in catchment map – SC54)</p>	<p>Total area under different kinds of landcover: <b>(Extent degraded to be determined at inception)</b> – this needs to be retrofitted</p>	<p>In situ biophysical data validation, mapping and re-drawing of upper Sebapala major landscapes as well as verification of Agricultural lands, rangeland, wetland areas and riparian habitats degraded hot spots where improved soil and water conservation measures will be implemented to combat soil erosion and promote water infiltration was undertaken. The reports identified areas to be reclaimed, different landscapes, including wetland areas where shrubs are turning into a thicket. The reports are important because they provide a base upon which resource users priorities will be anchored and furthermore will guide future rehabilitation interventions since they provide a picture and base for rehabilitation works.</p> <p>In an effort to fast-track the work, a draft Delivery Plan to be presented to the Board for approval in an extraordinary Board meeting in September has been prepared.</p> <p>Since the project area is a hard-to-reach compounded by inadequate implementing partners' officials operating on-ground, the Board in its sitting of June 2023 approved engagement of Field Supervisors (These are graduates who will be trained and stationed within targeted communities to supervise SLWM works). To this end, TORs for Field Supervisors have been drafted. To facilitate engagement of Field Supervisors, the project will identify sources of funds from savings to pay for the allowances of the 6 Field Supervisors.</p>	<p>Total area under restoration or under improved practices by midterm: 12,000ha                      Agricultural lands: 2,000 ha under improved practices - 400 ha in SC54, with agreed plans in place for roll out more broadly over a further 1,600 ha in TCC</p>	<p>Sub-indicator 8.1: 124.4 ha is area under improved agriculture.</p> <p>Assessment of areas/place suitable for Fruit trees establishment was undertaken by Ministerial team</p>	<p>At least 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under improved SLM practices</p>	<p><b>NOT ON TRACK</b></p>	<p>MU</p>	<p>The agricultural component is behind schedule and it is not clear to what extent the climate smart agriculture will address the soil conservation and restoration aspects facing the crop lands.</p>
<p>Sub-indicator 8.2: Grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands)</p>	<p>Agricultural lands 8,181 ha in TCC, of which 612 ha are in SC54                      106,282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54), with 90,339 ha used for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54)</p>	<p>engagement of Field Supervisors (These are graduates who will be trained and stationed within targeted communities to supervise SLWM works). To this end, TORs for Field Supervisors have been drafted. To facilitate engagement of Field Supervisors, the project will identify sources of funds from savings to pay for the allowances of the 6 Field Supervisors.</p>	<p>At least 6,000 ha of rangelands under improved practices                      At least 3,800 ha of rangelands under fast tracked'' restoration, targeting hotpots in SC54 first, with plans in place for roll-out of soil and water</p>	<p>Sub-indicator 8.2: A total of 2228.7 ha of which 1680.7 is rested rangeland at Selomomg, Ha Liphapang, Thoteng, Matsela-Habeli, Motse-mocha, Daliwe, Mathambekeng and Ha Matiase. 482.1 ha is area under brush control at</p>	<p>At least 34,500 ha restored or under improved practices: 15,000 ha of degraded rangelands under improved practices 10,000ha degraded rangelands restored through improved soil and water conservation</p>	<p><b>ON TRACK</b></p>	<p>S</p>	<p>As above -here are concerns with regards the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of the community enterprises (e.g. the orchards, etc.).</p>

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
			conservation measures in remainder of SC54 and TCC, as appropriate	Mapopong, Khorong Ha, Ranomoro, Ha Thaha, Ha Hlaela, Ha `Mako, Ha Raemile, Ha Frans, Mathaheng, Patiseng, Lits`oeneng, Mateleng, Qoaling Ha Liphapang, Merataleng, Ha Sekonyela, Mabele a tlala, Selomong, Tosing, Matsela-Habeli and Thibella, Sekolong Motse-mocha.	and grazing management measures			
Sub-indicator 8.3: Wetlands and riparian habitats	847 ha of wetlands in TCC (of which 496 ha are in SC54), and 953 ha of other riparian/aquatic habitats in TCC (of which 202 ha are in SC54)		At least 200 ha of headwater wetlands under emergency restoration (targeting wetlands in Upper Seapala and Tsatsane minor drainage basins in SC54 first), with sites for further roll-out identified	Sub-indicator 8.3: 124.4 ha is area under improved agriculture. Assessment of areas/place suitable for Fruit trees establishment was undertaken by Ministerial team	At least 1,500 ha of wetlands and riparian habitats under IWRM (including 496 ha of restored wetlands)	<b>ON TRACK</b>	S	As above there are still issues regarding the compliance issues within the community and related to different tenure regimes. This is for sub indicator 8.1. There seem to be no record of how much work has taken place in the wetlands in 2023 PIR and the 2024 physical progress report submitted to the MTR. However, during the mission, protection of wetlands was reported by all communities, including the reasons for doing it and some of the techniques and specific problems faced such as preventing livestock entering.

99. **Output 3.1:** Soil and water conservation measures implemented to combat soil erosion and promote water infiltration (including hillside terracing, stone-bunding, gully rehabilitation, re-seeding, tree-planting, and soil improvement).

- The project reports 124.4 ha under improved agriculture. However, the MTR is not clear on where these areas are and what improvements have been introduced/made. The agricultural (cropping) component is yet to take place. Training on climate-smart agriculture is scheduled to take place later this month. However, the MTR has concerns about how effective this will be and considers that there is a risk that conventional farmer support with inputs such as fertilizers will take place. It is recommended that this component is carefully thought through with a number of basic regenerative farming techniques introduced to build soil and prevent soil losses from crop lands are introduced.
- Assessment of areas/places/sites suitable for Fruit trees establishment was undertaken by Ministerial team. The MTR has concerns regarding these community enterprises and it will be important that work is done with the community to ensure that tenure issues and the equitable sharing of the costs and benefits are adequately addressed.

100. **Output 3.2:** Rangeland rehabilitation measures implemented to promote improved productivity and vegetative cover (measures including enforcement of rotational grazing plans, selective reseedling, rangeland resting and natural regeneration, removal of invasive species):

- A total of 2,228.7 ha of which 1,680.7 is rested rangeland at Selomomg, Ha Liphapang, Thoteng, Matsela-Habeli, Motse-mocha, Daliwe, Mathambekeng and Ha Matiase. 482.1 ha is area under brush control at Mapopong, Khorong Ha Ranomoro, Ha Thaha, Ha Hlaela, Ha `Mako, Ha Raemile, Ha Frans, Mathaheng, Patiseng, Lits`oeneng, Mateleng, Qoaling Ha Liphapang, Merataleng, Ha Sekonyela, Mabele a tlala, Selomong, Tosing, Matsela-Habeli, Thibella, Sekolong and Motse-mocha.
- Considerable work has been done with regards to brush clearing. However, the MTR has concerns regarding the sustainability of these activities. Much of the brush clearance is of naturally occurring indigenous brush such as Cheche (*Leucosidea sericea*). In some communities downstream, the same shrub is being planted in the rangelands because of its ecological benefits. A better ecological understanding of the system and process of vegetation succession is needed to understand the costs and benefits and likely sustainability of these activities. There are opportunities for the project to engage with academic institutions to better understand the practical approaches to managing these areas without the use of burning because brush clearance may not be sustainable nor cost effective.

101. Total area of 9,000 Ha of land under sustainable land management in productive system is based on Range Management Areas (Area under improved management by Tsatsane Kopanang Basotho Grazing association).

102. **Output 3.3:** SLWM practices piloted by land users at selected sites to improve agricultural productivity (and strengthen resilience) measures including climate-smart agriculture, crop diversification, mixed crop-livestock systems, agroforestry).

- As with Output 3.1, the MTR has concerns regarding the climate smart agriculture and this output needs to be carefully thought through otherwise there is a risk that it may just result in conventional farmer support. The climate smart agriculture needs to be well-thought through and pragmatic, including experimental approaches with the project reducing the risks to farmers which might result from their participation. A conventional approach which provides farmers with inputs such as fertilisers is unlikely to meet the criteria of increasing systemic resilience.

103. **Output 3.4:** Integrated water resources management promoted to augment water supply for community and household food production (measures including rainwater harvesting, in-field planting pits and keyhole gardens).

- There is a good awareness by local communities for the need to protect wetlands as a result of the project's activities. However, it is not clear how this is providing support at the household level and is not uniform across the communities.
- 14 ha is wetland area under rehabilitation in Bolahla, Leqhekaneng, Motse-Mocha, Mapopong and Mateleng.
- 36 ha is reclaimed area through gully rehabilitation and construction of diversion furrows at Matsela-Habeli, Mabele a Tlala, Mathambekeng and Nonyana ea Mpitsa.

- Identification, assessment and costing of areas/places suitable for water harvesting was undertaken by Ministerial team at Matsela-ha -beli; Ha Moseneke, Ha Raemile and Ha Liphapang.

**104.Outcome 4:** Lessons learnt by the project through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&E are used to promote SLWM in the wider Sebapala Watershed and nationally.

Table 14 Progress Towards Results Matrix, Outcome 4

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Indicator 9: Ratio of women/ men benefitting from project interventions, in accordance with Gender Action Plan	Total population of potential beneficiaries in Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	Recruitment of a Gender specialist to update the Gender Action Plan and its strategy is at advance stage and will be concluded during the third quarter. However, through sensitization activities, the project reached a total of 623 beneficiaries (228 M: 345 F) which is about 17.1% of Mid-term target and very close to proposed ratio (1:0.95) of men and women estimated to benefit from project interventions.	At least 50% of population of TCC participating directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	Core indicator 11 achievement of a total of 4,697 (women 2,569 and men 2,128) of which 3,525 benefited from ecosystem goods and services accrued from improving management of land resources and 1,172 land restoration volunteers benefited through provision of food parcels, protective clothing, restoration equipment and trainings	At least 80% of Tosing Community Council population (19,071 total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sebapala Watershed (11,786M, 12,053F) At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	MU	The project may have engaged with this number of men and women; however, it would be unrealistic to state that they have benefited from improved ecosystem goods and services yet. The MTR does not accept direct beneficiaries of project incentives (food parcels, tools, etc...) as accounting for this indicator on the basis that these are project bound and not necessarily sustainable. The MTR considers that the benefit should be from the outcome of the intervention and not due to direct "payments" from the project which are for a specific purpose and not necessarily sustainable. Furthermore, benefits to women can be characterised as "targeted" whereas it should be expected to see more "transformational" benefits both from a rights perspective and in the interests of SLM.

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Indicator 10: Number of manuals, policy briefs, reports and lessons on SLWM in Sebapala Watershed collated and shared, and learning exchanges convened	Currently there are no policy-briefs or SLM knowledge products specific to the Sebapala Watershed, and no comprehensive knowledge management or M&E system for IWM/SLM. An SLM Toolkit for Lesotho (based on work in the Maseru District) is available, and a booklet capturing lessons on Rangeland Rehabilitation in the Mount Moorosi area Stakeholders in the Sebapala have not yet benefitted from SLWM learning exchanges	<p>1. 1 farmer to farmer learning knowledge-exchange trip facilitated. This Team consisted of Community Watershed Teams, Council and Chiefs representatives. These were accompanied by personnel from implementing partner Ministries.</p> <p>23 (10 female) people participated in the farmer to farmer learning exchange.</p> <p>2. Beaded Vulture Bilateral Task Force meeting in Mokhotlong</p> <p>3. Delivery fast-tracking plan prepared</p> <p>The meeting was organized by the Department of Environment and the project was invited.</p>	<p>Sebapala Communications Knowledge Framework in place and guiding development and distribution of policy briefs and lessons learnt, and participation in learning exchanges:</p> <p>At least:</p> <p>1 Technical Report/Policy Brief</p> <p>4 Best-practice/lessons learnt communications pieces (at least one of which should have a specific gender focus)</p> <p>At least five local-level learning exchanges facilitated</p> <p>Participation by Sebapala stakeholders in at least one national or regional knowledge-exchange event, with a report prepared on lessons learnt</p>	<p>The project is generating useful lessons but as yet these need to be made conclusive and the experience collated in such a way that they become transferable knowledge products.</p>	<p>Sebapala Catchment Communications and Knowledge management Framework fully implemented, Web-based knowledge management system in place and serving information and knowledge products on ICM in Sebapala Catchment, including at least:</p> <p>4 Technical Reports</p> <p>56 /Policy Briefs</p> <p>8 best-practice/lessons learnt communications pieces</p> <p>At least one national knowledge-sharing workshop convened, ahead of TE, with proceedings collated as a technical lessons-learnt report</p> <p>Participation in at least 2 regional or national knowledge-exchange events, with reports</p>	<b>NOT ON TRACK</b>	MU	<p>The self-reported achievements for this indicator are essentially activities, some of which have a very weak alignment with the project's objectives (e.g. the attending the bearded vulture meeting and therefore do not constitute effective or efficient use of project resources). Certainly, the MTR considers that the project does have the intellectual capacities and enthusiasm to deliver on this indicator, however these results are not evident at the time of the MTR.</p>

Indicator	Baseline	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	MTR Target	MTR Status	EOP Expected	MTR Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
					prepared on lessons learnt Community-led advocacy programme operational			

105. **Output 4.1:** Project gender strategy and action plan implemented, monitored, and reported on.
- The gender strategy and action plan has not yet been updated and developed. It will need more logistic, technical and material resources to effectively implement this. Currently, the project can claim that activities are targeted at women and to a considerable scale. However, this output will need more resources if it is to become transformational for women in the project area.
106. **Output 4.2:** Knowledge management system to facilitate participatory M&E, ongoing learning, and adaptive management in the watershed and nationally, with active participation of key project stakeholders and project partners.
- The project is generating important experiences but this has not been effectively documented and translated into transferable knowledge products.
  - In its reporting the PMU is reporting on various activities, some of them only loosely relevant to the project's outcomes (e.g. the bearded vulture conference) or project process (e.g. the GRM).

#### 4.2.3 Remaining Barriers to Achieving the Project Objective

107. The MTR identifies five barriers to achieving the project's objective and provides recommendations to address these in section 5.2.
108. **Barrier 1:** Slow delivery of project activities. The project experienced delays in starting activities after the official start of the project and was already delays. However, the slow delivery of activities (see section 4.3) has continued to slow progress towards results. This is largely due to PMU implementation issues, particularly related to government procurement procedures and a weakness in the PSC and is evidenced amongst other things by the low budget execution at the mid-term.
109. **Barrier 2:** Mismatch between the focus of activities (District and Sebapala catchment) and the project's PMU. The main activities are taking place at the District level; however, most decisions are made in Maseru as well as a great deal of the project's human and material resources being kept at the central rather than the District level. This was a reoccurring theme amongst key informants interviewed at the District level.
110. **Barrier 3:** The need to balance the catchment-level operations with the administrative responsibilities at the Ministry level. The MTR considers that the role of Project Manager necessitates a centralised, high-level administrative-strategic role while at the same time requiring an "aggressive" tactical-operational role to keep things moving at the catchment-level. Currently, the latter appears to be fulfilled largely by technical assistance and there may be a need for a full-time Operational Manager.
111. **Barrier 4:** Logistical challenges within the project area. The MTR argues that the project design did not provide sufficient support for the project activities in the Sebapala catchment. The very nature of the catchment means that there are three watershed and five communities. Only three are located in one watershed, the other two being located in two separate watersheds. Travelling between communities is arduous and the roads are particularly poor. Many community members have to travel long distances to attend meetings and many of the parts of the project cannot be reached by vehicle. Furthermore, accommodation is scarce in the catchment and there is a need to transport large numbers of people (both project workers and local communities) over long distances. This is legitimately a "transport hungry" project. This was a reoccurring theme amongst key respondents and the availability of transport rather than the timely needs of work in the field appears to dictate when activities take place.
112. **Barrier 5:** The need to address common property management systems. There are different tenurial systems at play in the catchment area. Single owner private and state regimes are readily recognised; however, common property systems are more challenging to incorporate into modern government and administrative systems. An important aspect of managing the catchment is supporting the existing collective decision-making and conflict resolution structures that generally exist within communities in order to build their capacity, ensure the equitable distribution of costs and benefits and develop them into effective community management institutions. This experience may not be available within the existing project human resources which results in issues such as non-compliance with pasture rules or community members seeking to maximise individual profit at the expense of the group, etc.
113. In addition to these recurrent barriers the project has suffered setbacks due to the national elections and change in government with a subsequent restructuring of government institutions and changes in senior decision-makers in 2022. The MTR regards this as an external and temporary barrier, however, it had a profound effect in slowing the implementation of project activities at a critical time and, *inter alia*, has resulted in the low delivery rate at the mid-term.



### 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Table 15 MTR Ratings Project Implementation & Adaptive Management

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	MU	The project has experienced significant delays and at times appears unable to recover quickly from these. Project implementation issues such as procurement are acting like brakes on the activities at the District level and within the catchment. A lack of operational risks <sup>51</sup> , late payments and other procurement issues are slowing the project down. Budget execution is low and there has been a very low delivery of co-financing. Decision-making is slow and the PSC which should serve as an executive for the project is unwieldy, as a result, ownership of risks and decision-making appears to be diffused across the project leading to indecisiveness. The centre of operations is at the District level; however, the decision-making and operational aspects of the project are based in Maseru. Small inefficiencies such as releasing a vehicle for use in the project area are slowing the project's progress and reducing the effectiveness of the project's considerable strengths in its human resources which are more than capable of carrying out their tasks to a very high standard because the project has considerable intellectual and human resources. Many of the challenges and solutions are self-identified, but it would appear that the project <i>per se</i> is unable to make decisions and act decisively. If these issues could be addressed by, <i>inter alia</i> : restructuring the PSC and moving the centre of operations and much of the day to day decision-making to the District level and by resolving very simple procurement issues such as commissioning the project vehicle, it is likely that this rating could be raised by two levels to satisfactory by the end of the project.

#### 4.3.1 Management arrangements

114. In the MTR's experience, the NIM approach has proved challenging to COs and national Implementing Partners/Agencies in many countries because it requires synchronizing different financial and accounting processes, M&E procedures, reporting timeframes and operational practices. A common feature of these challenges has been the convergence of procurement rules and regulations and the Sebapala project is no exception.

115. The NIM approach is both a GEF and Government of Lesotho requirement and has a number of benefits with regards capturing and internalising the project experience and ownership of the project and its results.

116. However, as outlined below, there are considerable challenges mostly related to procurement procedures.

117. On the other hand, the NIM approach has ensured that there is a strong sense of ownership and purpose at the district level.

#### UNDP Project Assurance & Oversight

118. The UNDP Country Office (CO) is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. This includes responsibility for the Project Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee.

119. The dynamic between the Implementing Partner and GEF Agency reporting approaches is evident in the single Project Implementation Report (2023) where there is a discernible difference between the IP and CO and RTA concern at the slow delivery rate (including the low delivery of co-financing – 6% - eighteen months into the project) and the operational risks that the project was facing. While these were being flagged as part of the project assurance role, the project itself did not seem to be responding with a sense of urgency.

120. The MTR understands that the change from the ATLAS M&E system to QUANTUM reporting has also been disruptive<sup>52</sup>.

121. The UNDP CO is concerned about the slow delivery rate<sup>53</sup> and has initiated the Acceleration Plan<sup>54</sup> however, it has not appeared to be able to provide sufficient oversight on issues such as recording the co-financing,

<sup>51</sup> A risk to the operations of the project itself and not necessarily the impact. An example of an operational risk might be upcoming elections, availability of technical advice or procurement challenges, etc.

<sup>52</sup> The MTR has experienced this during other reviews and evaluations of UNDP-GEF and Adaptation Fund projects with other COs, therefore, it would appear that this was a single systemic challenging event.

<sup>53</sup> UNDP CO pers. comm.

<sup>54</sup> A revised budget to accelerate delivery between May – December 2024.

budgeted items such as attending the COP which are not, as far as the MTR can discern<sup>55</sup>, a project related activity, identifying operational risks and appropriate mitigation and insisting that the project vehicle was released.

#### Implementing Partner

122. The MEF is the Implementing Partner, through the PMU it carries out: project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and is responsible for ensuring that the other project implementing partners carry out project activities including M&E.
123. The PMU is also responsible for risk management, procurement of goods and services (including human resources, financial management, as well as overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets and AWP; and approving the multi-year workplan).
124. The national Implementing Partner is responsible for financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against budgets, approving and signing the Combined Delivery Report (CDR) and signing the financial report, funding authorization and Certificate of Expenditures.
125. The delivery of activities has been slow and budget expenditure (see section 4.3.3) below that expected in the Project Document and Annual Work Plans (AWP). As stated, the project is implemented through a PMU based in Maseru while most of the activities are taking place in Quthing District, the District Council (DC) located in Quthing and the Sabapala Catchment itself.
126. In October 2022 national elections were held resulting in a change in government and a substantial restructuring of the institutional framework, changes in senior personnel; for instance, the project bank account was closed for a short period of time due to a change in signatories resulting from a change in Permanent Secretary (PS).
127. The changes in government are partly responsible for the delay. The MTR recognises that the elections, changes in government and reorganization of government institutions is a normal part of the democratic process and to be anticipated in any project in any country and therefore is an external risk, but still one which could have been anticipated. The MTR considers this to be unavoidable. However, the MTR does question the weakness in the project's operational design in not developing an operational risk assessment<sup>56</sup> and in not responding swiftly to issues being raised by the RTA and UNDP CO. Most of these related to project operational, work planning and procurement. For instance, logistics and transport in the project area are critical to the success or failure of the Sebapala project and a project vehicle has been purchased in January 2024, but it is not operational and parked in Maseru due to procurement issues.<sup>57</sup>
128. It is important to stress that at the district level there is "energy" in the project and a clear recognition that the project's relevance to issues of environmental resilience and livelihoods as well its catalytic effect in supporting the strengthening of decentralised capacities is clearly appreciated. However, this contrasts with the procedural slowness at a central level which in part is due to the complex procurement procedures and the challenges of matching government and UNDP-GEF procedures and processes. This has resulted in a lateness in procurement of technical services, equipment and the implementation of activities.
129. While the project has responded, for instance by developing an acceleration plan (May – November 2024) to increase the rate of implementation, the MTR considers that this is still not increasing the efficiency of the project's implementation.
130. The project has substantial and qualified technical expertise, through contracted services, Technical Assistants, (TA), but also within the PMU and District and Community Councils. However, given the innovative nature of the Sebapala project, the MTR considers that the TA, especially with regards women (representing 50% of the community constituents) and the ecological aspects of SLM, are insufficient for the task and as a result will likely affect the quality of the outcomes – the difference between business as usual and innovative solutions to catchment management.
131. The location of the PMU in Maseru, while probably necessary because it is embedded in the Ministry, also militates against the efficient and effective delivery of results. The project results – both their delivery and achievement – will take place at the District level and within the Sebapala catchment itself. Therefore, the positioning of the PMU with all its operational capacities and decision-making functions in Maseru creates an incongruity between project implementation and expected results. It is very clear that there is

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<sup>55</sup> Project funds were used to attend the COP meeting. The justification being that it may result in a "trickle down" policy change when what is needed is a "cascade" such as resulted from study tours or might be achieved by using those funds on supporting women in the project area.

<sup>56</sup> An issue raised by the RTA in the 2023 PIR, pp. 24 - 25

<sup>57</sup> Various reasons were advanced as to why the vehicle has not been commissioned including a faulty handbrake under warranty, however, the MTR considers this "horseshoe nail" over which the "battle" may be lost.

considerable enthusiasm and support for the project within the District governance structures. The provision of material and financial resources through the project, combined with a focus of attention on land, water and livelihood issues is providing both means and purpose to strengthen participation, accountability and democratic structures at this level. The importance of building this social capital within government and communities with a focus on environmental, economic and social resilience should not be underestimated.

#### Project Steering Committee

132. The PSC is the primary decision-making body of the project. The PSC includes a large number of stakeholders and in this sense, it serves as a forum for participation for the complex array of stakeholders. However, this distracts it from its purpose as a project oversight and executive body. The minutes of meetings do not reflect the realities of the challenges that the project has been facing and it would appear to serve a broader participatory forum rather than an oversight and executive decision-making body to solve problems and ensure efficient and effective direction in addressing significant challenges such as: the slowness of procurement, logistical challenges related to transport and the effectiveness of budgeted activities in the work plan<sup>58</sup>, all of which were having a profound effect on the rate of delivery.

#### 4.3.4 Work Planning

133. It should be noted that this is a complex project with a large number of implementing partners and stakeholders across different levels of government and the project site has considerable logistical challenges. This need for a broad participation and the multiple departments within government appears to make this a somewhat unwieldy projects and is an inherent challenge, resulting from this level of complexity, for the PMU to steer the process across so many departments and is likely contributing to the difficulties in work planning.

134. As has been noted already, delivery has been low and as a result progress towards results is poor. The project started in May 2022 but the Inception Workshop and first disbursement didn't take place until September of that year. In October 2022 national elections took place, followed by a reorganisation of government institutions which resulted in shifts in various project responsibilities across different agencies as well as changes in personnel including the PS and Account Signatory which resulted in the project bank account being closed for several months. Likely due to these uncertainties the first disbursement was not made until September 2022. However, the MTR still has concerns that there has not been a very discernible increasing in the rate of budget expenditure since then which suggests that there are weaknesses within the projects structure and operations.

135. As a NIM project it has to share financial and procurement services with the Ministry as following the government rules and procedures. Key informant responses to the MTR indicate that at times this has caused delays in the implementation of activities. While the MTR understands that the government procedures need to be followed there is a dissonance between project expedience and timing and these procedures at times.

136. Three AWP (2022, 2023 and 2024) have been developed as well as an Acceleration Plan (May – November 2023) in recognition of the low project expenditure (currently 25.68%) and slow delivery rate. However, this appears to be driven more by the UNDP CO than the PSC *per se*.

#### 4.3.5 Finance and Co-financing

137. The MTR has already noted that this is a complex and challenging project insofar as it is working across multiple levels of government, stakeholders and at an extensive scale of the catchment which, in its self, presents considerable logistical challenges. The MTR argues that the project was under resourced for this and would need to rely on the delivery of co-financing for the delivery of some activities. In the MTR's experience, the GEF fund is much more "agile" in ensuring the project remains on its critical path because in-kind co-financing is invariably subject to bureaucratic and administrative delays and when logistics are necessary, competing with other pressing governmental priorities or urgencies. This is especially so when the project has to respond quickly to real and present difficulties such as hunger due to the 2023 crop failure and poor harvest. While the project has a policy of voluntarism, it is not practical to expect local community to work on collective enterprises when they are hungry and lack tools.

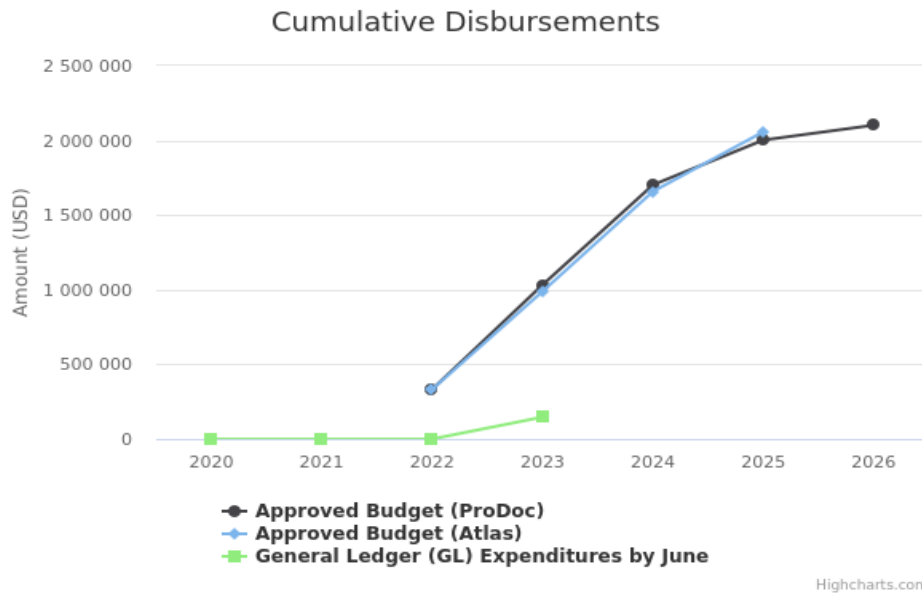
138. While the project appears to have strong financial controls over the GEF Trust Fund (US\$ 2,101,826), this does not necessarily translate to an efficiency in budget execution. The MTR has not been able to ascertain

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<sup>58</sup> For instance, the 2023-2024 AWP&B included project financed attendance to the UNCCD COP (3.1.2.6 Attend UNCCD-COP 16 meeting in Saudi Arabia) in Saudi Arabia and two bearded vulture conservation meetings in RSA (3.2.6.1 Attend two bearded vulture meetings). These expenditures are hard to justify given the status of the project at the time and yet this US\$ 28,478 spend does not appear to have been scrutinized by the PSC against its effectiveness and efficiency of achieving the project's objective.

the variance by component and by year. There was no PIR produced during the first year (2022) however, the project started on the 9<sup>th</sup> May but the first disbursement was made on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The MTR has the preliminary financial information for the 2024 PIR. However, based on the June 2023 PIR the cumulative delivery against the approved amount in the Project Document was 6.98%<sup>59</sup> and against the expected delivery for that year it was 14.19% with a cumulative disbursement of \$ 146,627 (30<sup>th</sup> June).

Figure 3 Cumulative Disbursements June 2023 PIR



139. To date, figures provided by UNDP show a total disbursement for 2022 of US\$ 75,606, 2023 of US\$ 317,539 and 2024 of US\$ 195,673 giving a total GEF Fund disbursement of US\$ 588,819 at June 2024 equating to a budget expenditure of 24.68%.
140. It is reasonable for the MTR to conclude that the project, on this basis, is under-performing and unless there is a substantial improvement in the rate of delivery the project is unlikely to produce the expected results and risks closing with unspent funds in the GEF account.
141. Adding to this, there is the issue of the project vehicle purchased in January 2024 and still not commissioned by June 2024 arguably; effectively reducing the expenditure rate in terms of implementation. The same arguments could be advanced for the US\$ 28,478 spent attending the UNCCD COP and bearded vulture meetings. These were not core project activities<sup>60</sup>.
142. The 2023 PIR notes that “Government co-finance during this reporting period [approximately 13 months after disbursement] is very low, as it is about 6% [US\$ 192,000] of the total pledged in-kind contribution for the whole of project implementation while UNDP co-finance worth US\$75,000 cash that was disbursed is not yet spend due to mentioned government procurement challenges”<sup>61</sup>.
143. Confirmed co-financing in the Project Document amounted to US\$ 3,200,000 (see Table 5 for breakdown of co-financing sources and types) including US\$ 200,000 from UNDP TRAC funds.
144. At the MTR (June 2024) the reported co-financing for the period July 2023 to March 2024 was US\$ 181,608<sup>62</sup>. This would make a cumulative total (with the 6% reported in June 2023) to March 2024 (approximately 46% of the way through the project) of US\$ 373,608 or 11.67%. Furthermore, the co-financing is not disaggregated by source other than it has been contributed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police, and Ministry, nor is it attributable to activities. The MTR does not

<sup>59</sup> 2023 PIR (June)

<sup>60</sup> An argument was advanced that the COP meeting was a policy issue and the bearded vulture meeting was linked to eco-tourism development and there is a “trickle down” effect from these. However, the MTR argues that for this level of expenditure and given the current status of the project it would need a “cascade” effect and significantly advance the project activities in the Sebapala catchment area to justify these expenditures.

<sup>61</sup> 2023 PIR, p. 24

<sup>62</sup> Letter to the UNDP Resident Representative from the Principal Secretary Environment and Forestry, 13 May 2024.

contest that the reported co-financing has been spent, but it cannot assign it to source or activity and therefore reports it as a lump sum in Table 8. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the bulk of the co-financing committed at project design has not been realised and that the PMU is not adequately tracking the co-financing by activity or even component.

145. On this basis, the project would appear to have done remarkably well on the GEF Fund commitments and 11.67% of the co-financing, given that there is a 88.33% shortfall in the co-financing). An alternative, “glass half empty” view might be that the GEF Fund is in part filling the gap of the co-financing, which is why expenditure on items such as attending the COP in Saudi Arabia are likely to have a greater negative impact on the final outcomes than it might have been if the co-financing had materialised. This will be picked up in the Terminal Evaluation and needs immediate action in the MTR Management Response.
146. A Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) micro-assessment was carried out on the MEFR under a previous cycle (2019 – 2023) and the next HACT assessment will be carried out this year before the end of July and will include the Implementing Partner. While the Project Document makes provision for an audit, the Sebapala project was not included amongst projects audited in 2023 – 2024 due to its low delivery against the NIM threshold of US\$ 600,000. While the MTR does not have any specific reasons, it is recommended that an audit is carried out as soon as the project passes the threshold in the interests of procedural transparency.

Table 16 CO-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount Confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Committed at MTR (US\$)	Actual % of Amount (US\$)
Government	Government -Ministry of Environment and Forestry <sup>63</sup> (MEF) - Department of Soil and Water Conservation	In-kind	\$2,500,000	\$328,235	14.91% <sup>64</sup>
Government	Government -Ministry of Environment and Forestry <sup>65</sup> (MEF) - Department of Environment	In-kind	\$500,000		
Government	Government- District Council Secretary - Quthing (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Quthing)	In-kind	\$200,000		
Donor Agency	UNDP (TRAC)	Grant	\$200,000	\$0.00	0% <sup>66</sup>
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$3,400,000.00</b>	<b>\$328,235.00</b>	<b>14.91%</b>

Sources of Co-Financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (US\$)
Partner Agencies	MFRSC	In-kind	Investment Mobilized	\$2,500,000
Partner Agencies	MTEC	In-kind	Investment Mobilized	\$500,000
Partner Agencies	MAFS	In-kind	Investment mobilised	\$200,000
Donor Agency	UNDP	Grant	Investment mobilized	\$200,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>3,400,000</b>

<sup>63</sup> Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation

<sup>64</sup> The MTR was unable to disaggregate the co-financing by organisation and by activity

<sup>65</sup> Formerly Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture

<sup>66</sup> The MTR understands that the UNDP CO TRAC funds have been at least partially expended but it is unable to confirm, quantify nor attribute this.

#### 4.3.6 Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

147. The project's Inception Report provided a technically good assessment of the project during the start including a recommendation to add a number of finer-grained indicators<sup>67</sup> to be attached to Outcome 3. These were largely technical impact indicators. However, this was not carried through to the PIR and some of them may be worth revisiting before the end of the project, albeit with considerations to the costs of data collection and the need to establish a credible baseline.
148. As stated earlier, the project has produced one PIR (June 2023). While the PIR captures the preparatory work and provides realistic ratings, the PMU reporting is more optimistic than the UNDP CO and the RTA assessments. As noted in section 4.1, during the project development an SESP was carried out and a number of social and environmental risks were identified. However, there were no operational risks identified (e.g. elections, government reorganisation, time-consuming procurement procedures, etc.) although these should have been reasonably obvious at the time and a mitigation plan could have been prepared in advance.
149. The MTR considers that the budgeted M&E plan is probably under-estimated at \$68,000 (3% of the total UNDP and GEF grants), especially given the scale and logistical challenges of the catchment area. Arguably, the risks to the project are two-fold, those to the project's implementation due to operational risks which are best monitored at a central level (which should be addressed through a more effective SC) and, those which will occur within the catchment and at the District level, the latter being mostly captured by the SESP and requiring regular contact and feedback, including through the GRM. This last exposure to risks is especially vulnerable due to the centralisation of operations and a lack of close to continuous presence of the project in the catchment area (largely due to the lack of transport).
150. During the field mission the MTR formed the impression (based upon feedback from community members) that the particular issues related to women in the catchment and in relation to their participation in the project are not being properly addressed, despite initial consultations and efforts starting the project up. This shortcoming and attendant risk could be greatly reduced through an increased presence of the project's Gender Officer (from the Department of Gender) and the project's own Gender Specialist for gender and women<sup>68</sup> as well as operationalising the GRM. The 2023 PIR noted that the risks identified in the project's design SESP had not been updated.
151. Perhaps the most critical issue related to the project's M&E system is the lack of operational risks identified and systematically included and tracked in the Quantum risk register coupled with the weak executive and oversight function of the PSC to put in place plausible risk mitigation measures and then track and hold accountable risk owners through the PSC meetings. This has likely contributed to the "loss of a horseshoe nail" effect (see section 4.3.2) where issues such as the provisioning of transport cascade across the project's entire effectiveness and efficiency<sup>69</sup>.

#### 4.3.7 Stakeholder Engagement

152. The Sebakala project has a large and complex number of institutional stakeholders working across several different layers of government, making it somewhat unwieldy and significantly adding to the costs in terms of institutional participation. A very good stakeholder engagement plan with a gender component was prepared during the PPG<sup>70</sup> and was updated<sup>71</sup> in 2023 collecting considerable data on the five communities in the catchment area.
153. An important facet of stakeholder engagement is the ongoing decentralisation process in Lesotho (that started in 2005 followed by the 2014 Decentralisation policy) which replicates government institutional departments and agencies within the District Council. At the district-level, these different arms of government and the democratic governance structures (District Council, Community Councils, Community Watershed Teams, Grazing Associations, etc.) are critical to the stakeholder engagement in the project, to the sustainable management of the catchment and to the success of the Sebakala project.

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<sup>67</sup> Sebakala Project Inception Report, p. 9

<sup>68</sup> Currently the TA has only 2 days a month and their Contract expires in November 2024.

<sup>69</sup> For instance, the project frequently has to hire vehicles (the MTR was transported in Maseru and the project sites) in a privately hired vehicle. Not only does this increase the project's operational costs, but it also impacts on the timing of activities which in a project dealing with communities, ecology and agriculture, can be critical.

<sup>70</sup> GEF ID 10020/PIMS ID 6081: Sebakala IWM Project - Annex 4 Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

<sup>71</sup> COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE SEBAPALA SUB-CATCHMENT QUTHING, March 2023

154. The project activities are firmly embedded in these structures, certainly at the District and Community Council level, which is very encouraging. Arguably, the financial and material resources of the project are even strengthening the democracy at this level within the resource-strapped District Council by providing the focus and the means to carry out activities. However, this must be caveated with the recognition that much of the project's operation management and decision-making takes place in Maseru. The importance of these democratic structures, and their engagement with the community institutions, importance to the successful outcomes of the project; cannot be overstated and at the District-level there is a strong sense of ownership of activities and outcomes.
155. Prior to the Sebapala project the then Ministry of Water working in partnership with the EU, the Government of Germany and GIZ, had already embarked on an ambitious National Programme for Integrated Catchment Management (ICM). The then MFRSC also initiated a similar donor-financed intervention called the Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods (ROLL) project. ROLL's objective is to ensure that rural communities adopt transformational practices for regenerated landscapes and sustainable livelihoods. The duration of the ROLL project is eight years<sup>72</sup>. Both Sebapala and ROLL are using the same ICM approaches developed by the National ICM Programme (ReNoka). World Food Programme (WFP) with funding from the Adaptation Fund (AF) is also implementing a project called Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACOV). The project aims to improve the adaptive capacity of vulnerable people by addressing some of the barriers imposed by climate change on livelihoods in Lesotho. One of the IACOV project sites is in Quthing within the Tosing Community Council, where Sebapala project is also operational. There are regular (monthly) meetings between these different initiatives by the field officers and to some extent a pooling of resources through the District Project Implementation Team (DPIT)<sup>73</sup>.
156. The key point is that there is regular communication and sharing of resources and experiences at the field and district level under the national ICM programme, including sharing resources to reach hard to get to communities.
157. At the higher level, the PSC appears to have a strong stakeholder engagement in terms of representation. For instance, when it met on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 there were twelve Members, eight others in attendance, and two absent; twenty-two in total<sup>74</sup>. In June 2023, there were twelve Members, eight in attendance and one absent twenty-one in total<sup>75</sup>, in December 2023 there were fourteen Members and seven others in attendance; twenty-one in total<sup>76</sup>.
158. Therefore, there is considerable participation in the PSC (although it has only met three times). However, it is likely that this large membership, while allowing broad participation, reduces the oversight and executive function of the Committee and the MTR would argue that the broad institutional participation in the project should take place within the Technical Working Groups, and the PSC should function as a high-level executive and oversight/policy body. This decision-making function of the Committee is further reduced because, according to key informants' feedback, very often members deputise individuals to attend without the authority to make decisions.

#### 4.3.8 Gender and Cross-cutting Issues

159. The role and circumstances of women in the project were raised in the Project Document and the SESP at entry assessed as Moderate due to potential discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities and benefits from the project. A number of safeguards and mitigation measures were put in place including, the participation of the Department of Gender, a contracted Gender TA to develop a gender strategy and action plan. However, these need to be updated now.
160. Further, the MTR considers that the project has, on paper, very good technical support for women through the Department of Gender and the TA. However, this support needs to be operationalised. The Gender Officer from the Department is very capable but junior in rank and the TA Contract provides only 2 days a month and ends in November 2024. When coupled with the on-the-ground challenges and lack of transport this is insufficient.

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<sup>72</sup> ROLL project document

<sup>73</sup> IACOV project document

<sup>74</sup> PSC 1st Meeting, Draft Minutes 02/12/2022

<sup>75</sup> PSC 2nd Meeting, Draft Minutes 09/06/2022

<sup>76</sup> PSC 3rd Meeting, Draft Minutes 15/12/2022



The role of women in the catchment is critical to the success of the Sebapala project. It represents 50% of the population, there are gender-nuanced roles in natural resource management and women are disadvantaged, it is important for the success of the project, it is in line with government policy, it is a central objective of the UNDP programme and the SDGs; and it is the right thing to do.

161. The ICM approach puts local livelihoods in the forefront of sustainable catchment management. The project has engaged stakeholders through a voluntary approach on many of the catchment management activities such as brush clearance, etc. The MTR considers this a very appropriate project policy and notes that it is challenging approach, not in the least because there is a history of direct payments for participation by previous projects and even government interventions. This has created a culture of dependency which is hard to break. The project has had to compromise in many instances, for instance by providing food parcels to people working on brush clearance following the 2023 failed harvest and supplying tools to the teams. These are legitimate support actions by the project and the MTR raises the question of a unified approach between ICM projects, and rural development projects *per se*, to not provide direct cash payments for works benefitting communities and providing guidelines for when other support (e.g. transport, food parcels, tools, etc.) should be provided to enable activities to take place.
162. Given the high dependence upon soils, range and other ecosystem goods and services of the five Sebapala communities, the project has the potential to benefit these groups directly by improving range management and crop lands and building resilience into the system. An important aspect of this is building the social capital at the District and community levels and recognising this as a direct benefit to the communities and an important outcome of the project, even if it is not fully captured in the project's SRF. Strengthening these community management institutions and the working relationships between them and the formal government structures at the District level is something that is taking place at the catchment and District level. This process of the local communities taking control over their ecosystem goods and services is an important development because:  
*"Benefit is usually conceptualized in terms of financial revenue, and in unusual circumstances this can be substantial. Normally however natural resource production can only supplement inputs from agriculture and other modes of production, and it is important not to regard community participation in conservation as a panacea for rural poverty. Benefit should also be understood in non-pecuniary terms, and when economic benefit is linked with authority and responsibility large increments in social capital can result"*<sup>77</sup>.
163. This social capital, the sum of all the interactions at different levels – individual - community – council – district – is critical for the success of the project's objective. Arguably, the project lacks the resources to fundamentally shift the trajectory of the Sebapala catchment socio-ecosystem through direct actions on the land. The present trajectory can be characterised by environmental degradation and loss of ecosystem functions and services. This is unlikely using the project's resources alone to "repair" the damage or restore the constituent components of the ecosystem, to make it more resilient. In this instance, resilience should not be defined as the absence of challenges, but *"as the capacity of a system to undergo disturbance while maintaining both its existing functions and controls and its capacity for future change"*<sup>78</sup>.
164. However, the social capital, that is the ability of all the players to come together and develop adaptive solutions to collective action challenges as they arise, is a notable feature of this project with its internal intellectual strengths and district and community level support. This can be achieved within the project resources to a level where, having used the project to stand up within the remaining project lifetime, the stakeholders can walk the rest of the way considering that *"resilience is determined not only by a systems ability to buffer or absorb shocks, but also by its capacity for learning and self-organisation to adapt to change"*<sup>79</sup>.
165. This is arguably the projects main strength and can be its lasting impact as long as there is a focus of support and effort at the District level and within the catchment communities.
166. Linked to this resilience and social capital is the challenge of managing the entire catchment as a functionally efficient unit of management. This is more complex than a conventional community-based approach to development given that there are different tenurial regimes overlaying the land use and livelihood activities.

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<sup>77</sup> Community-based Conservation: Old Ways, New Myths and Enduring Challenges, Proceedings of the Conference on "African Wildlife Management in the New Millennium", Key address No. 3 "Community-Based Conservation – The New Myth?", Professor Marshall W. Murphree, CASS, Zimbabwe, Mweka, Tanzania, 13 – 15 December 2000

<sup>78</sup> Gunderson, L.H. (2000). Ecological resilience – in theory and application. Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics 31, 425-439.

<sup>79</sup> Gunderson, L.H. and Holling, C.S. Eds. (2002). Panarchy: Understanding transformations in human and natural systems. Washington, DC. Island Press.

For instance; rangelands are a common property whereas livestock are a private property. These common property systems are inherently vulnerable to external influences and internal disruptions. However, experience from the region has shown that they can be formalised and provide effective governance for sustainable natural resource management providing that<sup>80</sup>:

- Differential inputs result in differential benefits – this tension is seen in the brush clearance for instance where those involved in clearing the brush complain that others are benefiting by grazing on the newly recovered pastures.
- There must be a positive correlation between quality of management and the magnitude of benefit. The differential input requiring differential benefit involves not only the assets and costs mentioned above, it also incorporates management costs, both quantitative and qualitative. A fundamental policy objective is to provide the motivation for good management; thus, policy should ensure that good management pays. Failure to encourage and reward good management will result in “mining” of the resource for short-term gain.
- The unit of proprietorship should be the unit of production, management and benefit. This means that the unit of decision-making must also be the same as the unit that manages and benefits. This component is fundamental to any sustainable resource management regime. However, it is recognised that due to issues of scale and the mobile nature and temporal and spatial boundaries of many natural resources, mechanisms that allow for collective management decisions need to be used. These mechanisms generally exist within the community and need to be identified.
- The unit for collective management should be as small as practicable and functionally efficient within ecological and socio-political constraints. From a social dynamic’s perspective scale is an important consideration; large-scale externally imposed structures tend to be ineffective, increasing the potential for corruption, evasion of responsibility and lethargy in respect of broad participation. Where collective management structures are based on existing collective management structures and are at a scale that ensures regular contact of the members, it becomes possible to enforce conformity to rules through peer pressure and control individual actions through collective sanction.

167. It is likely that many of these components already exist within the catchment and it is just a matter of organising them in such a way that they can function effectively.

#### 4.3.9 Reporting

168. The project produced a good quality Inception Report including recommendations to add some fine-grained indicators to the SRF which would measure impact at the ecosystem level, however, these were not followed up. It did not identify the weakness in the project’s risk monitoring with particular attention to the operational risks, however, this was picked up and flagged by the RTA in the 2023 PIR, but again, it does not appear to have been followed up in Quantum, although the MTR has not seen the 2024 PIR because it is due in late June.

169. The PMU is following up with Quarterly reports in 2023 (3) and one Annual report (December 2023). The Minutes of Meetings from the PSC provide little insight to the project and its challenges.

170. The project reporting does not provide the sense of urgency necessary to complete the outputs and achieve the outcomes in time. There is not an adequate reporting pathway between field activities, PMU and PSC and UNDP CO which identifies issues at an early stage, translates them into actionable activities, assigns appropriate ownership and provides a timebound project solution. Elements of this are present in the project and the PMU, but it needs to be made more effective and efficient<sup>81</sup>.

171. Otherwise, the reporting is largely realistic in terms of ratings, except that it does not seem to convey the necessary urgency to get the project completed within time.

#### 4.3.10 Communications

172. The MTR found that there is a good understanding of the project and its purpose at all levels, community, District, Ministry, etc. The awareness raising and training has had a considerable impact in this area with community members displaying an understanding of the purpose of the project as well as the interventions in areas such as wetland and pasture rehabilitation.

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<sup>80</sup> Adapted from: Principles for developing a sustainable use system (adapted from Murphree, M. J., Wildlife Division Support Project, CREMA Review Report No. 56. Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, Ghana and IUCN. October 2005)

<sup>81</sup> The MTR cites the delays in, *inter alia*: delays in engaging TA, lateness in paying for goods and services, transport challenges in the project area, the project vehicle....

173. The use of study tours has proved to be a very effective means of communicating complex messages to community stakeholders.
174. The project has not yet generated sufficient knowledge to produce any meaningful knowledge products, however, it is quite possible that by the close of the project the project would have generated significant experience.
175. On this matter, it is important that the project uses its M&E capacities to design robust monitoring programmes to measure the impact of the measures introduced through, for instance, the range/ pasture management and the climate-smart agriculture. Some robust measurements of baselines and features such as soil organic carbon, species diversity, etc. Some of these variables were suggested during the Inception Workshop<sup>82</sup>.

#### 4.4 Sustainability

Table 17 MTR Rating for Sustainability

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Sustainability	ML	The project results are all considered moderately sustainable in terms of the financial, socio-economic, institutional framework and governance and environmental criteria. However, risk monitoring within the project needs to be strengthened with more attention to the SESP. The project outcomes are firmly embedded at the District and community (Councils) level, improving soils and pastures will build resilience into the livelihoods of local communities and reduce their risks, environmentally the improved pasture management, wetland protection and providing that the climate-smart agricultural interventions are of good quality the outcomes are environmentally sustainable. The MTR is most concerned about the financial sustainability. The shortfall in co-financing commitments and the apparent lack of resources at the District level suggests that overall there is a high dependence on external project financing for anything other than the core activities of local government.

176. Sustainability is assessed based on the following four criteria: financial risks to sustainability, socio-economic sustainability, institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability and environmental risks to sustainability.

##### 4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

177. **Moderately Likely.** There are quite severe constraints on spending<sup>83</sup> at the District level which will need to continue the support to the five Sebapala catchment communities within TCC. The logistical challenge is considerable and arguably the District budgets would struggle to provide the type of coverage necessary to maintain the management capacities at the community level after the close of the project. Therefore, it is critical that the project ensures that it focuses its operational activities and investments at this level to provide the strongest basis for these works to continue after the project-financed activities end.

##### 4.4.2 Socio-economic sustainability

178. **Moderately Likely.** The project interventions should increase resilience in crop lands and pastures. There are questions regarding brush clearance and its efficacy as improving pastures in the longer term because the rangelands are essentially being held in a successional stage and ecologically they will naturally revert to brushland without burning. Brush clearance is an expensive way of maintaining rangelands/ pastures and whether this is economic needs to be investigated.

179. However, overall, as long as the project seeks to internalise the costs and benefits at the level of the catchment it is reasonable to assume that, given the project's ability to build social capital, including the Community Councils, and strengthen the role of District services, there is a reasonable chance of socio-economic sustainability.

##### 4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks

180. **Moderately Likely.** As with socio-economic sustainability, the NIM approach has distinct advantages at the District level with clear ownership of project activities and the process itself is internally building capacities for management, M&E and problem-solving. The MTR raises the issue of moving the operational aspects to the

<sup>82</sup> Sebapala project Inception Report, p. 9

<sup>83</sup> For instance, the poor delivery of co-financing estimated as 14.19% delivery at midterm.

District level (Quthing) to strengthen this process and support not just the District Council but also the Community Council, Village Catchment Teams, Grazing Associations, etc. The MTR reiterates that this is not efficiently done by having the main focus of the PMU based in Maseru.

#### 4.4.4 Environmental sustainability

181. Likely. The project strategy is grounded in solid scientific and technical principles and has clearly had a very high level of technical input into the ecosystem process aspect of the catchment. The proposed interventions are sound in that they should address the drivers of soil loss and other environmental degradation and the focus on livelihoods provides a strong motivation for communities to continue many of these practices by internalising them in their livelihood strategies. Arguably, an important aspect of the Project Document (and also seen in the early reports on the Grazing Associations and indigenous seed collection) is the experimental management approach. Strengthening this in the second half of the project through the CTA and possible inclusion of academic institutions can only increase the likelihood of environmental sustainability as well as building in a culture of learning and adapting with interventions such as Holistic Land and Livestock Management (HLLM), High-Density Overnight Kraaling (HDOK) and High-Density Grazing (HDG).

#### 4.4.5 Risk management

182. The project has all the elements (Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, TA, etc.) in place but it needs to be resourced sufficiently so that it can be effective in the field. The PMU should update the SESP and review the GRM. According to feedback from key informants, the first point of call at the community level is through the newly appointed Community Supervisors. While the MTR found no issues relating to this there should be a more direct line to an impartial arbitrator.

183. The project's risk log in Quantum should be revised and the operational risks should be included and mitigation measures proposed. These should be discussed at a high level in the PSC so that everyone is aware of the risks and likely mitigation measures.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Strategic conclusions

184. The Sebapala project design provides a technically sound and progressive strategy well embedded in the national policy framework and priorities, a number of regional water agreements, the UNDP CP and the specific challenges of the Sebapala catchment. It is well-aligned with the GEF LDN programme taking a whole-system approach to land and water management in the Sebapala catchment.

185. The technically progressive approaches described in the project document and the training and capacity building taking place make this a project of particular interest and the NIM at the District level has particular advantages by embedding environmental governance within the structures of local government.

186. In particular the integration of the project objectives into the larger national ICM programme and the on-the-ground interventions being based in previous experience have made a significant contribution to the project even with the delays experienced.

187. However, the project design was under-resourced given the logistical challenges of the catchment area and overly-optimistic regarding what can be achieved in a four-year timeframe.

188. The project's SRF provides a very reasonable M&E framework for monitoring project progress and impact. The SRF includes that GEF LD1 Core Indicators at the objective level and uses the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard to measure changes in the overall catchment governance although this may not be sufficient to capture the impacts at a community level with regards to building a framework supportive of common pool resources, however, the SRF is sufficient for its purposes<sup>84</sup>.

### 5.2 Implementation conclusions

189. The project has experienced some significant delays partly due to external events (e.g. national elections in 2022) but also due to internal weaknesses in the project's management structure and decision-making apparatus. These weaknesses are exacerbated by the absence of operational risks in the Project Document which identifies risks correctly through the SESP but does not include operational risks. This was identified in the 2023 PIR, however, it is still relevant one year later at the MTR.

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<sup>84</sup> In the experience of the MTR GEF SRFs are generally of poor quality considering that they are the primary M&E tool. This is not surprising given that these projects are highly complex in nature. The Sebapala project SRF is actually of remarkably good quality.

190. The risk identification – decision-making – mitigation action pathways are therefore slow. In part due to the lack of operational risk identification but also, due to the project’s decision-making architecture. The PSC is large and unwieldy and lacks efficiency and effectiveness as a project executive. The large number of institutional stakeholders is an unavoidable feature of the Sebapala project. However, for the project to function efficiently it requires rapid decision-making. While the PSC does serve a broad participation function the MTR argues that its executive and oversight role is more important. Therefore, participation can be achieved through the Technical Working Groups and on the PSC as through *ex officio* Members, but there needs to be a smaller, high-level, (five would be a reasonable number) defined Quorum to form an Executive as well as an improvement in the management of PSC meetings to speed the rate of delivery.
191. The MTR argues that the focus of operational management of the Sebapala project should be based in Quthing District and the catchment itself. Currently the PMU sits in the MEF in Maseru. The MTR accepts that there is a need for a high-level (Project manager) presence in Maseru for liaison with the multiplicity of other institutional partners and ongoing projects. However, the bulk of the operations, with significant decision-making powers on day to day activities (and the resources to support these) needs to be shifted to Quthing.

#### 5.2.1 Rate of implementation

192. The “rate of delivery” is the technical euphemism for the speed at which the project is moving. The Sebapala project, based on the observations and findings of the MTR, is capable of delivering project outputs in line with the outcomes with considerable speed once the resources are made available at the District and community levels. However, there appears to be some considerable chokepoints in making these resources available. Speed is of the very essence in this project not least because it is fitting agrarian and ecological cycles into the wholly arbitrary four-year project cycle. Four years is perhaps a long time when measured in days, but it is only 4 growing seasons and if one of those is lost due to a delay of a few days, then due to a delay of a tiny fraction of the project’s time as measured in days; one growing season may be lost measuring 25% of the projects opportunities to interact with beneficiaries and stakeholders.
193. These tiny delays equate to decisions not been made at the PSC in a timely fashion, late deployment of TA, insufficient transport in the field, small but incremental procurement delays, late payments for Contractors, services and TA, etc. All perhaps small in their own right, but incrementally significant on the project’s progress and impact.

#### 5.3 Budget & Co-financing

194. Budget execution has been slow. Based on the June 2023 PIR the cumulative delivery against the approved amount in the Project Document was 6.98%<sup>85</sup> and against the expected delivery for that year it was 14.19% with a cumulative disbursement of \$ 146,627 (30th June)<sup>86</sup>.
195. Unless there is an increased rate of delivery there is a high risk that the project will end with a substantial amount of unspent funds.
196. It is important that the project’s resources are expended in the project area as much as possible. Some of the budgeted items while loosely within the GEF LD Programme envelope are not directly related to the projects stated outcomes and objective<sup>87</sup> and therefore reflect a lack of efficiency and effectiveness in budget execution. Similarly, the project vehicle purchased in early 2024 which has not been registered and licensed is arguably not an efficient budget expenditure because it is not effective if it is not on the road and in the project area.

#### 5.4 Gender & crosscutting issues

197. The role of women in the project area is critical to the outcomes of the Sebapala project, not least because they represent 50% of the constituents but as the project’s SESP points out, they are less able to influence decision-making and very often disadvantaged for a number of systemic reasons. Furthermore, women play an important role in the management of ecosystem resources and in rural circumstances women often have a high dependency on these services and other natural resources for their livelihood security and its sustainable management is of real and practical concern to them.

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<sup>85</sup> 2023 PIR (June)

<sup>86</sup> To date, figures provided by UNDP show a total disbursement for 2022 of US\$ 75,606, 2023 of US\$ 317,539 and 2024 of US\$ 195,673 giving a total GEF Fund disbursement of US\$ 588,819 at June 2024 equating to a budget expenditure of 24.68%. At the MTR (June 2024) the reported co-financing for the period July 2023 to March 2024 was US\$ 181,60886. This would make a cumulative total (with the 6% reported in June 2023) to March 2024 (approximately 46% of the way through the project) of US\$ 373,608 or 11.67%.

<sup>87</sup> For example, attending the UNCCD COP in Saudi Arabia.

198. Government of Lesotho policy supports the empowerment of women, it is core to the UNDP values and mission, enshrined within the GEF LD programme values and a core principle of the SDGs.
199. The project has considerable intellectual assets and has already shown that it can deliver good quality interventions supporting women. However, this is not enough and the project needs to ensure that these assets are deployed (with sufficient time available) and properly resourced in the field to provide consistent support to women participating in the project.
200. The project's strategy is technically very good. However, the sustainable management of the Sebapala Catchment necessitates an understanding of the different resource tenurial regimes that are at play in the area. Arguably, inequalities and inefficiencies within these regimes are an important driver of the unsustainable land use practices. Resolving these conflicts and building the social capital within the communities to collectively make decisions and resolve conflicts regarding common pool resources is challenging (see section 4.3.6). The project is part of the way there and no doubt with more time would be able to find solutions which create the right conditions and internalise authority and responsibility within the local communities as functionally efficient units of catchment management. The problem is that the project does not have more time and will end in 2026. However, such experience does exist in the region, in particular with regards to Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and wildlife resources and this experience (having already learned from their own mistakes) would benefit the project by fast tracking the process.

#### 5.5 Overall conclusions

201. The Sebapala project has a number of things to recommend it. A strong and progressive project design, considerable intellectual resources, alignment with the overall policy framework as well being a part a larger government and donor-funded suite of projects addressing water issues through ICM.
202. Internally it has a number of strengths including well-trained and motivated officers and very good TA. At the District level it has an element of enthusiasm and energy, which is not always matched by the flow of resources to this level.
203. At the catchment level it is having an impact despite considerable delays and the challenges, especially logistical challenges at this level. However, interactions with the community at this level must be based upon regular contact to build the relationships based on mutual trust in order to jointly solve problems and mitigate associated with new approaches. Currently, at the MTR, the project doesn't have this type of presence in the field due to the slow disposition of resources, especially logistical resources.
204. Weaknesses within the project management, in particular the efficiency of procurement processes, but also the speed at which risks are identified, decisions made and actions to mitigate are put in place are too slow to meet the restricted timeframe of the project and to respond to systemic timeframes (e.g. seasonal aspect, etc.).
205. The logistical challenges presented by the project area are considerable; even if the resources at the project's disposal were effectively and efficiently deployed, which presently they are not.
206. Currently this is not happening and issues such as procurement procedural details take priority over project activities which are timebound and sequential in nature causing delays to accumulate and compound within the project cycle.
207. PSC meetings are attended by a larger number of project partners, sometimes delegated and attending without necessarily having decision-making powers. Agendas are not always circulated, decisions are not followed up or allocated to specific parties in a way that demonstrates the PSC's executive function. The project's decision-making has to be accelerated with decisions turned into adequately and timely resourced actions. The PSC is the project's principle decision-making structure and needs to be made more effective in addressing the challenges faced by the project.
208. The focus of the project's operations needs to be decentralised to the District level with tactical decisions made in the field. Resources need to be deployed in a timely manner and to where they are really needed.
209. Despite its many strengths and significant achievements to date, if the project continues without revision and without addressing these challenges it is unlikely to deliver the anticipated outcomes and achieve the objective by the close of the GEF fund. The MTR proposes a number of mainly strategic recommendations in order to address these weaknesses and build upon the project's achievements and strengths.

## 5.6 Recommendations

Table 18 Recommendations

Rec #	MTR Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Project implementation		
A.1	<p>Restructure the PSC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PSC should consist of a seven-member executive made up of Principal Secretary (PS) MEF, UNDP (Resident Representative [RR] or Deputy RR [DRR]), Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ministry of Agriculture (MA), District Council (DC), Community Council (CC) and the GEF Focal Point.</li> <li>A quorum shall consist of the five executive members.</li> <li>All other project partners to be <i>ex officio</i> members in a non-executive (voting) capacity.</li> <li>The PSC should meet quarterly and the Executive Committee as needed by special request.</li> <li>The project PM to continue as the Secretary to the PSC.</li> <li>All members to submit agendas to the Secretary six weeks prior to the next meeting.</li> <li>The Secretary (PM) to circulate the last Minutes of Meeting and Agenda for the next meeting two weeks before the meeting date.</li> <li>Executive Members should submit a delegation note to the Secretary one week before the next meeting indicating their delegated voting powers.</li> <li>An extraordinary <i>ad hoc</i> meeting can be called by the PS MEF and UNDP as necessary and at short notice.</li> </ul>	PS MEF & UNDP CO.	Immediate
A.2	MEF and UNDP to move to a supported NIM – the PS MEF and UNDP to agree on project implementation roles to be supported by UNDP. Critically the procurement role should be supported by the UNDP CO.	RTA, PS MEF UNDP CO	Immediate
B	Category 2: Operational		
B.1	Move the operational activities to the District level in Quthing. Office space should be provided and the project should equip the office.	PS MEF	Next Quarter
B.2	Appoint a substantive Operational Manager to be permanently based in Quthing to drive the project activities in the catchment area	MEF	Immediate
B.3	Register and insure the new project vehicle which is currently off the road in Maseru and station it in Quthing. The vehicle contributes nothing to the project if it is not in use and therefore it cannot be considered as satisfactory budget expenditure until it is in use.	PS	With immediate effect. UNDP CO
B.3	<p>The project should resolve the logistical challenges by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that there is sufficient transport available for field work.</li> <li>Consider purchasing/ acquiring a second vehicle to be based in Quthing.</li> </ul> <p>Logistics are a particular feature of this project and successful engagement with local communities and implementation of field activities is dependent upon transport<sup>88</sup>.</p>	PMU, MA & MENR	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024

<sup>88</sup> This could be preceded by a rapid assessment of how much the project is currently spending on vehicle hire.

C			
Category 3: Financial			
C.1	The PMU should issue a standard template to all project partners to record co-financing on a monthly basis against the item or activity. PMU to collate and include it in Quarterly Reports.	Project Partners	Quarterly
C.2	<p>Review the remaining budget against the Acceleration Plan and remaining commitments to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary requirements of the Management Response to the MTR.</li> <li>• Prepare a brief financial report with forecast cost implications to May 2026.</li> <li>• PMU to present findings with likely scenarios to the PSC Executive.</li> <li>• Focus on strategies to accelerate delivery (e.g. more effective PSC, streamlined procurement, etc.)</li> <li>• End of Year 3 The project carries out a thorough assessment of the remaining budgetary commitments until May 2026 with a view to requesting an extension of at least one year in order to complete the project activities due to the likelihood of unspent funds at the predicted close of the project and to allow more time to engage with communities including a feasibility study of the extended costs of an extension.</li> </ul> <p>According to the Project Document<sup>89</sup> a no-cost extension can be granted not exceeding six months. The MTR recommends at least one year to accommodate growing seasons and ecological cycles.</p>	MEFT & assisted by UNDP CO	Immediate Extension decision – end YR3
C.3	All expenditures to be directly aligned with the project strategy and achieving agreed outputs and outcomes in the project area. The project can achieve good results, but it will have to work very efficiently and effectively to do so. It will be necessary to ensure that all project resources are focused in the Sebapala catchment and directly contribute to a project Output.	MEFT & UNDP	Quarter 3 2024
C.4	In light of the expenditure on COP participation, the CO should undertake a financial spot check as an interim measure to mitigate potential risks.	UNDP CO	Immediate
D			
Category 4: Technical			
D.1	<p>Strengthen the project’s support to women in the project area by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of days per month available for the Gender Consultant/Specialist and extending the length of the Contract to run until the close of the project.</li> <li>• UNDP providing mentoring support and sharing resources with the Gender Officer from the Department of Gender.</li> <li>• Updating the project’s gender strategy and action.</li> <li>• Document agreed arrangement between the project and Department of Gender regarding the Gender Officer.</li> <li>• Gender Consultant/Specialist and project Gender Officer to produce a lessons learned knowledge product specifically documenting the issues of ecosystem management and the role of women in Quarter 4 2026.</li> </ul>	MEFT, Department of Gender, UNDP CO	Quarter 2 2024

<sup>89</sup> Project Document, p. 62: “all extensions incur costs and the GEF project budget cannot be increased. A single extension may be granted on an exceptional basis and only if the following conditions are met: one extension only for a project for a maximum of six months; the project management costs during the extension period must remain within the originally approved amount, and any increase in PMC costs will be covered by non-GEF resources; the UNDP Country Office oversight costs in excess of the CO’s Agency fee specified in the DOA during the extension period must be covered by non-GEF resources”.



D.2	Review the GRM in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of the newly appointed Community Supervisors.</li> <li>• Ensure that there are clear and direct grievance reporting pathways and that these are widely understood at all levels within the project.</li> </ul>	MEFT	Immediate
D.3	Review the upcoming climate smart activities and ensure that there is sufficient TA to ensure that any project-funded activities are innovative, ecologically sustainable and that there is expert M&E of the economic viability as well as the climate resilience benefits. An important aspect of this should be the collaboration between farmer, agronomist and scientist. Linkages with national Universities would be ideal	MEFT	Quarter 3 2024
D.4	Engage a TA to assist at the community District and community level to develop the functional efficiency of CBNRM, in particular to ensure that the VWT plans and overall Catchment Plan meets the criteria that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The costs do not exceed the benefits of catchment management at the individual and community level</li> <li>• Differential inputs result in differential benefits.</li> <li>• There must be a positive correlation between quality of management and the magnitude of benefit.</li> <li>• The unit of proprietorship should be the unit of production, management and benefit</li> <li>• The unit for collective management should be as small as practicable and functionally efficient within ecological and socio-political constraints.</li> </ul>	MEFT	Quarter 4 2024

### 5.6 Lessons Learned

210. **The PSC should be the project executive as well as the oversight body.** The PSC will struggle if it is intended to be both the primary stakeholder participation forum and the project's executive and oversight body. The PSC does serve a very high-level participatory function, but this should not be so inclusive that it diminishes its executive and oversight role. Clear rules and a protocol should be worked out in advance and the running of the PSC should be delegated to a high-level Secretary, normally the PM. Stakeholders can be invited to submit agenda items ahead of meeting and these should only be discussed if they are included on the agenda for the meeting. All those attending the meeting in an executive role should be prepared to make decisions based on the agenda points circulated ahead of the meeting. Broader participation by other project partners is possible and even desirable, but this should not distract from the decision-making responsibilities. Broader participation is best achieved at lower level bodies than the PSC, such as the TWC or DPIT.

211. **Considerable and real progress can occur when project resources get down to the local level.** In this instance to the District and Community Councils. Obviously, this depends on the capacities at this level, but when there are sufficient and committed human resources at this level the project's resources are used to very good effect. There is a high level of commitment, energy and accountability at this level which makes for very efficient resources use.

212. **When working with communities and natural resources management there should be a disproportionate allocation of resources to supporting women in the community.** Women will under normal conditions constitute 50% of the population. Women play an important role in the management of ecosystem resources and in rural circumstances women often have a high dependency on these services and other natural resources for their livelihood security and its sustainable management is of real and practical concern to them. However, they are less able to influence decision-making and very often disadvantaged for a number of systemic reasons. Therefore, a disproportionate allocation of resources and effort is necessary simply to create a level playing field even before specific land use improvement activities can begin.

213. While natural resource/ land degradation can provide a focus to interact with women on inequalities, it is important to not just consider the position and circumstances of women through this lens alone and a project will, by necessity and because it is the right thing to do, also address the day to day inequalities which women face all the time.

## Annexes

### Annex 1 MTR Terms of Reference

#### Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference

##### Standard Template 1: Formatted for attachment to UNDP Procurement Website

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Midterm Review (MTR) of the *full-sized* UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled **Integrated Watershed Management for improved agro-pastoral livelihoods in the Sebapala sub-catchment (PIMS # 6081)** implemented through the *Implementing Partner* Ministry of Environment and Forestry, which is to be undertaken in 2024. The project started on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and is in its *second* year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* [TS \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org).

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project was designed to establish the enabling environment for overcoming the narrowly-focused, sectoral approaches to natural resource management that currently prevail. Working at watershed, sub-catchment and lower levels, the project will apply the guidelines and institutional model established through the National Integrated Catchment Management Programme to enhance multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder collaboration and integrated management of land and water resources.

The **objective** of the project is to mainstream sustainable rangeland management and restoration of watersheds to combat land degradation, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve the livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities. The project is structured under **three components**: (i) Institutional capacity at national and local levels for integrated watershed management (IWM); (ii) Integrated watershed management practices in the Sebapala Watershed; and (iii) Gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and M&E.

The **four project outcomes**, which will be delivered via four impact pathways, are: a) An Integrated Watershed Management Plan with community action plans facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices in the Sebapala River Watershed (covering 121,996); b) District-level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions are capacitated to implement IWM plans and to enforce regulations to prevent land and ecosystem degradation; c) Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM) are effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sebapala Watershed (with pilot sites in the 52,388 ha Sebapala Sub-catchment), with ecosystem and livelihood benefits; and (d) Lessons learnt through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&E promote integrated watershed management in the wider Sebapala Watershed, and nationally. The project will deliver its outcomes through a structured, highly-participatory and gender-responsive process that balances consideration of ecological, social and economic parameters, and establishes the conditions for sustainability and upscaling. The project will be executed by the Ministry of Forestry, Rangeland and Soil Conservation (MFRSC), working in close collaboration with departments in other line ministries, their district counterparts, partners in the development community and civil society, and with full participation of communities. It will be implemented over four years, with a GEF investment of \$2,101,826 and co-finance from government and UNDP \$3,400,000.

**Project strategy** is centred on an Integrated Catchment Management approach to put in place plans, systems and capacities to catalyze and sustain the integrated landscape management practices required to shift the Sebapala Watershed and Sub-catchment towards land degradation neutrality. Under this approach, stable institutional arrangements for watershed-governance will be put in place, and stakeholders will be equipped to identify, interpret, address and manage drivers of landscape degradation in their watershed, through adaptive application of sustainable land and water resource management measures and effective knowledge-sharing.

#### Project budget and planned co-financing

Source	Amount Year 1	Amount Year 2	Amount Year 3	Amount Year 4	Total
GEF	332,864	700,125	669,275	399,562	2,101,826
Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	500,000
Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation	625,000	625,000	625,000	625,000	2,500,000

MLCGA - District Council Secretary- Quthing	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	200,000
UNDP	83,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	200,000
TOTAL	1,215,864	1,539,125	1,508,275	1,238,562	5,501,826

**Project Governance and Management Arrangements**

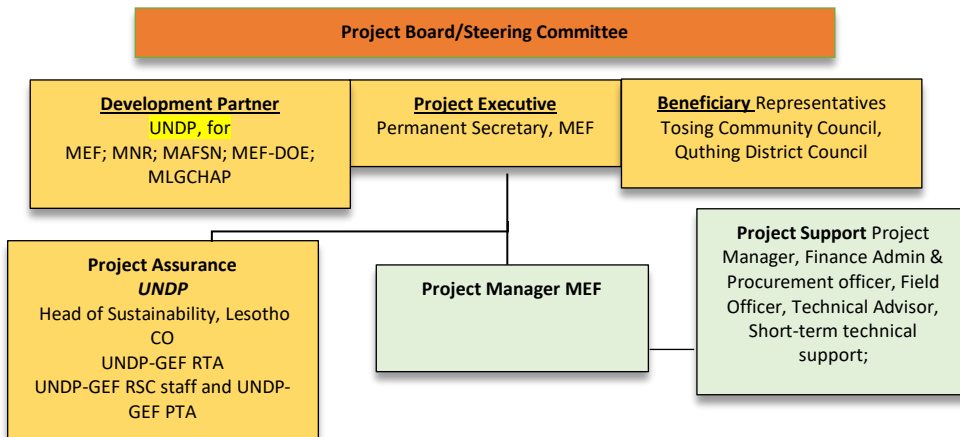
- The Implementing Partner responsible for executing this project is the Ministry of Environment and Forestry with specific tasks including the following:
  - Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
  - Risk management as outlined in this Project Document;
  - Procurement of goods and services, including human resources;
  - Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets;
  - Approving and signing the multiyear workplan;
  - Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
  - Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

**Project organisation structure**

The Implementing Partner is the entity to which the UNDP Administrator has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance specified in this signed project document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in this document. The project is implemented in very close collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (output 3.2 and 3.4), Ministry of Natural Resources (Outcome 1) and the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police(Output 2.2). Engagement of these institutions is guided by the signed project document.

- The Project Board (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP’s ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. In case consensus cannot be reached within the Board, the UNDP Resident Representative (or their designate) will mediate to find consensus and, if this cannot be found, will take the final decision to ensure project implementation is not unduly delayed.

UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is responsible for the Project Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee.



**3. MTR PURPOSE**

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document; and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability. MTRs are mandatory requirement for all GEF-financed full-sized projects as they are used as monitoring tools to identify challenges and outline corrective measures that will ensure project implementation is on track towards achievement of expected results by their completion. as it serves as monitoring tool for assessing progress towards expected results. The MTR report must be submitted to GEF secretariat with the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Project Implementation Review (PIR).

#### 4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach<sup>90</sup> ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to *Sebapala area, in Quthing district*, including the following project sites *Sebapala upper catchment*.

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

The final methodological approach including interview schedule for structured interviews field visits for observations and focus group discussions to collect data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

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

#### 5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

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

##### i. Project Strategy

###### Project design:

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

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<sup>90</sup> For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

- Were relevant gender and LNOB issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women and other vulnerable groups, engaging women and other vulnerable groups in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

**Results Framework/Logframe:**

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

**ii. Progress Towards Results**

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator <sup>91</sup>	Baseline Level <sup>92</sup>	Level in 1 <sup>st</sup> PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target <sup>93</sup>	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment <sup>94</sup>	Achievement Rating <sup>95</sup>	Justification for Rating
<b>Objective:</b>	Indicator (if applicable):							
<b>Outcome 1:</b>	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
<b>Outcome 2:</b>	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
<b>Etc.</b>								

**Indicator Assessment Key**

Green= Achieved      Yellow= On target to be achieved      Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

**iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.

<sup>91</sup> Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards  
<sup>92</sup> Populate with data from the Project Document  
<sup>93</sup> If available  
<sup>94</sup> Colour code this column only  
<sup>95</sup> Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project’s results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

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

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
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**TOTAL**

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

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

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

Stakeholder Engagement:

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

#### Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
  - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
  - The identified types of risks<sup>96</sup> (in the SESP).
  - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

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

#### Reporting:

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

#### Communications & Knowledge Management:

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

#### **iv. Sustainability**

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

#### Financial risks to sustainability:

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

#### Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

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<sup>96</sup> Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

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

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

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

**Ratings**

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

*Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Project Title)*

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

**6. TIMEFRAME**

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 31 working days over a time period of 9 of weeks, and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	4 days	14 March 2024
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	12 days	27 March – 11April 2024
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 day	12 April 2024
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	10 days	15 – 26 April 2024
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	2 days	1 – 2 May 2024

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

**7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES**

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	<b>MTR Inception Report</b>	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management



<b>2 Presentation</b>	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
<b>3 Draft MTR Report</b>	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
<b>4 Final Report*</b>	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

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

## 8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

## 9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions and globally) and one team expert, from the Kingdom of Lesotho. The team leader will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the MTR report, etc.) The team expert will assess emerging trends with respect to regulatory frameworks, budget allocations, capacity building, work with the Project Team in developing the MTR itinerary, etc.)

The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

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

### Education

- A master's degree in environmental management or other closely related field (10%)

### Experience

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies (10%);
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios (10%);
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to *GEF 6 Land Degradation Focal Area* (15%);
- Experience in evaluating projects (10%);
- Experience working in *Africa* (5%);
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years (10%);
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and *GEF 6 Land Degradation Focal Area*; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis (5%).
- Excellent communication skills (5%);
- Demonstrable analytical skills (10%);
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset (5%).

### Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English (5%).

## 10. ETHICS

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The MTR team must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and

confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

## 11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%<sup>97</sup>:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR ToR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed

## 12. APPLICATION PROCESS<sup>98</sup>

### Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#)<sup>99</sup> provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** ([P11 form](#)<sup>100</sup>);
- c) **Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest template](#). If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

All application materials should be submitted to the address ([fill address](#)) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference “Consultant for **Integrated Watershed Management for improved agro-pastoral livelihoods in the Sebapala sub-catchment** Midterm Review” or by email at the following address ONLY: ([fill email](#)) by ([time and date](#)). Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

**Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal:** Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

### ToR ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team

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)

<sup>97</sup> The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit’s senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

[https://popp.undp.org/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP\\_POPP\\_DOCUMENT\\_LIBRARY/Public/PSU\\_Individual%20Contract\\_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default](https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default)

<sup>98</sup> Engagement of the consultants should be done in line with guidelines for hiring consultants in the POPP: <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx>

<sup>99</sup> <https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/psa/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

<sup>100</sup> [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11\\_Personal\\_history\\_form.doc](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc)

7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8. Audit reports
9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm (*fill in specific TTs for this project's focal area*)
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team

The following documents will also be available:

13. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
14. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
15. Minutes of the **Integrated Watershed Management for improved agro-pastoral livelihoods in the Sebapala sub-catchment (PIMS # 6081)** Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
16. Project site location maps
17. Any additional documents, as relevant.

**ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report<sup>101</sup>**

- i. Basic Report Information (*for opening page or title page*)
  - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
  - UNDP PIMS# and GEF project ID#
  - MTR time frame and date of MTR report
  - Region and countries included in the project
  - GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program
  - Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners
  - MTR team members
  - Acknowledgements
- ii. Table of Contents
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations
1. Executive Summary (*3-5 pages*)
  - Project Information Table
  - Project Description (brief)
  - Project Progress Summary (between 200-500 words)
  - MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table
  - Concise summary of conclusions
  - Recommendation Summary Table
2. Introduction (*2-3 pages*)
  - Purpose of the MTR and objectives
  - Scope & Methodology: principles of design and execution of the MTR, MTR approach and data collection methods, limitations to the MTR
  - Structure of the MTR report
3. Project Description and Background Context (*3-5 pages*)
  - Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope
  - Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted
  - Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites (if any)
  - Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.
  - Project timing and milestones
  - Main stakeholders: summary list
4. Findings (*12-14 pages*)
  - 4.1 Project Strategy
    - Project Design
    - Results Framework/Logframe
  - 4.2 Progress Towards Results
    - Progress towards outcomes analysis
    - Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective
  - 4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
    - Management Arrangements
    - Work planning
    - Finance and co-finance
    - Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

<sup>101</sup> The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

- Stakeholder engagement
  - Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
  - Reporting
  - Communications & Knowledge Management
- 4.4 Sustainability
- Financial risks to sustainability
  - Socio-economic to sustainability
  - Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
  - Environmental risks to sustainability
5. Conclusions and Recommendations (4-6 pages)
- 5.1 Conclusions
- Comprehensive and balanced statements (that are evidence-based and connected to the MTR’s findings) which highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project
- 5.2 Recommendations
- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
  - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
  - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
6. Annexes
- MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
  - MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)
  - Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection
  - Ratings Scales
  - MTR mission itinerary
  - List of persons interviewed
  - List of documents reviewed
  - Co-financing table (if not previously included in the body of the report)
  - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form
  - Signed MTR final report clearance form
  - *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
  - *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.*) or *Core Indicators*
  - *Annexed in a separate file:* *GEF Co-financing template (categorizing co-financing amounts by source as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditure’)*

**ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template**

*(Draft questions to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit with support from the Project Team)*

This Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix must be fully completed/amended by the consultant and included in the MTR inception report and as an Annex to the MTR report.

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?</b> (include evaluative question(s))	(i.e. relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc.)	(i.e. project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.)	(i.e. document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.)
<b>Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?</b>			
<b>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project’s implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?</b>			
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			

**ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants<sup>102</sup>**

**Evaluators/Consultants:**

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

**MTR Consultant Agreement Form**

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

Name of Consultant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ (Place) on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings**

<b>Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)</b>	
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.
<b>Ratings for Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)</b>	
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”.

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

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

**Ratings for Sustainability:** (one overall rating)

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

**ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form**

*(to be completed and signed by the Commissioning Unit and RTA and included in the final document)*

<b>Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:</b>	
<b>Commissioning Unit (M&amp;E Focal Point)</b>	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
<b>Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)</b>	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____

#### ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template

*Note:* The following is a template for the MTR Team to show how the received comments on the draft MTR report have (or have not) been incorporated into the final MTR report. This audit trail should be included as an annex in the final MTR report.

**To the comments received on (date) from the Midterm Review of (project name) (UNDP Project ID-PIMS #)**

*The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Midterm Review report; they are referenced by institution ("Author" column) and not by the person's name, and track change comment number ("#" column):*

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft MTR report	MTR team response and actions taken
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Annex 2 Evaluation Questions Matrix

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF Focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national level?</b>			
To what extent are the project's objectives consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, national priorities and policies, global priorities and partners' and GEF policies and priorities?	Adequacy of activities in relation to policies and stakeholders' needs. Alignment of project objective and outcomes with policy objectives. Alignment of projects strategy and theory of change with country situation and national priorities.	Conventions, Project Document, UNDP Country Programme, sector policies and regulatory frameworks, regional agreements and programmes	Interviews of stakeholders / beneficiaries Interviews steering committee members Review of documents
To what extent were decision-making processes during the project's design phase reflecting national priorities and needs? Were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?	Effectiveness of partnerships arrangements since inception, co-financing budget execution	Project Document, Inception Report, PIRs, minutes of PSC meetings, TOC.	Document review, interviews with government agency stakeholders and project partners, analysis.
How relevant is the project strategy to the situation in the project area/ national context and circumstances? Does it provide the most effective route towards expected/intended results? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?	Coherence between project design and implementation – what changes have had to be made. Should changes have been made? Level of project resources assigned to tasks.	Project Document, Inception Report, Consultant's studies and reports, minutes of PSC/PB and Technical Working Groups	Document review, interviews with government agency stakeholders and project partners, analysis.
What was/is the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions? What has been the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document? Was the problem correctly identified?	Suitability of specific components of the project to address issues and achieve results areas. Changes to the strategy, changes to the interventions. Completeness of interventions by mid-term.	Project Document, Inception Report, Work Plans, PIR and NSC/PB minutes of meetings, Consultants reports.	Documents, interviews with stakeholders, project implementing partners, PMU and project Consultants.
Does the project's Theory of Change reflect the complexity, uncertainty and framework of national government agencies?	Review MTR TOC and test hypothesis against SRF. Project TOC causal pathways, outputs and outcomes, emergent or unidentified risks, identify weak links in the cause and effect relationships	MTR TOC, Project Document strategy, risk register, field mission findings, PMU, implementing partners	Discussion and analysis
To what degree is the project's implementation a participatory and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation? If so, how is this achieved?	Gender disaggregated data, level of co-financing commitment/ expenditure, workshop and meeting attendance, degree of ownership of project community-based/ civil society initiatives	Project reports, PIR, workshop reports, co-financing records, PSC meeting minutes	Documents, interviews with stakeholders, project implementing partners.
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustaining of project benefits?	National policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents. Approved policy and legislation related to biodiversity, land use	National policy and regulatory framework documents	Document review, interviews with high-level project partners.



	and land use planning, climate change, budgets, etc.		
<b>Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?</b>			
To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?	SRF indicators & EOP targets,	Project Document, SRF, PIRs, results, GEF-6 LDN Core Indicators	Document review, analysis, interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries
To what extent did the project contribute to the Country Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities?	Alignment and synergies of outcomes	Project Document, CPAP, SDGs, GEF strategic priorities, GEF-6 LDN Core Indicators	Document review, high-level stakeholder interviews, analysis
What factors have contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs? Could the project include alternative strategies?	Progress towards results, efficiency of project strategy, adjustments to strategy Number of key priorities that have been met through the project Assumptions not met / unpredictable effects	SRF, Project Document, PIR, risk log.	Document review, interviews, analysis
Has the project produced unintended results - positive or negative? If there are negative results, what mitigation activities are in place?	Progress towards results, efficiency of project strategy, adjustments to strategy Number of key priorities that have been met through the project Assumptions not met / unpredictable effects	SRF, Project Document, PIR, risk log.	Document review, interviews, analysis
To what extent the project has demonstrated: a) scaling up, b) replication, c) demonstration, and/or d) production of public good	Number of relevant initiatives not directly financed by the project, take up of initiatives outside the project realm	PIR, other project reports	Document review, interview with PMU, UNDP, PSC, stakeholder, beneficiaries, government agencies
What evidence is there to suggest that the project will/ has achieve the outcomes and objective by the close of the GEF-fund?	Budget execution, realism of work plans, results to date	SRF indicator MT & EOP targets, PMU, project documentation	Document review, interviews, field visits
<b>Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in line with international and national norms and standards?</b>			
To what extent has the project completed the planned activities and met or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of global environmental and development objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned?	Activity modifications (removal / adding) Budget revisions Circumstances for no-cost extension Functionality of M&E system Compliance with UNDP-GEF rules	UNDP finance & project staff Project Director interview Annual reports, CDR, co-financing reports	Interviews, analysis, field visits
To what extent were project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?	As above	As above	As above
<b>Financing and co-financing</b>			
Are there variances between planned and actual expenditures? What are the main reasons? To what extent did financial controls allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget? What extra resources has the project leveraged? How have they contributed to the project's ultimate objective?	Disbursement trends Follow-up and adjustments of procurement plan Co-financing complementarities / substitution M&E system updates and annual/intra-year budgetary adjustments	UNDP finance & project staff Project Director interview Annual reports, CDR, co-financing reports.	Interviews, analysis
<b>Implementation, Oversight and Execution</b>			
To what extent has UNDP delivered effectively on activities related to project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion and evaluation?	Changes in UNDP staff Periodicity of technical meetings with project team & relevant support / timeliness of recruitments Changes in project team staff Activity / staff / service payment delays...	Annual reports, PIR UNDP, MFRSC & PMU MoW, MAFSN, MTEC & MLGCA interviews CDR.	Interviews, document review, analysis

To what extent has the Implementing Partner effectively managed and administered the project's day-to-day activities? How was UNDP's overall oversight and supervision?	Role of UNDP-GEF Regional Office.		
<b>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-political, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>			
How are risks monitored and managed?	Project risk log in QUANTUM and management responses, communication with partners and stakeholders, change over from ATLAS to QUANTUM.	Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the QUANTUM Risk Register, project communications strategy, MTR & Management Response	Review, interviews, analysis
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends?	Public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other (donor) funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)	National policies and plans, local policies and plans, NGO feedback, private sector feedback, project exit arrangements. Consultants and service providers reports	Review, interviews, analysis
What are the long-term socio-political risks to the outcomes of the project?	Partner and stakeholder ownership, public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives, sharing of information on risks, adjustments to interventions to address specific risks	National policies and plans, local policies and plans, NGO feedback, private sector feedback, project exit arrangements. Consultants and service providers reports	Review, interviews, analysis
What are the environmental risks to the sustainability of the project's outcomes? How are these managed and mitigated?	Climate data and forecasts. National disaster risk reduction strategies and plans	National data, policies and plans	Review and analysis, field visits
<b>Gender equality and women's empowerment: How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?</b>			
How were gender and human rights considerations integrated in the project's design, including analysis, implementation plan, indicators, targets, budget, timeframe and responsible party? To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and human rights of disadvantaged or marginalized groups? To what extent did women, poor, indigenous, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups participate and benefit from the project? Was the UNDP Gender Marker rating assigned to the project document realistic and backed by the findings of the gender analysis? Is there any potential negative impact on gender equality, women's empowerment, disadvantaged or marginalized groups? If so, what can be done to mitigate this? To what extent was the SESP realistic, followed and monitored. Were gender related/ affecting activities, gender-blind, -negative, -targeted, -responsive, - transformational?	M&E system covering gender Activity adaptability as per gender and target beneficiaries' types Degree of project targeting of vulnerable people Number of women & vulnerable people that were direct beneficiaries from project's results Level of participation of vulnerable groups & women in activities' operationalization Safeguarding actions and activities FPIC	Gender-specific & marginalized group interviews (focus groups) Project team interview Local Council interviews Annual reports SESP, MTR & Management Response	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
<b>Other cross-cutting issues</b>			
How have the project activities contributed to poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods? To what extent has the project contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk, and/or addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation? To what extent has the project incorporated capacity development activities? Were results achieved?	Conversion incentives success rate Increased resources through improved technology (& capacity building) / diversification Pilot-project appropriation and empowerment, number of beneficiaries, gender differences in beneficiaries.	Interviews project staff Interviews final beneficiaries Interviews community members / representatives	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis

Stakeholder engagement and partnerships			
Where all key stakeholders identified, were they categorised correctly? To what extent do project stakeholders share a common understanding and are involved in the decision-making process of the project? To what extent did stakeholder's participation mechanisms in place lead to empowerment and joint ownership of the project? What should be done better to increase their participation and engagement?	Degree of active participation in project activities / capacity building training Project responsiveness re. final beneficiary/community needs Degree of participation of stakeholders in project (annual) planning	PMU & MFRSC, MoW, MAFSN, MTEC & MLGCA interviews Interviews of community representatives and municipalities	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
Results framework			
To what extent the project's objectives and components are clear, practicable and feasible within its time frame? Was there a clearly defined and robust Theory of Change? Were the indicators in the Results Framework SMART?	Number of activities that were amended / terminated and reasons Follow-up of Capacity Score Card indicators Changes of indicators during implementation, number of indicators not assessed Usability of baseline studies Cost-effectiveness of indicators	Interviews project team Interviews of ministry Interviews PSC members, SRF/ log frame Project strategy.	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
Monitoring and evaluation			
To what extent did the Monitoring systems allow the collection, analysis and use of information to track the project's progress, risks and opportunities toward reaching its objectives and to guide management decisions? Were the budget and responsibilities clearly identified and distributed?	Level of functionality of M&E system; updating and effective integration into decision-making (planning + adjustments) Cost effectiveness of indicators	Interviews PMU, RTA, UNDP CO	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
Risk Management, Social and Environment Standards and Adaptive Management			
To what extent were risks (both threats and opportunities) properly identified and managed? To what extent did the project maximize social and environmental opportunities and benefits and ensured that adverse social and environmental risks and impacts were avoided, minimized, mitigated, and managed? What "safeguards" did the project implement? Were the project's changes based on evidence? Were they properly managed?	Updating of assumptions and risks realistic Relevant project implementation changes M&E system operationality	Project team interviews, UNDP interview, QUANTUM risk log, PIRs, RTA	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
GEF additionality			
To what extent has the project lead to additional outcomes? Global Environmental Benefits Livelihood improvements and/or social benefits Innovation Additionality	Overall increase / stabilization of ecosystem benefits/services, areas of improved land management, GEF-6 LDN Core Indicators, Capacity Score Cards.	MFRSC, MoW, MAFSN, MTEC & MLGCA other implementing partners Interviews project team Annual reports	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
To what extent are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?	Specific changes to sector policies and operational practices Reduction of pressures (fisheries, agriculture, plantations, mining, (through behaviour change and threat reduction and mitigation)	Technical reports Monitoring reports Interviews of implementing partners, NGOs & community representatives, GEF-6 LDN Core Indicators, Capacity Score Cards.	Documentation review, interviews, field visits, analysis

Annex 3 Mission Itinerary

Mid-Term Review (MTR) Programme

3<sup>rd</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> June 2024

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 (Monday) – Arrival of the International Consultant

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible
16:00	Arrival of MTR International Consultant in Maseru	Airport	Air-ticket, Transport from airport, lodging	PMU

Day 1: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Tuesday) - courtesy calls and meetings

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible
10:00 – 11:00	Courtesy call – UNDP	UN House	Vehicle	UNDP Boardroom
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting with PMU for planning purposes	Sebapala IWM Office	Vehicle	PM, TA
1:00 – 14:00	Lunch			
14:00 -15:00	Meeting with GEF Focal Point, Project Focal Point and Board Members)	Project Focal Point Office	Vehicle	PM
15:30 – 16:30	Interviews – LMS	LMS	Vehicle	Mr Mpholle

Day 2: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Wednesday) - Interviews

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
8:30 – 9:30	Interviews – MLGCHP	MLGCHP Offices	Vehicle	Mr Phaqaane Mr Moorosi, (Board and TAC members respectively)
10:00 – 11:00	Interviews - MAFSN	MAFSN Boardroom	Vehicle	Mr Abisi Alotse and Ms Rorisang Motanyane (TAC and Board members respectively)
11:30 – 12:30	Interviews - Early Warning II Project	Early Warning II Offices	Vehicle	Mr Letuma
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch			
15.30 – 16.30	Interviews - ROLL Project	Roll Offices	Vehicle	Mr Lechesa

Day 3: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Thursday) – Interviews & travel to Quthing

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Contact
8:30 – 9:30	Interviews - ReNoka	RENOKA Offices	Vehicle	Ms Matsolo Migwi
10:00 – 11:00	Interviews - Department of Gender	Gender Offices	Vehicle	Mrs Matau Futho Letsatsi (Board member)
11.:30 12:30	Interviews – DWA	DWA Offices	Vehicle	Director DWA (Mr Motoho Maseatile) Ms Makoae (TAC Member)

<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>			
<b>14:00 – 16:00</b>	<b>Travel to Quthing &amp; sleep over</b>		Vehicles (2), refreshments	PM, PFO

**Day 4: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Friday) –Meetings and interviews in Quthing**

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
8:30 – 9:30	Courtesy call and interviews - DC (Board member) and management	MEF		PM, PFO
9:30 – 10:30	Courtesy call and interviews - DA (Board Member)	DA Office		DC, PFO, PM
10:30 – 11:30	Courtesy call and interviews - DCS (Board member and Tosing Council Secretary)	DCS Office		DC, PFO, PM
11:30 – 12:30	Meeting & interviews - DAO and Management (e.g Nutrition, Crops, Livestock Officers)	DAO Office		DC, PFO, PM
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>			
14:00	<b>Return to Maseru</b>			

**Day 5: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Sunday) – Travel to Tsatsane – in the afternoon**

**Day 6: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Monday) – Tsatsane and Tosing**

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
8:00 – 9:30	Meetings and interviews with Tsatsane Chiefs, Community Council Members, CWT members and Community	Tsatsane	Vehicles (2), packed lunches	PFO
9:30 – 11:00	Site Visit	Tsatsane		PFO
11:00– 13:00	Travel to Dalewe (& lunch)			
13:30 – 14:30	Meetings and interviews with Dalewe Chiefs, Community Council Members, CWT members and Community	Dalewe		PFO
14:30 – 16:00	Site visit – Dalewe	Dalewe		PFO
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Travel to Quthing (sleep-over)</b>			

**Day 7: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Tuesday) – Letlapeng and Ha Malephane**

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
8:00 – 9:30	Travel to Letlapeng	Letlapeng	Vehicles (2), Packed lunches	
9:30: –11:00	Meetings and interviews with Letlapeng Chiefs, Community Council Members, CWT members and Community	Letlapeng		PFO
11:00-12:30	Site visit – Letlapeng	Letlapeng		PFO
<b>12:30 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch &amp; travel to Ha Malephane</b>			

14:00 – 15:30	Meetings and interviews with Malephane Chiefs, Community Council Members, CWT members and Community	Ha Malephane		PFO
15.30- 17.00	Site visit – Ha Malephane	Ha Malephane		PFO
<b>17:00</b>	<b>Travel back to Quthing (sleep-over)</b>			

**Day 8: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Wednesday): Tosing**

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
8:00 – 10:00	Travel to Tosing	Tosing	Vehicles (2), Packed lunches	
10:00 –11:30	Meetings and interviews with Tosing Chiefs, Community Council Members, CWT members and Community	Tosing		PFO
11:30-13:00	Site visit – Tosing	Tosing		PFO
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch &amp; travel to Quthing</b>			
15:00 – 16:30	Present preliminary findings to District Administration, DCS and District Heads of Departments	Quthing	Hall/boardroom	DC, PFO
16:30	<b>Travel back to Maseru</b>			

**Day 9: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Thursday) - Presentation of Preliminary findings**

Time	Activity	Venue	Resources	Responsible/contact
9.00 – 13.00	Present preliminary findings to the Ministry Management, UNDP and relevant stakeholders/ Implementing partners	Maseru	Vehicle, Hall, refreshments	PMU
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>			
14:00 – 15:00	Debriefing meeting - sharing of preliminary findings with PS and UNDP Management			

**ACRONYMS**

CWT – Community Watershed Teams; DA – District Administrator; DAO – District Agricultural Officer; DC – District Coordinator; DCS – District Council Secretary; DWA – Department of Water Affairs; IACOV - Improving Adaptive Capacity of the Vulnerable and Food-insecure; IWM – Integrated Watershed Management; FC – Focal Point; LMS -Lesotho Meteorological Services; MEF – Ministry of Environment and Forestry; MLGCHP - Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs; MAFSN - Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition; MTR – Mid-Term Review; PFO – Project Field Officer; PM – Project Manager; PS – Principal Secretary; PSC – Project Steering Committee; PMU – Project Management Unit; ROLL - Regeneration of Livelihoods and Landscapes; SWC – Soil and Water Conservation; TA – Technical Advisor; TAC – Technical Advisory Committee.

**LOGISTICS BY PMU:**

- ✓ Arrange a vehicle for transporting the MTR consultants during the MTR mission
- ✓ Secure an additional vehicle for the Project team to Quthing and Sebakala

- ✓ Set up appointments for meetings and interviews (in Maseru, Quthing and Sebapala)
- ✓ Book accommodation in Quthing and Tsatsane (MTR consultants and accompanying Project Team members)
- ✓ Arrange venue and refreshments for group meetings.

**Preliminary Findings on Mid-Term Review (MTR) Programme**  
**13<sup>th</sup> June 2024** **Avani Maseru**

Facilitator: TA

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
09:30 – 09:40	Arrival & Registration	All
09:40 – 09:45	Opening Prayer	All
09:45 – 09:55	Introductions	All
09:55 – 10:10	Official Opening and Welcome Address	PS
10:10 – 10:25	Statement of Purpose and Remarks	Project Focal Point (Director SWC)
<b>10:25 – 10:40</b>	<b>TEA</b>	<b>All</b>
10:40 - 11:25	Preliminary findings	MTR Consultants
11:25 –12:00	Discussions	Facilitator
12:00 – 12:15	Remarks by UNDP	UNDP
12:15 - 12:30	Wrap-up - Way Forward	PM
12:30 -12:45	Official Closure	GEF Focal Point (Director Environment)
<b>12:45 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>All</b>
14:10 -15:15	Debriefing UNDP	
15:00 - 16:00	Debriefing PS MEF a.i	

*Annex 4 Signed Evaluation Consultant Agreements Form*

**Evaluators/Consultants:**

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

**MTR Consultant Agreement Form**

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

Name of Consultant: **Francis Hurst**

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signed at Moncarapacho, Portugal on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May June, 2024

Signature:



Francis Hurst



**Evaluators/Consultants:**

10. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
11. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
12. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
13. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
14. 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.
15. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
16. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
17. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
18. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

**MTR Consultant Agreement Form**

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

Name of Consultant: **Ramochaha Lethola**

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signed at Maseru, Lesotho, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May June, 2024

Signature:



Ramochaha Lethola

Annex 5 Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder	Role in project
Government Ministry	<p><i>Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF)</i> through Department of Forestry is the National focal point for UNCCD, tasked to implement the National Action Programme on Natural resource management, combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought;</p> <p>It has piloted programmes for devolving the management of State Forest Reserves to the Local Government Community Councils under the Forest Policy and Programme. This process is accompanied by training of communities and their councils on various aspects of forest management, business opportunities and cottage industries.</p> <p>The Ministry is directly responsible for conservation and management of forested and range landscape, biodiversity, invasive alien species (IAS) and ecosystems functions in general.</p> <p>The Meteorology department is an agency that is responsible for climate change policies, programmes, and initiatives.</p>	<p>MEF will be the Executing Agency of the proposed watershed resources management project</p> <p>Will coordinate the involvement and participation of all other relevant institutions to implement interventions under the project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Will play the role of public awareness, communication and advisory in the implementation of regulations of sustainable use of forestry resources</li> <li>-The project site is also home to medicinal plants traded by communities, the department will assist on aspects of in-situ conservation and sustainable harvesting of biological resources</li> <li>-The Ministry will empower community councils by supporting activities that promote conservation of the biological resources and deliver benefits to local communities in the project area.</li> <li>- The Department of Meteorology will provide climate change data to inform agricultural activities.</li> </ul>
Government Ministry	<p><i>The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment (MoTCE)</i>, was created in November 1992, with a mission of promoting adoption of principles and strategies for the protection and recovery of the environment, use of resources and the introduction of sustainable development principles in the formulation and implementation of public policies.</p> <p>The departments of Environment (DoE) and Tourism (DoT) have mobilized communities to establish biodiversity groups that work on protection of plant species and wild animals including the establishment of a Vulture restaurant and a community homestead.</p>	<p>The DoE is the main provider of Environmental Impact Assessment clearance and licensing. The DoE and DoT will participate in the project implementation including stakeholder engagement and project management.</p> <p>The DoE will participate in the drafting and implementation of the Integrated Watershed Management Master Plan</p> <p>This Plan will also embrace a gender perspective including the creation of a gender unit that will ensure the mainstreaming of gender in all the project activities.</p>
Government Ministry	<p><i>The Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN)</i> is responsible for the implementation of public agriculture policies, the promotion of agribusiness as well as regulation of services linked to the agricultural sector.</p> <p>In fulfilling its responsibilities on food security, MAFSN introduced greenhouse technology to local farmers for production of high value fruits and vegetables for supply to both domestic and international markets. This was done through the Enhanced Integrated Framework Tier II project, the Horticulture Productivity and Trade Development Project.</p>	<p>The MAFSN will be responsible for providing information on methods of sustainable cultivation and on water harvesting for improved agriculture production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Experience and lessons from projects related to and supporting improved agricultural productivity (e.g. the greenhouse technology) will be shared to contribute to technology uptake by local farmers.</li> </ul>
Government Ministry	<p><i>Ministry of Energy and Meteorology (MoEM)</i></p> <p>The MoEM through the Department of Energy has various energy programmes such as Rural Electrification Programme</p>	<p>The department of Energy through rural electrification programme will assist communities to access energy for entrepreneurial activities. This will contribute to high productivity of communities as time spent by women on collection of biomass will be reduced and spent on the conservation activities by both women and men.</p>
Government Ministry	<p><i>Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police (MLGCHAP)</i> is mandated to ensure the decentralization of public services and empowerment of local authorities including that of chiefs to play their administrative roles. Through the Decentralization Unit; District and Community Councils are mandated through the Local Government Act 1997 (amended) to have control over natural resources, environment protection and other communally owned property. Chief's role in addressing conflicts is based on social differentiation for purposes of inclusiveness.</p>	<p>The community councillors, Chiefs and headmen will provide local leadership by giving consent for the implementation of the project in the project site and assist in identifying the specific areas where project activities will be implemented.</p> <p>They will mobilize communities to actively participate in project agreements, and to ensure that benefits from the project are equitably shared by the communities.</p> <p>They will lead in the development of bylaws that govern utilization of natural resources</p>

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder	Role in project
		The councils will also be the buffer for grievances related to the project activities especially project impacts on herders.
Government Ministry	<i>Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation (MGYSR)</i> The Department of Gender (DoG) in the MGYSR is mandated to ensure equality of all opportunities between women, men, girls and boys, so that development efforts have an equal impact on all gender issues. The main goal of the DoG is to facilitate proper integration of gender issues in development to ensure full involvement, participation and partnership of women and men, girls and boys in both their reproductive and productive lives.	The DoG in collaboration with The Ministry will provide technical back-up to the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, through capacity building and advocacy and knowledge management program to ensure that men, women and youth participate in the project. These groups will be made aware of the issues pertaining to the IWM planning, land and rangelands rehabilitation and restoration so that they take up sustainable practices, ensuring equitable distribution of benefits from their conservation and use. The DoG will also promote the inclusion of gender aspects in all the project training and capacity building activities.
Development Agency	United Nations Development Programme	UNDP will be the Implementing partner with Ministry of Forestry. UNDP will be responsible for monitoring the effective and efficient use of project resources, and achievement of all project objectives.
Development Agency	GiZ is supporting the implementation of Lesotho's National Integrated Catchment Management programme. With an investment of Euro 28 million from the EU, Euro 6 million from BMZ and co-finance of Euro 5 from the Government of Lesotho, this project will focus in its first year (2020) on building a multi-stakeholder partnership for implementation of ICM at national level, developing a harmonized policy and regulatory framework for ICM (in particular, finalizing the governance structure for ICM and nationally-adopted guidelines for ICM planning); capacitating institutions (through training and the development of ICM plans); and building the foundations for a national ICM knowledge management and gender mainstreaming system. In later years it will implement practical ICM measures in 6 prioritized sub-catchments to address land degradation, build climate resilience and support the development of sustainable livelihoods.	GiZ will provide (via consultation) practical guidance, share materials, experiences and lessons on planning and implementation of IWM plans. In particular, it will contribute manuals on community based IWM planning and inform the formation of IWM governance (Institutional arrangements for coordination of the planning process and implementation and monitoring of the Sebakala IWM Master Plan and community action plans).
NGO	Lesotho Council of Non- Governmental organizations (LCN) LCN is a national, nonprofit umbrella organization representing the vast majority of community-based and national non- governmental organizations. Its main aim is to build the capacity of NGOs and CBOs and coordinate their work. It provides supportive services (networking, leadership training, information dissemination, etc) and advocacy and representation when dealing with the national and international community. Affiliates cover various fields including agriculture, <i>environment</i> , disaster management, and social development.	- LCN will assist in providing information about its membership working in range management (rehabilitation, restoration, improved cropping systems within rangelands), who could contribute knowledge and resources (co-finance) to the IWM Master Plan and action planning processes.  It will also assist in advocacy programmes and dissemination of the products of the Communications and Knowledge Management on IWM planning and implementation (through its network of members).
INGO	Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP)	Promotion of conservation farming and climate smart technologies; Educate and raise awareness of the public on climate change adaptation and mitigation
INGO	World Vision	Implementing livelihoods projects that target the welfare of children including food security
National University of Lesotho	The National University of Lesotho is recognized as an authority on training and research on natural resources management related themes, including rangelands and water resources management.	The Departments of Geography, Environmental Sciences, Agriculture and Soil Sciences will participate in discussion on the IWM Master Plan (especially possible contribution to assessment of degradation of the ecosystem/landscape/rangelands) the discussions (under the Technical Planning Secretariat).

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder	Role in project
		Partnerships with these institutions will be sort to engage student researchers to contribute to the technical aspects of the IWM planning process (at no additional cost to the project).
CBO <i>Kopanang Grazing Association</i>	A Grazing Association is a local entity legally registered with Law Office. The association has a sub-committee of horse riders (Lipalami), whose main role in is to enforce compliance with traditional grazing scheme and to prevent livestock theft. The association has by-laws governing access to and use of grazing lands	The grazing Association will be key actor in identifying degradation hotspots (for range and land rehabilitation and restoration) and the formulation of the IWM Master Plan and action plans.  They will be key actors in development and enforcement of bylaws and policies on grazing control.  They will be entry point to disseminate content of the communications and knowledge management programmes in the prioritized landscapes;
CBO - Water committee	The water committee works with the District and Community Councils and the Ministry of Water Affairs to control and protect wetlands and springs within the Tosing Council area. They do so by enforcing rules formulated in collaboration with stakeholders to protect water resources. The committee has a core structure called 'water minders' whose mandate is to ration water during water scarcity and also to routinely check the quality and quantity of water at the source	They will participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of activities related to soil and water conservation aspects of the project.
<i>Herders</i>	Responsible for the health and sustained use of the rangelands. They are custodians, harvesters and users of rangeland resources. They are also traditional knowledge holders.	Herders will participate in the implementation of project activities of conservation and sustainable harvesting of rangelands resources
<i>Traditional healers, thatchers and all other resource-user groups across the land-use spectrum (e.g. farmer's groups, beekeepers, vegetable growers, women's groups)</i>	There are many informal groupings involved in natural resource use. The traditional healers are recognized by the community as the custodians of traditional knowledge on plants with medicinal value. They are interested in increasing the density and variety of such plants, which they harvest. Similarly, the thatchers are interested in valuable thatching grass, and are therefore harvesters of these natural resources	These groups will participate in the implementation of project activities related to conservation and sustainable harvesting of rangelands resources. They will be consulted on enrichment planting as part of range and land rehabilitation programs.

*Annex 6 List of Persons Interviewed*

Name	Gender	Position	Organization	Email
<b>Courtesy call with UNDP</b>				
Lerato Seleteng Kose	Female	TA	SIWMP	leratoseletengkose@gmail.com
Ratsele Ratsele	Male	PM	SIWMP	ratsele.ratsele@gov.ls
Limomane Peshoane	Male	SDL	UNDP	limomane.peshoane@undp.org
Tyre Ammsalu	Male	DRR	UNDP	Tyre.ammasalu@undp.org
<b>Meeting with PMU</b>				
Limakatso Kheleli	Female	Procurement Officer	MEF	<a href="mailto:limakatsokheleli@gmail.com">limakatsokheleli@gmail.com</a>
Tholang Mohlalisi	Male	Assistant Economic Planner	MEF	<a href="mailto:tmohlalisi@gmail.com">tmohlalisi@gmail.com</a>
Kalaele Tseka	Male	FAO	SIWMP	kalaeletsekasiwmps@gmail.com
Ratsele Ratsele	Male	Project Manager	SIWMP	ratsele.ratsele@gov.ls
Lerato Seleteng Kose	Female	Technical Advisor	SIWMP	leratoseletengkose@gmail.com
<b>Meeting with GEF Focal point and Project Coordinator</b>				
Qongqong Hoohlo	Female	GEF Focal Point	MEF	qongqong.hoohlo@gov.ls
Nkuebe Lerotholi	Male	Project Coordinator	MEF	<a href="mailto:nclerotholi@gmail.com">nclerotholi@gmail.com</a>
<b>Meeting with Maseru Stakeholders</b>				
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<b>Community Leaders</b>				

Wenzeni Mosendela	Male	Community Councillor		
Liphapang Jobo Letsie	Male	Local Chief		
Mabophelo Lesoma	Female	Local Chief		
Limakatso Namole	Female	Community Councillor		
Makhothatso Ranthamane	Female	Community Councillor		
Resetselemang Letsie	Male	Local Chief		
Khutlang Matlama	Male	Field Supervisor		
Sabelo Sekoati	Male	Local Chief		
Shebeng Mohale	Male	Local Chief		
Tsepang Peete	Male	Community Councillor		
Morero Seeiso	Male	Community Councillor		
Monnfela Malephane	Male	Local Chief		
Tsepang Raase	Male	Local Chief		
Choela Mofomobe	Male	Local Chief		
Moeketsi Setlaeea	Male	Community Councillor		
Tlotliso Kaloli	Male	Community Councillor		
Tsebo Mopeli	Male	Local Chief		
Rampulane Mosifa	Male	Local Chief		
Nketjoane Mosoang	Male	Local Chief		
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*Annex 7 Names of Previous and Current Ministries*

Previous name	Acronym	Current name	Acronym
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition	MAFSN
Ministry of Energy and Meteorology	(MoE	Ministry of Energy (Department of Meteorology moved to MEF)	MoE
Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation	MFRSC	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	MEF
Ministry of Gender and Sports, Youth and Recreation	MGSYR	Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation	MGYSR
Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs	MoLGChA	Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police	MLGCHAP
The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment	MoTCE	Department of Environment moved to MEF	MEF

*Annex 8 Documents Reviewed*

Document	Comment	Date	Source
Project Document			UNDP
PIR 2023			UNDP
PSC Minutes	Invitation to field visit	05/06/2023	UNDP
Initiation Plan		13/09/2018	UNDP
Project Inception Report		Oct-23	UNDP
PIF Inception Report		29/05/2019	UNDP
CEO Endorsement		Undated	UNDP
PIF		03/09/2018	UNDP
AWP		23/02/2024	UNDP
STAP Review		04/06/2018	GEF
PIF Review		01/06/2018	GEF
SLM Toolkit		Dec-14	GEF
UNDP Guidelines for MTR of GEF-financed Projects			<a href="https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20EN_2014.pdf">https://erc.undp.org/pdf/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20EN_2014.pdf</a>

Annex 9 Indicator Analysis

Indicator	Baseline	MTR	End of Project	SMART Analysis					MTR comment
<b>Objective:</b> to mainstream sustainable rangeland management and land restoration into the use of watersheds, enhance the flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services and improve livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities in the Sebapala Watershed (Tosing Community Council) in the Lower Senqu Basin.				s	m	a	r	t	
<b>Indicator 1 (Mandatory GEF 7 Core Indicator 3):</b> Area of land restored (in ha), including: <b>Sub-indicator 1.1:</b> natural grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands) (Core Indicator 3.3)	In Tosing Community Council: 106, 282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54), with 90,339 ha used for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54188,696 ha rangelands (incorporating grasslands and shrublands) (extent degraded to be determined at inception)	(Total area restored is 4,000ha) At least 3,800 ha restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone- bunds, water furrows, cross- slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures, and improved rangeland management (40% of EOP target)	(Total area restored is 11,500 ha) At least 10,000 ha of land restored through implementation of mechanical restoration measures (terraces, stone-bunds, water furrows, cross-slope barriers, gabions etc), other soil and water conservation measures and improved rangeland management	✓	✓	Q	✓	✓	The translation of the Core indicators is very reasonable; however, the MTR is concerned that the scale of the targets. The MTR notes that the 2023 PIR (p. 30) states: “the mapping exercise recorded 49,076 ha for rangeland (grazing areas) as against the original baseline of 47,091 ha”. The figures in the SRF should be updated for the Terminal Evaluation (TE).
<b>Sub-indicator 1.2:</b> Areas of wetlands restored (Core Indicator 3.4)	847 ha wetlands, and 751 ha other associated aquatic and riparian habitats	At least 200 ha of wetlands restored and under IWRM	At least 1,500 ha of wetland and riparian habitat restored and under IWRM productive water use and productive water use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The MTR notes that the 2023 PIR (p. 30) states: “Based on the mapping and verification exercise, there are minor variations from the baseline data established and submitted at CEO endorsement. For example, while the prodoc indicates that wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats cover 1,598 ha (847 ha and 751 ha respectively), the mapping exercise reflects 14,787 ha for wetland and other aquatic and riparian habitats combined”.
<b>Indicator 2 (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 4):</b> Area of landscape under improved practices, outside of protected areas <b>Sub-indicator 2.1:</b> Area of landscape (ha) under SLM in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3), including: Cultivated lands; rangelands; grasslands	In Tosing Community Council: 8,000 ha cultivated lands.  106,282 ha rangelands	At least 8,000 ha under improved practices, as follows: Cultivated lands: at least 2,000 ha (farmlands in SC54 to be targeted first) under improved practices, with agreed plan in place for roll-out in remaining 6,000 ha across TCC Rangelands: at least 6,000 ha under improved practices (targeting SC54)	At least 23,000 ha under improved practices 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under SLM/IWM practices and productive water use, across Sebapala River Watershed  At least 15,000ha of rangelands/grasslands under improved practices	✓	✓	Q	✓	✓	The MTR has concerns that the scale of changes expected does not fit the realistic timeframe of the project.
<b>Indicator 3 (Mandatory GEF Core Indicator 11):</b> No. of direct and indirect	Total population of potential beneficiaries in	At least 50% of population of TCC	At least 80% of Tosing Community Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The MTR does question the target on the basis that “benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM



beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, as co-benefit of the GEF investment	Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	participating directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	population (19,071 total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sebapala Watershed At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)							Master Plan for Sebapala Watershed” does not clearly define the “benefit” and therefore there is an assumption that being included in the plan will result in a benefit.
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Integrated Watershed Management Plan, with community action plans, facilitates implementation of landscape restoration, soil and water conservation, and Sustainable Land Management practices in the Sebapala Watershed										
<b>Indicator 4:</b> Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Sebapala Watershed (including community action plans for land restoration, soil and water conservation, and SLM in production landscapes) developed and adopted Sebapala IWM Master Plan covering 121,699 ha (Tosing Community Council) Community Action Plans covering at least 49,425 ha (Sebapala Sub-catchment SC54)	No IWMP plan or community action plans in place in Tosing CC or its sub-catchments	IW Master Plan developed and endorsed by National ICM Technical Secretariat and at least two community action plans for drainage basins in SC54 drafted and approved by District and local authorities	IWM Plan and at least 5 community action plans at sub-catchment level completed, endorsed by the National ICM Steering Committee and local governance structures and guiding management, with at least one Monitoring Report completed and informing adaptive management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Strictly speaking the indicator re-states the outcome and contains elements of the targets. A better phrasing would reflect just the coordination of land use activities within the watershed and the other parts included in the MTR and EOP targets. However, the intention is clear enough and it provides a reasonable metric for both performance and impact.
<b>Indicator 5:</b> Institutional arrangements for co-ordination of IWM planning, implementation and monitoring	No institutional arrangements for IWM planning in place in Sebapala Watershed	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination team in place and meeting regularly, according to agreed TORs, with minutes of all meetings kept	IWM Plan Technical Secretariat and Stakeholder Coordination Team capacitated to interface with Sebapala CPU and transfer skills, knowledge and capacity to implement the IWM Plan M&E system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Note that Indicator 7 provides a means of measurement to support this indicator (Capacity Score Card).
<b>Outcome 2:</b> District level technical officers, local authorities, and resource management institutions capacitated to implement IWM plans and enforce rules to prevent land and ecosystem degradation										
<b>Indicator 6:</b> Number of effective bylaws providing legal basis for local-level implementation of IWM Master Plan and Community Action Plans	Tosing Community Council and local-level structures currently have no bylaws for enforcing IWM	Full scoping assessment (review of legal instruments and identification of gaps in local-level regulatory framework) completed	At least three* by-laws developed by CC, adopted and in force as the legal basis for local-scale implementation of IWM plans (*number and type	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		MTR notes that scoping exercise needs to be recorded in the PIR.

		and consultative processes concluded for identification of new bylaws for ICM (number of bylaws to be determined during scoping)	to be refined based on scoping study to be carried out in second year of implementation)						
<b>Indicator 7:</b> Improved capacity scores of key resource management institutions responsible for implementation of IWM Master Plan and community action Plans at Quthing District, TCC and local levels: Systemic, institutional and individual capacities will be assessed using: The UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for District-level institutions (Quthing District Officials, extension staff, and all other relevant entities under the approved National Governance Framework for ICM – such as the Catchment Management Joint Committee)	Baseline for District officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 55%	Midterm score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 60%	End-of-project score for district officials under national Ministries (and other relevant entities) 65%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strictly speaking the indicator should not be phrased “improved” and the Score Card is a means of measurement – therefore, the indicator should be stated “capacity of management institutions....” And the “improvement” component should be reflected in the target and the Score card as a means of measurement. But it still works.
Modified Capacity Development Scorecard for Tosing Community Council (Standing Committees on Finance, Planning and Environment; officials; extension staff), and local-level institutions (water supply groups, Grazing Associations, wool and mohair groups, vegetable growers, beekeepers – full list to be confirmed at project inception)	Baseline for local-level institutions 70%	Midterm score for local-level institutions: 75%	End-of-project score for local-level institutions: 80%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	As above.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Integrated Watershed Management practices (including SLM and SWM) effectively implemented over at least 34,500 ha in the Sebapala River Watershed, with ecosystem, climate resilience and livelihood benefits									
<b>Indicator 8:</b> Area of land restored or under improved land use practices, measured in total, and separately for: Sub-indicator 8.1: Agricultural lands Sub-indicator 8.2: Grasslands and shrublands (incorporating rangelands) Sub-indicator 8.3: Wetlands and riparian habitats Targets to be disaggregated for the whole Sebapala River Watershed (=Tosing Community Council - TCC) and the	Total area under different kinds of landcover: (Extent degraded to be determined at inception) Agricultural lands 8,181 ha in TCC, of which 612 ha are in SC54 106, 282 ha of shrublands and grasslands in TCC (of which 47,091 are in SC 54), with 90,339 ha used	Total area under restoration or under improved practices by midterm: 12,000ha Agricultural lands: 2, 000 ha under improved practices - 400 ha in SC54, with agreed plans in place for roll out more broadly over a further 1,600 ha in TCC	At least 34,500 ha restored or under improved practices: At least 8,000 ha of agricultural lands under improved SLM practices 15,000 ha of degraded rangelands under improved practices 10,000ha degraded rangelands restored through improved soil	✓	Q	Q	✓	✓	It is not clear how these are to be measured. The target is not feasible in the project time frame – “15,000 ha of degraded rangelands under improved practices 10,000ha degraded rangelands restored”. However, the indicator still works and needs to be tightened up.

Sebapala Sub-catchment (No. 54 in catchment map – SC54)	for rangelands in TCC (40,027 of these in SC54) 847 ha of wetlands in TCC (of which 496 ha are in SC54), and 953 ha of other riparian/aquatic habitats in TCC (of which 202 ha are in SC54)	At least 6,000 ha of rangelands under improved practices At least 3,800 ha of rangelands under fast tracked” restoration, targeting hotpots in SC54 first, with plans in place for roll-out of soil and water conservation measures in remainder of SC54 and TCC, as appropriate At least 200 ha of headwater wetlands under emergency restoration (targeting wetlands in Upper Sebapala and Tsatsane minor drainage basins in SC54 first), with sites for further roll-out identified	and water conservation and grazing management measures At least 1,500 ha of wetlands and riparian habitats under IWRM (including 496 ha of restored wetlands)						
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Lessons learnt by the project through gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and participatory M&E are used to promote SLWM in the wider Sebapala Watershed and nationally									
<b>Indicator 9:</b> Ratio of women/ men benefitting from project interventions, in accordance with Gender Action Plan	Total population of potential beneficiaries in Tosing Community Council 23,839 (11,786 M, 12,053F) Of which: 2,397 People in SC54 (1,125M, 1,272F)	At least 50% of population of TCC participating directly in consultations for development of the IWM Master Plan (with 50M:50F split) At least 3,649 people (25% of target) in SC 54 and neighbouring villages benefitting directly as a result of the project (1,824M, 1,925F)	At least 80% of Tosing Community Council population (19,071 total, 9,428M, 9,642F) people in TCC benefit indirectly through delivery of the ICM Master Plan for Sebapala Watershed (11,786M, 12,053F) At least 14,597 people (7,298M, 7,299F) benefit directly through involvement in pilot projects to implement SLM/IWRM interventions, (including all 2,397 people in SC54)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The MTR reflects that the gender component of the indicator is largely targeted and it would be advisable to include an additional indicator or sub-indicator to capture any transformational aspects of the women’s empowerment and participation.
<b>Indicator 10:</b> Number of manuals, policy briefs, reports and lessons on SLWM in Sebapala Watershed collated and shared, and learning exchanges convened	Currently there are no policy-briefs or SLM knowledge products specific to the Sebapala	Sebapala Communications Knowledge Framework in place and	Sebapala Catchment Communications and Knowledge management Framework fully	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	<p>Watershed, and no comprehensive knowledge management or M&amp;E system for IWM/SLM.                  An SLM Toolkit for Lesotho (based on work in the Maseru District) is available, and a booklet capturing lessons on Rangeland Rehabilitation in the Mount Moorosi area                  Stakeholders in the Sebapala have not yet benefitted from SLWM learning exchanges</p>	<p>guiding development and distribution of policy briefs and lessons learnt, and participation in learning exchanges:                  At least:                  1 Technical Report/Policy Brief                  4 Best-practice/lessons learnt communications pieces (at least one of which should have a specific gender focus)                  At least five local-level learning exchanges facilitated                  Participation by Sebapala stakeholders in at least one national or regional knowledge- exchange event, with a report prepared on lessons learnt</p>	<p>implemented, Web-based knowledge management system in place and serving information and knowledge products on ICM in Sebapala Catchment, including at least:                  4 Technical Reports 56 /Policy Briefs                  8 best-practice/lessons 57 learnt communications pieces                  At least one national knowledge-sharing workshop convened, ahead of TE, with proceedings collated as a technical lessons-learnt report                  Participation in at least 2 regional or national knowledge-exchange events, with reports prepared on lessons learnt                  Community-led advocacy programme operational</p>						
SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound Green: SMART criteria compliant; Yellow: questionably compliant with SMART criteria; Red: not compliant with SMART criteria									
Q Questionable	✓ SMART	× Not SMART							

*Annex 10 Document Sign-off*

This Mid-Term Review Report, dated 24 June 2024, for the UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Full-Size Project "Integrated Watershed Management for Improved Agro-Pastoral Livelihoods in the Sepabala Sub-catchment", (PIMS 6081), has been reviewed and approved by the following signatories.

<b>Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:</b>	
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Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
<b>Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)</b>	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____