# 10. Lessons learned

302. There have been no specific lesson learning exercises during Project implementation up to the MTE, and, as yet, few lessons can be drawn relating to relevance, performance and success as the Project is behind on delivery. However, the MTET has identified a number of lessons learned relevant to the design and implementation of this and/or other GEF and UNDP projects (in no particular order).

* Although no two consultants will probably ever agree 100% over the design of a logframe, it is essential that sufficient attention is paid to the choice of indicators and associated targets at the design stage and these should be independently reviewed during the inception period, if the Project expects to be able to show real achievement of results by its end. A simple coherent measurable logframe is critical for complex GEF projects and helps keep a project focused, whereas a bad one creates confusion and wastes valuable time and resources.
* Measuring success and failure using a logframe is limited, especially if the logframe is poor – GEF projects need to assess other dimensions of success and in particular the views of stakeholders on project success and failure, which can be very important especially for sustainability of the project results. The Project had a flawed set of indicators and targets, but nevertheless it has delivered some meaningful achievements not listed in the logframe at the MTE stage.
* Mainstreaming projects that involve changes to legislation and policy frameworks are high risk because approval of these changes is required by governments and this is beyond the immediate control of the project. Whilst government commitment to make changes needs to be a precondition for a mainstreaming project, the timeframes of the processes means that flexibility is needed over the length of project implementation and extension to a project at mid-term is probably going to be required. In the case of the current project, it was one of the first UNDP-GEF mainstreaming projects to be designed and approved so it could not be predicted with any certainty how long it would take to deliver.
* Arrangements between project partners, especially over financing/co-financing, need to be detailed in writing – preferably through a Memorandum of Understanding/Memorandum of Agreement – at the beginning of a project and certainly no later than the end of the inception phase. This is essential to avoid misunderstandings and partnerships deteriorating during implementation. Over a third of the co-financing for the MBD Project at project submission was to come from the ENGO community but most of these have not been involved in any significant way as organizations (although some members have been contracted as individual consultants) in project activities and their ‘co-financing’ is questionable. It has never been detailed how these ENGOs were to be involved in the project or how their ‘co-financing’ relates to project activities (set out in a MoA), and as a result the relationship between them and the project/PCU/DoE has suffered.
* In countries with small populations where there is high competition for a relatively small number of qualified, experience applicants, UNDP-GEF projects need to ensure that salaries are competitive and that there are opportunities for professional development, in order to staff to attract and retain staff. If it is not able to address these issues then its projects are likely to suffer from high turnover of staff, which introduces costly delays.
* Similarly, capacity building of national stakeholders needs to be a high priority for UNDP-GEF projects, which might be best achieved through international technical consultants working long-term with project teams providing mentoring and regular training as an integral and major part of their TOR.