Terminal Evaluation of UNDP/GEF project: Mainstreaming and Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Belize

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Note that all Annexes are contained in a separate Microsoft Word file.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AED	Agricultural Enterprise Development
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
APR	Annual Progress Report
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BECOL	Belize Electric Company Limited
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute
CFO	Chief Forest Officer
CO	Country Office
DOE	Department of Environment
EA	Executing Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCD	Friends of Conservation and Development
FD	Forest Department
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
GOB	Government of Belize
IA	Implementing Agency
IFS	Integrated Financing Strategy
LIS	Land Information System
Logframe	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plan
NAVCO	National Association of Village Councils
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEGIS	National Environmental and Geomatics Information System
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization of Belize
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPAC	National Protected Areas Commission
NPAPSP	National Protected Area Policy and System Plan
PA	Project Assistant
PD	Project Director
PEG	Project Executing Group
PIR	Project Implementation Report

PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
RTA	Regional Technical Adviser
SD	Sustainable Development
SICCM	Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Coordinating Multi-Sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TORs	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tripartite Review
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

1 Executive Summary

- **Brief Description of the Project**

Belize is facing increasing levels of actual and potential land degradation as a result of a variety of interrelated issues that are driving these trends, and barriers preventing the implementation of solutions. This UNDP/GEF project is part of a global portfolio project entitled "LDS-SIDS Targeted Portfolio Project for Capacity Building and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management", which involves 37 countries, and conforms to the overall objectives of the portfolio project. The project was carried out from 2008-2012 and received a $500,000 grant from GEF as well as significant counterpart funding.

The project's main goal or development objective is that "ecosystem functions and integrity in productive landscapes in Belize [are] maintained through sustainable use of land resources thus providing for long term socio-economic development. The immediate objective of the project is to create "an enabling environment for sustainable land management enhanced through mainstreaming, capacity building, and improvements in policy, legislative and institutional frameworks."

The project established the following four Project Outcomes:

i. Long term plans for sustainable land management (SLM) and integrated natural resource management are developed and supported through enhanced policy, legal and institutional frameworks;
ii. Tools and capacities for SLM developed within government, public and private sectors;
iii. Medium Term Investment Plan developed.
iv. Adaptive management and learning

- **Context and Purpose of the Evaluation**

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) is a requirement of both UNDP and GEF and followed the evaluation Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) and the UNDP/GEF Policies and Evaluation Guidelines. The overall objective of the TE is to analyze the design and implementation of the project, as well as review the achievements made by the project to deliver the specified objective and outcomes, paying particular attention to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project and the sustainability of the results. The evaluation also presents specific lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to the strategies employed and implementation arrangements, which may be of relevance to other projects in the country and elsewhere in the world.

The Terminal Evaluation took place from March- May 2012. The methodology included an in-depth review of project documentation, interviews with a total of 20 key stakeholders in Belize, an initial presentation of findings in Belize, follow-up phone interviews and correspondence, detailed analysis of the findings, and preparation of the draft and final reports.

- **Main evaluation findings**

Project formulation

The project design was based on a thorough analysis of threats and barriers and identified an appropriate project objective and relevant project outcomes. However, there were certain deficiencies with respect to the logical framework included in the Project Document (ProDoc). For example, the indicators and targets did not always

correspond to the outcomes under which they were listed and in some cases the sources of verification were unrelated to the indicator. It could also be argued that a few of the indicators or targets were quite ambitious for a three-year project. A careful revision of the logframe at project outset would have been useful to correct these inconsistencies and to ensure that all indicators and targets were appropriate and realistic.

In general, project assumptions and risks were clearly formulated in the original logframe. The planned stakeholder participation was rated as *Highly Satisfactory* and envisioned the formation of a Project Steering Committee with all key stakeholders and the development of cooperation agreements with various organizations to facilitate stakeholder involvement. The project design also identified appropriate linkages with other interventions related to SLM and sustainable livelihoods, such as the Belize Rural Development Program.

The management arrangements established in the project design are considered satisfactory with the Forestry Department (FD) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE) identified as the Executing Agency (the focal point for the UNCCD) and a Project Management Unit (PMU) to be established therein. A Project Executing Group (PEG) would be created to oversee project execution. The UNDP was selected as the Implementing Agency and had a strong comparative advantage to take on this role due to its physical office in Belize, extensive network of contacts, as well as previous experience in supporting natural resource management initiatives, supporting UNCCD monitoring and reporting processes, and implementing GEF projects.

Project implementation

The UNDP and EA execution of the project are rated as *Satisfactory*. The executing modality selected with a government employee taking on the project management functions as her primary job function was well received as it contributed to national capacity building and project sustainability. There was, however, an increased time period required for the Project Manager's familiarization with the project management responsibilities as well as with UNDP-GEF policies and procedures.

The PMU was considered to have managed the project effectively with accurate and realistic preparation of narrative reports, diligent financial planning and management, regular monitoring of risks, and strong follow-up on project outputs. FD, the PEG and the UNDP continuously employed adaptive management to deal with a variety of implementation problems that arose. Examples include the consolidation of outputs, elimination of one pilot project and reallocation of funds to ensure that sufficient funds would be available for the development of the Land Use Policy (LUP), Framework and Mapping System, which was considered a key project deliverable. One of the main operational issues experienced by the project was frequent delays in project implementation, related primarily to the contracting processes for two key consultancies, to obtaining co-financing, and to receiving deliverables from consultants. While these were largely outside of the control of the PMU, the PMU took various steps to try to address the delays.

The UNDP played an important role in kickstarting the project as it took on project execution functions during the initial ten months of the project during a transition in government. After this point, it effectively performed its oversight and financial management functions throughout project implementation.

The design and implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation functions for this project are rated as *Satisfactory*. The M&E Plan included in the original ProDoc included all the main necessary activities and an appropriate budget. Actual expenditures during project implementation on M&E were lower than expected in part because some elements were achieved through the ongoing work of the PMU without incurring additional costs. Some adjustments were made to outputs and activities during project implementation to reflect changing realities, and these modifications contributed to the achievement of project results. However, the logframe was not revised accordingly and as such, did not function as effectively as it could have as a management tool to guide project progress. Feedback from many of the M&E activities, such as the field visits, financial audit, and monitoring of

consultancies, helped to inform management decisions. The recommendations made during the MTE were adopted to varying degrees- a few recommendations (such as the revision of the logframe) were not followed up on due to time constraints, and others such as the expansion of the PEG to include more local-level representatives were also decided against due to the already existing difficulties of obtaining quorum for the meetings.

The project successfully involved a wide range of stakeholders in its implementation. The PEG was representative of all key stakeholders, with the exception of local level representatives, whose participation was sought by the PMU without success. The PEG participated actively in project oversight, despite some difficulties in scheduling meetings. In addition, a government taskforce was established to provide technical input into the development of the Land Use Policy (LUP), Framework and Mapping System. It should be noted that extensive consultations with stakeholders were carried out both for the development of the Land Use Policy and Framework and the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve. The PMU carried out general outreach and public awareness activities, which enabled additional stakeholders to be reached. Partnerships were established with different organizations, such as the Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute, Friends of Conservation and Development, and BECOL, which served to expand the scope of the project to other geographic regions, to include more work on sustainable livelihoods, and to obtain co-financing.

Results and Sustainability

The TE rating for overall results in terms of attainment of objectives is *Satisfactory*. The project led to a significant improvement in the policy environment with the development and endorsement of the country's first LUP and Framework. The principles of SLM were also mainstreamed into various other national policies and plans, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Capacity building initiatives and pilot projects were carried out with government functionaries, farmers and the private sector. In terms of Outcomes, three of the four were completed, with the Medium-Term Investment Strategy still outstanding, however, actions have been set in motion to ensure its completion.

The TE rating for project relevance, effectiveness and efficiency is *Satisfactory*. The Land Use Policy was deemed highly relevant for the government of Belize to articulate the government's position on land distribution and allocation for the first time. Several of the other project deliverables were also considered to have significant national relevance in terms of promoting sustainable land management, including the development of an information-sharing protocol and the implementation of SLM pilot projects. In terms of effectiveness, the main outcomes apart from the Medium-Term Investment Strategy were achieved and have significant stakeholder buy-in. The project was relatively cost effective, achieving a great deal with the budget available and taking advantage of significant co-financing in excess of the original committed amounts. The next section provides a summary of the results achieved for each of the four Project Outcomes, while a more detailed analysis of the level of achievement of the Project Objective and Outcomes based on the logframe indicators is provided in the report.

Outcome 1- Long term plans for SLM and Integrated Natural Resources Management are developed and supported through enhanced policy, legal and institutional frameworks.

The development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System was considered to be the most significant achievement of the project, and was endorsed by Cabinet in 2011. This sets the foundation for long-term planning based on the principles of integrated and sustainable natural resource management. The Policy now needs to be complemented with the development of a national land use plan and local land use plans (the latter was recommended in the Land Use Framework to implement the Land Use Policy). With respect to the latter, the project consultants developed draft regulations for their development. While the National Action Program to Combat Desertification was not endorsed during the time period of the project due to the need for its substantial revision, the target established in the logframe was nevertheless achieved.

Outcome 2- Tools and capacities for SLM developed within government, public and private sector

In order to achieve this objective, the project provided training in GIS, invested in equipment to facilitate the application of the training, and built capacities within government and the private sector in SLM, particularly in the farming and mining sectors. In addition, an information-sharing protocol was developed as planned, though further work is now needed to implement this protocol. This Outcome was considered to have been largely achieved.

Outcome 3- Medium-Term Investment Plan developed

It should be noted that at the level of the global project, there was a change in focus and a push to develop an Integrated Financing Strategy rather than a Medium-Term Investment Plan, as had been originally envisioned. This Outcome was still outstanding at the time of the TE, but plans are in place to deliver the product before the end of the first quarter of 2013. There were significant delays resulting from problems securing promised co-financing, and the withdrawal of both the original consultant hired by the project as well as the team of consultants hired subsequently to carry out the consultancy.

Outcome 4- Adaptive management and learning
Adaptive management was employed throughout the project to deal with a variety of issues that emerged. In addition, project learning was regularly distilled in annual and monthly reports, and was shared in meetings, workshops, and presentations.

Country ownership of the project was felt to be high. This was facilitated by the fact that the PM was a civil servant and the fact that the PEG had a large proportion of government representatives on it. Ownership was particularly high for the LUP and Framework as attested by the fact that these were approved by Cabinet on the same day as their presentation. The pilot projects were carried out by government or with government support, which also generally allowed for government ownership. Some interviewees commented that ownership was somewhat less for a few of the project elements, such as the information-sharing protocol, for which there may not have been sufficient government commitment for follow-up.

By the time of the TE, the project had a delivery rate of 98%, including co-financing. Final co-financing amounts exceeded the ProDoc estimate as a result of substantial additional leveraged resources. There were definite variances between planned and actual expenditures per Outcome as a result of the consolidation of various outputs into the large consultancy to produce the LUP, Framework and Mapping System and the need to reallocate more funds to Outcome 1 to cover the cost of this consultancy. Outcome 3 has not yet been completed and has therefore underspent significantly. UNDP has committed to taking on the cost required to complete this deliverable. Externally funded components were generally well integrated into the GEF supported components and enabled an expansion in the scope of activities; the exception is the co-financing from FAO which was poorly coordinated with the project and did not facilitate achievement of the project's goals.

Finally, the sustainability of the project is rated as *Satisfactory*. This is due primarily to the substantial government commitment to implement the Land Use Policy and Framework and the continued involvement of stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Geology and Petroleum, in supporting and providing training in SLM practices. While there are some financial, sociopolitical, institutional framework and governance risks as detailed in the report, it is considered likely that the project's main achievements will be sustained.

Best Practices

- *Effective executing modality*

The designation of a civil servant from the Forest Department to manage the project led to increased ownership over the project and contributed to government capacity building. The fact that this person was dedicated primarily to the management of this project was crucial in the effectiveness of this executing modality.

- *Ongoing communication and consultation with relevant stakeholders*

Throughout, the project benefitted from a strong emphasis on maximizing communication and consultation with stakeholders, which increased buy-in for the project's deliverables. For example, several inception workshops were carried out at project start-up after a transition in government to ensure thorough understanding and support for the project. In addition, early on in the project, a policy paper on the Land Use Policy was presented to Cabinet members so they were kept abreast of this initiative from the beginning. During project implementation, the Project Manager worked to distill key products for PEG members to encourage feedback and consultants gave presentations to the PEG to outline the key aspects of their deliverables. The PMU was in regular communication with other ongoing projects in the Forest Department, which enabled linkages to be made and various benefits to be obtained, such as training opportunities. Extensive consultation was also carried out by consultants with a variety of stakeholders to develop key products, such as the Land Use Policy and Framework and the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy.

- Substantial involvement of government representatives in advisory bodies and pilot projects

The composition of the PEG included an emphasis on government representatives and was considered appropriate to ensure that the process would be steered and owned by government. The government task force established to accompany the process of development of the LUP was also viewed favourably as it enabled substantial input from relevant technical government staff into this nationally significant policy and implementing framework. Finally, the pilot projects were led by, or implemented in partnership with, government agencies, which allowed for continuity post-project.

Recommendations based on Lessons Learned

Project design

- *Ensure that all project components are in line with the national context and are realistically achievable*
  When projects are part of a global portfolio project, effort must be made to tailor all project elements to local realities. In addition, the project design should take into account the capacities of all stakeholders in order to establish realistically achievable targets.

- *Ensure the project time frame is appropriate to achieve deliverables*
  It is important not to underestimate the time it can take to implement project components to avoid placing undue burdens on the project team and consultants and to maximize chances of success. For example, the process of carrying out meaningful and inclusive consultations can be very time-consuming.

- *Allocate sufficient budget for awareness and outreach activities*
  This can serve to increase project visibility and garner support for the project, to build awareness and understanding (in this case of SLM) and ultimately to promote more sustainable practices.

- *Include sufficient funds to implement project outputs*

In this project, while there were funds to develop the information-sharing protocol, there was insufficient funding to roll it out across departments and ministries, particularly given the challenges of the interoperability of the data and incompatibility of operating systems within government. Although any attempt to mainstream new procedures inevitably requires time and in this case an institutional paradigm shift, funding to begin implementation during the project's lifespan should be allocated to kickstart the process and to reduce the risk of insufficient follow-up.

- *Explore ways to increase project sustainability at the design stage*
  This could involve building in fundraising for follow-up initiatives into the project's activities and/or obtaining commitments from relevant organizations for follow-up work post-project.

Project implementation

- *Provide adequate training/ orientation to PMU on UNDP/GEF project management, policies, and procedures*
  A mobilization period at project outset for such training is particularly important when project staff members do not have a solid background in these areas and will facilitate and speed up project implementation. Follow-up training during project implementation should also be considered, especially when policies and procedures change.

- *Clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders at project outset*
  The PMU, Project Director and PEG should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, lines of communication, and lines of decision-making.

- *Update logical framework as needed to ensure it functions as a useful management tool*
  When modifications are made during project implementation to address changing conditions (e.g., the consolidation of outputs or elimination of activities), the logframe should be revised as soon as possible so that its usefulness as a tool for project management to monitor project progress can be fully exploited.

- *Strive to put in place optimal contract negotiating conditions*
  Avoiding unnecessary breaks in negotiations with consultants, maintaining a consistent line of communication, and identifying a lead negotiator can contribute to reducing delays in procurement processes.

- *Reduce possibility of consultant delays and requests for extensions*
  It may be useful to include obligations in contractual agreements specifying the amount of notice that consultants must give for extensions and outlining the consequences of failure to do so. Such delays can also be minimized by making sure that the timelines for delivery of products are realistic in the first place.

- *Request that consultants provide any material requiring stakeholder review in a timely fashion*
  Given the many other responsibilities of committee members and other stakeholders, sufficient time for review and provision of input must be built into project timelines.

- *Ensure sufficient time for consultation throughout all stages of the development of products*
  When consultations for nationally relevant policies are being carried out, time must be reserved for the validation of draft documents with stakeholders to ensure that their input was satisfactorily incorporated.

- *Plan appropriately when international consultants are hired*
  This includes setting aside sufficient funds and time for the required in-country visits or planning for local/national organizations to provide support in terms of data gathering.

- *Select/screen participants in committees and training sessions strategically*
  The identification of participants should take into consideration factors such as their availability to participate, their abilities/expertise, the likelihood that they will actually apply the knowledge gained on the job (in the case of training sessions) and their individual interest in participating.

- *Carefully consider the appropriate length and modality of training sessions*
  For training initiatives, a balance should be sought between providing sufficient time for absorption and practical application of new skills versus ensuring that training is not so drawn out over time that participation wanes due to other departmental obligations or staff priorities.

- *Provide practical demonstrations of new technologies and practices*
  This will enable users to recognize the potential applications and benefits of new technologies and practices and will increase the likelihood of their adoption.

- *Do not underestimate the cost and planning required to mainstream technologies into government operations*
  The provision of training in a new technology is not sufficient to integrate into government systems- strategic analysis of the planned application of such technologies, as well as the inclusion of a budget for ongoing costs such as software maintenance and follow-up training must also be undertaken by government.

- *Ensure compatibility of any new tools with government systems and allocate sufficient budget for purchase of necessary tools and equipment*
  The Terms of Reference for consultants should request that they strive to ensure compatibility of any tools they develop with existing government systems. Given internal inconsistencies within government in terms of hardware and software, sufficient funding to purchase the necessary equipment and tools is also critical.

- *Request that consultants provide supporting documentation on the use of new tools*
  User-friendly manuals should be provided by consultants to accompany any new tools or systems developed to ensure that different government departments and ministries can clearly understand their use.

- *Clarify proposal and report writing requirements to pilot project managers from the outset*
  It is important that pilot project managers are up to speed on UNDP/GEF proposal, narrative and financial reporting requirements to expedite project execution.

- *Select agencies to carry out pilot projects that are likely to continue to provide follow-up after project completion*
  Ideally, the pilot project activities should constitute a core part of the work of the organizations selected to implement such projects to increase the likelihood that the project impact will be sustained over time.

- *High-level commitment is critical to ensure follow up*

Commitment from higher levels of government is necessary to ensure follow through on project initiatives (in the case of this project, the information-sharing protocol may not have received sufficient prioritization).

- *Identify ways to facilitate scheduling of board and committee meetings*
  Various possible strategies should be considered, from scheduling several meetings at once, to ensuring all members have alternates, to piggy-backing off of other meetings with some of the same members.

- *Put in place mechanisms to ensure committee members participate actively and relay information to their institution*
  The roles, responsibilities and expected level of participation of committee members should be clarified from the outset to ensure that all members provide meaningful input. Also, members need to commit to and provide evidence that they are relaying information and decisions made back to their respective institutions to maximize information exchange and project impact.

- *Explore ways to increase local-level participation*
  As has been the experience with other projects in Belize, it was difficult to get local-level participation on the project PEG. The barriers preventing such participation need to be more thoroughly analyzed in order to come up with effective solutions.

- *Keep members of the opposition party abreast when it comes to the development of nationally relevant documents*
  This serves to increase buy-in and sustainability of project impact in the event of a change in government.

- *Request co-financing commitments in writing and coordinate co-financing*
  This will reduce possible delays in project execution and ensure that co-financing contributes smoothly to the project's goals. In addition to obtaining the co-financing amounts in writing, it would be useful to obtain agreements from cofunders outlining how funds will be dispersed and the expected outcomes in order to facilitate the PMU's task of tracking and reporting on co-financing.

- *Include a budget for editing and/or translation*
  This will enable products developed by consultants to be polished if necessary to improve flow or deal with language issues, and will reduce the demands on the PMU to carry out this work.

- *Promote greater knowledge management and inter-project learning at the global and regional levels for future projects adopting a portfolio approach.*
  Greater networking at the regional and global levels to facilitate the exchange of information would increase learning and allow individual countries to benefit more from a global project with joint objectives.

Table 1: Ratings for Terminal Evaluation of the SLM Project

Project element	**Rating**
Project formulation- planned stakeholder participation	Highly Satisfactory
Project implementation- UNDP and EA Execution	Satisfactory
Project implementation- monitoring and evaluation- design and implementation	Satisfactory
Project results- overall results (attainment of objectives)	Satisfactory
Project results- relevance, effectiveness and efficiency	Satisfactory
Sustainability	Satisfactory

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

1. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) is a requirement of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) and is thus principally initiated by UNDP Belize Country Office. It was conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures for such evaluations established by UNDP and GEF.

2. The overall objective of the TE is to analyze the implementation of the project and review the achievements made by the project to deliver the specified objective and outcomes. It establishes the relevance, performance and success of the project, including the sustainability of results. The evaluation also brings together and analyzes best practices, specific lessons and recommendations pertaining to the strategies employed and implementation arrangements, which may be of relevance to other projects in the country and elsewhere in the world.

3. The TE provides a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of a completed project by assessing its project design, process of implementation and results vis-à-vis the project objective and outcomes. TEs have three complementary purposes:

   - To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishments;
   - To synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP-GEF activities;
   - To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.

2.2 Key Issues Addressed

4. This evaluation will analyze the following five main criteria:

   - Relevance**.** The extent to which the activities are suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
   - Effectiveness**.** The extent to which the results have been achieved or how likely they are to be achieved.
   - Efficiency**.** The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
   - Results**.** The positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to, and effects produced by, a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and longer term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects, and other local effects.
   - Sustainability**.** The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

5. The evaluation will provide general information about the evaluation; outline the project description and development context; analyze the project design and project implementation (including the M&E system),

assess the level of achievement of project results and; comment on the sustainability of project outcomes. As specified in the TORs, certain elements will be rated using a scale from Highly Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory.

2.3 Methodology of the Evaluation

6. The methodology for this Terminal Evaluation included the following components:

A) Evaluation Preparation:

- The consultant carried out an extensive review of documentation, including the Project Document and all other relevant information. The list of documents studied is provided in Annex 2;
- The overall development situation of the country (based on the UNDP Common Country Assessment and other available reports) was reviewed.
- Attempts were made to hold an initial telephone discussion with the UNDP RTA (this eventually took place shortly after the mission).
- An Inception Report was prepared with a detailed mission programme, including the evaluation methodology to be followed.

B) Evaluation Mission:

- Debriefing session was held with UNDP/Belize, the Project Manager and Project Assistant.
- Interviews were carried out with 20 individuals involved in different capacities in the project (see Annex 4).
- Additional material received during the mission was reviewed with a focused attention to project outcomes and outputs.
- The initial findings were presented by the consultant to the UNDP Environmental Programme Analyst, the Project Manager and Project Assistant.

C) Report preparation:

7. This involved a detailed analysis of data, follow-up phone calls and e-mails to address information gaps, and consolidation of the information. The draft report was prepared in accordance with guidelines and Terms of Reference for this Terminal Evaluation (see Annex 1). Upon receipt of reviewer comments, a final evaluation report will be prepared.

2.4 Structure of the Evaluation

8. The structure of this evaluation follows the Terms of Reference provided by UNDP Belize and approved by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit (see Annex 1). UNDP Guidelines for Evaluators as well as GEF evaluation policies were followed as well as the specific expectations of the Implementing Agency (IA) and Executing Agency (EA).

3 Project Description and Development Context

3.1 Project Start and Duration

9. The GEF approved the project in January 8, 2008, with a three year implementation period and a planned closing date of January 2011. A new government came into office in February 2008. As a result of the lack of progress in project execution, the government formally requested that UNDP host the Project Management Unit as of July 2008. The project officially commenced on July 15, 2008 but the first disbursements were made in September 2008. Inception workshops were carried out in July and September 2008 in Belmopan, Belize. Management of the project was transferred back to the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment in July 2009, with the PMU established therein. The Terminal Evaluation is being carried out from March to May 2012. The project's operational closure is planned for June 2012 and financial closure for December 2012.

3.2 Problems that the Project Seeks to Address

10. Belize is facing increasing levels of actual and potential land degradation. As identified in the project proposal, there are a variety of inter-related issues that are driving land degradation, including increased demand for land for expanding rural and urban communities and for agriculture. Causes and contributors to land degradation include deforestation and land conversions; farming on marginal lands, including on steep slopes; the use of fire; unplanned growth and settlements; invasive species; livestock overgrazing; logging; and surface mining. It is primarily the application of poor practices in land management that constitutes the root problem requiring intervention. A number of barriers preventing the problems from being addressed were also identified in the proposal, including institutional and governance barriers (in particularly poor development control and lack of comprehensive planning), economic and financial barriers (including insufficient access to capital for small and medium operators and the lack of fiscal incentives to promote mitigation and rehabilitation), social and behavioural barriers (particularly the prevailing sense of entitlement to parcels of land even if these are not suitable); and technology and knowledge barriers (the need for improved planning tools for planning and infrastructure development). The project was designed to address the causes of land degradation and barriers through policy development, capacity building, pilot initiatives and empowerment of communities and local governments to manage and mitigate the unsustainable use of land resources.

3.3 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

11. **Goal (Development Objective of the Project):** Ecosystem functions and integrity in productive landscapes in Belize maintained through sustainable use of land resources thus providing for long term socio-economic development.

12. **(Immediate) Objective of the Project:** An enabling environment for sustainable land management enhanced through mainstreaming, capacity building, and improvements in policy, legislative and institutional frameworks.

13. The following four project outcomes were articulated in response to the overall project objective:

i) Long term plans for SLM and Integrated Natural Resources Management are developed and supported through enhanced policy, legal and institutional frameworks;

ii) Tools and capacities for SLM developed within government, public and private sectors;

iii) Medium Term Investment Plan developed.

iv) Adaptive Management and Learning

3.4 Main Stakeholders

14. The project is affected directly and indirectly by various stakeholders distributed across various sectors. The primary stakeholders (affected directly by the project interventions) include institutions and individuals involved in natural resource management[1], including:

    - Ministry of Natural Resources (Forest Department as focal point for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification- UNCCD- and as executing agency for the project, Department of Environment as GEF operational focal point, Department of Lands and Surveys, and the Department of Geology and Petroleum);
    - Ministry of Agriculture;
    - Ministry of National Development (Rural Development);
    - UNDP Belize Country Office;
    - Farmers, landowners and local communities and their leaders represented through the National Association of Village Councils and the Mayors Association.

15. These were are all identified as important stakeholders for the implementation of the project to be successful. The majority of these primary stakeholders were represented on the project's Executing Group (PEG).

16. Secondary stakeholders include other government institutions, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), academia (University of Belize and Galen), Friends of Conservation and Development (an NGO), and the National Protected Areas Commission (NPAC), which conduct research or implement initiatives related to sustainable land use management, and other organizations or projects with supporting objectives. Included also are the government institutions that coordinate productive sector initiatives, such as tourism.

17. A third level of stakeholders includes the NGOs or sectors that provide support to project activities and that are involved in other supporting and complementary initiatives being carried out at the national level, such as Belize Rural Development Program.

3.5 Expected Results

18. The Logical Framework presented in Annex 6 identifies the Project Objective and four Project Outcomes, as well as associated indicators, baselines, targets, sources of verification, risks and assumptions.

[1] Note that after the recent elections in March 2012 there was significant restructuring of government departments and ministries. However, this report will make reference to the structure in place before the elections during the greater part of project implementation.

4 Findings

4.1 Project Design/ Formulation

- **Analysis of LFA (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)**

19. In general, the project design was based on a sound analysis of threats and barriers and it identified an appropriate project objective and outcomes. However, the logical framework included in the Project Document[2] had a number of deficiencies in its formulation. Firstly, in some instances the targets did not correspond with the indicators and/or the indicators and targets did not correspond to the outcome under which they were listed. For example, under Outcome 2 there is an indicator entitled "land management decisions benefitting from information system" but no corresponding target under Outcome 2, while Outcome 3 includes the target "enhanced and interconnected land and geographic information system, including NEGIS and LIS", which is unrelated to the actual Outcome and has no corresponding indicator. In addition, some of the sources of verification listed are not appropriate for the Outcome. For example under Outcome 3, which relates to the development of the Medium Term Investment Plan, the sources of verification listed in the logframe are "legislation for information management" and "enhanced protocols for information exchange". In addition, some of the indicators were framed as targets (e.g., Under Outcome 2, "agriculture, habitat expansion and enterprise development activities incorporate considerations for best land use practices in at least 15 communities"). A careful revision of the logframe at project outset might have been useful to correct these problems and inconsistencies and ensure that the indicators and targets were appropriate, realistic and appropriately framed.

20. In addition, it could be argued that some of the indicators and targets were overly ambitious for a three-year project, given the existing capacities. For example one of the targets was that 600 residents of cities and towns would be trained in sustainable land management concepts and issues. Furthermore, two interviewees commented that a few of the elements included were not realistic in the Belizean context (e.g., the implementation of an information-sharing protocol given the reticence to share information within government). Others felt that when the project was designed all elements seemed feasible, realistic and implementable based on the information available at the time and the commitments made by different organizations. However, it might have been useful to more carefully assess the capacity of those stakeholders that were to implement certain elements of the project (such as the village councils) in order to ensure that they would be able to follow through.

21. During project implementation, changes were made to the original log frame to adjust outputs and activities to reflect changing realities, costs, and time constraints, and to ensure achievement of the project's main outcomes, particularly relating to Outcomes 1 and 3. The actual logframe indicators and targets were not changed.

- **Assumptions and Risks**

22. In general, project assumptions/ risks were clearly formulated in the original logical framework. One small exception under Outcome 4 is the risk of "high staff turnover within project structure", which may not be an appropriate risk to include as it is not fully external to the project.

[2] Note that the evaluator was instructed to use the logframe included in the ProDoc for the purpose of the Terminal Evaluation. A somewhat different version of the logframe was included in the project proposal.

- **Lessons from Other Relevant Projects (e.g., same focal area) Incorporated into Project Design**

23. This evaluation cannot comment on the extent to which lessons learned at the global level from other projects were incorporated into the design of the global portfolio project. However, at the national level, the portfolio project was modified to adjust to national circumstances, taking into account lessons learned from other relevant projects. In particular, a project implemented prior to this project used the same executing modality of having a civil servant manage the project. However, in that instance, the project's management was an additional task imposed on the civil servant on top of an already long list of responsibilities and was not written into their job description. That project suffered as a result of the fact that the project manager was not able to devote sufficient time to it. This experience was discussed and the decision was made during the design of this SLM project that the project would again be managed by a civil servant but that this person would be dedicated primarily to managing this project. In fact, project execution was the civil servant's main responsibility and this was explicit in her TORs.

- **Planned Stakeholder Participation (*) (*Highly Satisfactory)***

24. The planned stakeholder participation for the project is considered *Highly Satisfactory*. The Project Document outlines the composition of the Project Steering Committee, which was to include representatives of all relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE)- Policy Coordination Unit, Department of Lands and Surveys, Forest Department and Department of Geology and Petroleum; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of National Development (Rural Development); Private Sector Companies (Belize Electric Company Limited); Friends of Conservation and Development (NGO); National Association of Village Councils; Association of Mayors; UNCCD Focal Point; and the UNDP Belize Country Office. The ProDoc indicated that the Project Steering Committee would meet on a quarterly basis in order to provide policy guidance, technical advice on implementation, and to support monitoring and evaluation of project delivery.

25. In order to facilitate inter-sectoral cooperation and stakeholder involvement, the project proposal also anticipated the development of cooperation agreements with the Village Council Association, conservation NGOs/ civil society groups, private sector investors in the areas of forestry, agriculture, mining and the national utility companies. Other mechanisms besides the PEG to ensure cross-sectoral integration within the public sector were also identified in the project proposal (such as through interaction with the Policy Coordination Unit of the MNRE).

26. The level of actual stakeholder participation in project design is considered Highly Satisfactory as well. Stakeholder input was gathered through a number of consultations that were carried out on the NCSA, the national awareness seminar associated with the NAP, and the land policy and land use consultations under the Land Management Programme carried out from 2003-2005. Focus groups were organized to identify priorities and decide on implementation arrangements; these groups included the National Coordinating Body of the UNCCD (including public and private sector representatives) and village and town council representatives. There were also individual consultations with stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Government departments, such as the Department of Geology and Petroleum, were involved in the project design from the outset.

- **Replication Approach**

27. The project proposal identified various elements that could promote replication of sustainable land management practices throughout the country, including the creation of an enabling legislative and regulatory environment, the strengthening of institutional tools and capacities in SLM and the identification of investment and resource mobilization opportunities. In addition, it was envisioned that the implementation of pilot projects and the establishment of demonstration sites would lead to replication through their mainstreaming into national regulations and permitting processes. However, the proposal does not provide further detail or how the pilot work would specifically be integrated into larger processes or lead to wider-scale application. The project planned for the development of training tools such as a manual on soil conservation and slope management and a manual on land rehabilitation, designed to encourage replication of best farming and mining practices. In addition, the project proposal committed to the documentation of lessons learned and education and outreach activities, which could promote increased uptake of SLM practices as well.

- **UNDP Comparative Advantage**

28. UNDP-Belize has a strong comparative advantage as the Implementing Agency for this project. UNDP is the only GEF Implementing Agency with a physical office in Belize, an extensive network of contacts in the country to draw upon, knowledge of partner dynamics and direct linkages to these contacts. As such, UNDP's Country Office and Environmental Programme Analyst are able to provide the Executing Agency with a greater level of support and technical backstopping. This physical office and capacity proved particularly critical in this project when the new GOB did not feel it had the absorptive capacity to begin to execute this project and therefore requested UNDP Belize to take on project execution for the first ten months of the project.

29. UNDP has played an important role in supporting natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use initiatives in Belize. It should also be noted that UNDP has previously implemented a number of GEF projects, such as the "Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Belize Barrier Reef" Full-Sized Project, "Golden Stream Watershed Project", and two Full-Sized regional programmes that include Belize, namely the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System. As a result, UNDP has valuable experience and lessons learned to draw upon. UNDP's knowledge of previous and ongoing projects enabled the SLM project to be informed of linkages with other projects from which the project could benefit (e.g., through the provision of training opportunities). Finally, UNDP played an important role in the development of the National Action Plan for UNCCD, which influenced the design of this project, and provides support for ongoing UNCCD monitoring and reporting processes.

- **Linkages between Project and Other Interventions Within the Sector**

30. The project design adequately identified linkages between the project and other interventions in the sector, such as the Belize Rural Development Program, which carries out complementary sustainable livelihood activities. The proposal also indicates that the project will "advance and reinforce" the lessons that have emerged from Belize's Land Management Programme. At project development, efforts were underway to incorporate natural resource management objectives in the 2006-2010 poverty elimination strategy. Clear linkages between the project and the activities of UNDP Belize Country Office are outlined in the project proposal and include linkages with the NCSA-MSP project ("Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Coordinating Multi-Sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes" or SICCM), whose objective is to

strengthen coordination among natural resource managers and decision makers. In general, sufficient detail is provided in the project proposal on baseline activities and their linkages to this project.

- **Management Arrangements**

31. The management arrangements established in the project design are considered appropriate. The selected project Executing Agency (EA) was the Forest Department within the then Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. Given the project's significant focus on developing policies and procedures and training government, it made sense that it be executed by government. Furthermore, as the Forest Department (FD) is the focal point for the UNCCD, it naturally falls on it to act as the executing agency. The UNDP was identified as the Implementing Agency and the project was to be managed using the standard UNDP NEX modality (National Execution).

32. The Project Document (ProDoc) specifies that a Project Management Unit (PMU) would be established within the EA. This would include a Project Manager (PM) to head the PMU and to assume responsibility for direct project execution, including the day-to-day operations, guided by approved work plans. The PM would be funded by the Government of Belize and would be supported by a Project Assistant funded by GEF. The EA is to assign a Project Director (PD) who would not be paid by the project, and who would be responsible for ongoing supervision of the project and ensuring adherence to existing policies and contractual obligations with the UNDP.

33. The ProDoc also indicated that a Project Executing Group (PEG) would be established to guide and oversee the execution of the project. The PEG is to meet quarterly and is responsible for policy guidance and technical advice on implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation (ensuring successful delivery against work schedules and adherence to UNDP GEF procedures and guidelines). The proposed members of the PEG are listed in the ProDoc (and in the section on Planned stakeholder participation of this report).

34. UNDP is the Implementing Agency for the project, responsible for disbursing funds and for management oversight and has the final responsibility for timely reporting, monitoring and evaluation and submission of audits to UNDP Headquarters. The UNDP Regional Coordination Office in Panama will provide technical backstopping, UNDP GEF policy advice, trouble shooting and advisory services if necessary.

4.2 Project Implementation

- **UNDP and Executing Agency Execution (*), Coordination, and Operational Issues (*Satisfactory)***

35. The UNDP and Executing Agency execution of this project are rated as *Satisfactory* and both organizations maintained a strong focus on the results that the project was meant to achieve.

36. The modality for the implementation of this project was UNDP NEX, that is, national execution, with the UNDP disbursing funds and providing management oversight. The Project Management Unit was established within the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. For this project the decision was made to hire the Project Manager on as a civil servant within the FD. Many of those interviewed within government felt that this executing modality provided added value as it contributed to capacity building and built-in sustainability in terms of the project management skills acquired through the project. The UNDP also perceived this executing modality as beneficial, given that an integral part of its work in-country is to contribute to national capacity building. Past experience in Belize has shown that for this

modality to function, it requires the commitment of the public officer to take on the often demanding tasks of managing a GEF project, the commitment of the Head of Department to ensure that the employee is not overextended with other tasks, and the right personality to take on the job. In this case, the PM's main responsibility was the management of the SLM project, with approximately 30% of her time dedicated to other responsibilities related to UNCCD that were closely aligned with this project. While these multiple tasks contributed to the demanding nature of her position, from the standpoint of the government and of UNDP, this executing modality worked well.

37. After the initial period of UNDP execution (see paragraph 41), the PMU in the FD took over all project execution functions. The Project Manager who was hired did not have a background in project management or in the thematic area of focus of this project and there was no time set aside specifically for the mobilization of this new staff member. As such, there was an initial learning curve as she came up to speed on project management, and on UNDP and GEF policies, procedures and jargon, and some delays resulted. Besides receiving training from the UNDP and from AED, the project took advantage of training opportunities offered by other MNRE projects and the NCSA project. By the time of the MTE in early 2011, the evaluator felt that further strengthening of the PMU would be beneficial. However, in general most interviewees agreed that after the initial transitioning period and after receiving training in results-based management, the PMU effectively managed the project- coordinating and monitoring the consultancies, organizing PEG meetings and carrying out the narrative and financial reporting functions and M&E, among other tasks.

38. Narrative reports were prepared accurately and realistically, with problems experienced and efforts undertaken by the PMU and the PEG to address these highlighted. Early on there were some delays in the preparation of stage plans, but narrative reports were subsequently prepared in a timely fashion. To supplement the Annual Progress Reports, the PM decided to prepare monthly reports for the later period of project execution (as of August 2010) to provide more regular updates on progress towards goals; these reports were sent to PEG members, including the CEO.

39. Technical support was provided to the PMU in the form of the input of the PEG and of the government task force created to support the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System. The PMU sometimes experienced delays in obtaining input from PEG, and as a result, several measures were taken to improve this situation. For example, the Project Manager provided summaries of products or highlighted key areas for review by PEG members, and the consultants presented their outputs directly to the PEG. In addition to the support provided by the PEG, the project contracted various consultants and organizations to produce different outputs, which were generally perceived to be of high quality. When products were not satisfactory, interviewees commented that the PMU held its ground to ensure that strong products were developed. The PMU followed up regularly to ensure the delivery of different outputs, keep the project on track and carry out quality control of the deliverables of consultancies.

40. Despite the PMU's regular follow-up of deliverables, one of the main operational issues experienced by the project was delays in the submission of products by consultants, with relatively frequent requests for extensions of the deliverable due dates. There are various possible reasons for this, including the need for consultants to more carefully plan when they can deliver the expected outputs[3]; and insufficient recognition within the Terms of Reference and by the consultants, the PEG and the PMU of the length of time some of the consultancies would take, particularly those involving consultations with stakeholders. It is possible that with more realistic timelines, some of the last minute changes to the project schedule could have been avoided. Another reason for the delays related to the time it took for consultants to receive the necessary data from agencies and to receive feedback on deliverables, which also must be taken into account when setting timelines.

[3] It should be noted that UNDP carries out an evaluation of consultants' work at the end of consultancies and uses this information to inform future procurement.

41. A second significant operational issue that arose was the lengthy delay of approximately two years in the contracting process for the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System (from 2008-2010). During the first bidding process, no consultants that were acceptable to the government were identified. A second bidding process extended to the international market, but the decision was made by the government not to proceed with international consultants partly through the contract negotiation process underway between UNDP and the consultants. Finally, there were budgetary issues at play and it was decided in the third hiring round to increase the amount of money available for this consultancy as it was found that the activity was under-budgeted in the original proposal. As a result, funds were reprogrammed from other budget lines within the project. The contracting situation was described by one of the interviewees as a "protracted, painful process". There were also many delays in the process of development of the IFS, which has yet to be completed. These were related to issues including the failure of one of the co-financing organizations to come through on its promise, the withdrawal of the consultants hired, as well as the change in direction in the expected deliverable and the difficulty of assigning a budget to as cross-cutting an issue as SLM.

42. The UNDP was felt to have effectively performed its oversight and financial management functions and to have been instrumental in the project's success. It should be noted that for the first ten months of the project after a change in government, UNDP executed the project in response to a formal request by government that UNDP take on this role until it had established the absorptive capacity to take over. During this time, the UNDP Project Management Unit adhered to UNDP finance and procurement rules and regulations. The UNDP was considered to have managed the project well during this interim period during which time the UNDP Belize Country Office Environmental Programme Analyst essentially acted as the Project Manager providing oversight, with the support of a Program Assistant hired with project funds.

43. Once FD took over project execution, UNDP continued to engage in regular communication with the PMU and to provide ongoing support to the project, including feedback on documents. The UNDP's presence in-country was felt to be a value-added benefit. UNDP also provided co-financing to support achievement of the project's objectives. One of the only minor issues raised was the fact that UNDP policies and procedures tended to change regularly (e.g., the format of the AOPs), requiring the PMU to adapt to these changes. There were a few interviewees who felt UNDP might have overstepped its role at times, particularly in terms of the contracting processes and that there needed to be more of a recognition that this was a government owned project. However, this was not the consensus viewpoint and this evaluator viewed evidence of open processes and proper procedures being employed by the UNDP in the contracting processes.

44. In general, the EA and IA and adopted a flexible approach and responded efficiently and appropriately when implementation problems arose by making the necessary changes. For more details, please see the Adaptive Management section.

45. A detailed risk log was developed and maintained by the PM to support risk management (though this tool did not begin to be used until some time into implementation). The risk log outlined the various risks to achievement of project outputs and outcomes. Appropriate counter-measures to these risks were identified in the risk log and the status of each risk was defined, with the exception of the last four risks in the table, for which some information was missing or required updating (e.g., the December 2011 hiring of BEST to complete the IFS consultancy and their withdrawal in January was not mentioned in the risk log reviewed by the evaluator, nor a countermeasure to deal with this). The comment was made that while there may have been some oversights in terms of the reporting of risks related to the inexperience of the PM with the risk log tool, the risks were nonetheless being actively monitored by the PMU throughout the work it was performing.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation: Design and Implementation (*) (*Satisfactory)***

46. Overall, the design and implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation functions is rated as *Satisfactory*. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan presented in the Project Document was appropriate and included all the main necessary M&E activities, including preparation of an inception report, Annual Progress Reports, quarterly operational reports, project publications and technical reports where appropriate, annual surveys, Tri-Partite meeting, mid-term and final external evaluations, terminal report, audit, visits to field sites and gathering of lessons learned. The roles and responsibilities for M&E were clearly articulated in the Project Document. The budget for Monitoring and Evaluation provided in the Project Document was $50,500.00, which is considered sufficient. By project end, $27,411.27 was actually spent on M&E ($10,912.50 of GEF funds, $11,065 of UNDP funds and $700 in-kind), spent primarily on the audit, the two evaluations, and the field visits. The fact that less was spent than the budgeted amount may have been in part because there were no formal annual surveys carried out, nor was there a separate lessons learned document commissioned. Regular monitoring was carried out and lessons learned were documented through the various project reports, but these were part of the ongoing work of the PMU and did not incur additional expenses.

47. Baseline information was well articulated in the Logical Framework. Indicators were provided in the logical framework included in the ProDoc, however, as changes were made during project implementation in terms of modifying or combining outputs and activities, corresponding changes in the indicators and targets were not made in the logframe. In 2009-2010, certain targets that would not be attainable in the lifespan of the project were identified; while the logframe was not revised, some changes were made to the AOPs. A more detailed analysis of the adequacy of the original logframe is provided in section 4.1. It should be noted that since this was a part of a larger global portfolio project, annual PIRs that report against the logical framework were not required, with simplified Annual Progress Reviews being submitted instead.

48. The Mid-Term Evaluation in early 2011 identified the need to revise the logical framework in light of various changes that had been made. However, it was decided that there was insufficient time for this logframe review and approval by the PEG, given the time constraints facing the project and the significant number of products to deliver in 2011. As a result, the logframe was not used to the extent possible as a management tool to guide project progress and performance. For future projects, it is recommended that such a revision of the logframe be undertaken earlier on in the project so that it can function more effectively as a useful tool for project management.

49. In general, while the PMU took some time to become familiarized with all the M&E requirements at the outset, the functions were carried out effectively for this project, including the preparation of necessary reports and monitoring of the consultancies. Regular communication and field visits to the pilot projects were carried out when appropriate.

50. It is difficult to comment on the level of consistency between the APR self-ratings and the ratings of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) because the time of submission of the APRs differed from the evaluations. The ratings for progress towards addressing project priorities and delivering expected products in the 2011 APR were Satisfactory from the PM, UNDP CO and UNDP RTA. On the other hand, the MTE which was concluded in January of 2011 (half a year before the 2011 APR) included somewhat lower ratings, specifically: Moderately Satisfactory for project execution, Satisfactory for financial planning and reporting and a range of ratings from Moderately Unsatisfactory through to Satisfactory for project results. In part the higher APR rating may have been because it was completed a half a year later than the MTE, when more deliverables would have been achieved. The TE ratings provided in this report cannot be directly compared to the APR ratings for 2012 as the latter has not yet been prepared (this is due around July 2012). However, if compared to the 2011 APR ratings they are relatively similar: APR ratings for 2011 were satisfactory from the PM, UNDP CO and UNDP RTA, while the TE ratings are Satisfactory for Project Execution-Implementation, Satisfactory for M&E, Satisfactory for Results and Satisfactory for Sustainability.

- **Financial Planning**

51. The PMU was felt to have been very diligent with its fiduciary responsibilities. Financial planning and reporting were perceived as sound throughout project implementation, and reports, such as Quarterly Operational Reports and Annual Operational Plans, were submitted on a timely basis. The one audit undertaken during the project did not reveal any significant problems. The only financial issue raised during the Mid-Term Evaluation was the fact that co-financing was not being adequately tracked, a situation which had been addressed by the time of the Terminal Evaluation. Please see Table 3 for the final co-financing figures, as well as Annex 7 for the final project expenditures. Note that the final co-financing exceeded the original amount in the Project Document (see Results section- Finances, for more details).

- **Feedback from M&E Activities Used for Adaptive Management**

52. The PMU's regular monitoring activities (such as field visits, monitoring of consultancies and of pilot projects, preparation of APRs and of quarterly operational reports) informed management decisions. In addition, the monitoring reports prepared by the PMU were used by the PEG to review progress, draw lessons and make decisions, employing an adaptive management approach. Follow-up actions were also implemented based on the recommendations made by the auditor in 2009. The Tripartite meeting carried out in April 2012 led to decisions being taken on how to address the outstanding deliverable under Outcome 3 (the Medium Term Investment Strategy or the IFS).

53. The Mid-Term Evaluation yielded several recommendations, which were adopted to varying degrees. These included, among others:

    - The revision and approval of a modified logframe. The decision was made not to proceed with this recommendation. The PMU and UNDP felt it would be difficult to do so because of the limited time available and the challenge of scheduling additional PEG time for review and approval of the logframe (especially when the project was already experiencing significant difficulties in scheduling meetings and obtaining quorum).

    - Identification of increased opportunities for involvement of non-state actors, including through the PEG. Given the difficulties already being experienced in obtaining quorum for PEG meetings and the limited time left for project implementation, the PEG decided that any expansion of this body would lead to further delays in scheduling meetings and reviewing and approving deliverables.

    - Careful monitoring and review of deliverables. This recommendation was made given that many of the deliverables were just being produced at the time of the MTE and much needed to be done in a relatively short period of time. This recommendation was effectively carried out by the PMU and PEG.

    - Strengthening of the project management skills of the PMU. The PMU received training in the use of PRINCE and made use of several PRINCE tools.

    - Increased accounting of co-financing contributions. This was carried out by the Project Assistant.

    - The establishment of a technical advisory team to assist in providing technical input into products delivered by consultants because neither the PMU nor the PEG would have sufficient time to carefully review extensive documents. The decision was made that rather than establishing another formal committee, documents would be sent out to the appropriate individuals for technical review as needed.

- The no-cost extension of the project. This project was extended from January 2011 to June 2012 for operational closure.

54. Many of the MTE recommendations focused on process issues because earlier delays in various consultancies meant that there were few completed deliverables and results that could be analyzed by the evaluators. Some interviewees commented that the reason that some of the recommendations could not be followed up on was because the MTE was carried out relatively late in project execution, which in turn was due to earlier delays in project execution.

- **Adaptive Management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)**

55. While the main environmental and development objectives of the project did not change during project implementation, various changes in planned project outputs and activities had to be made. In general it is perceived that the project has been very flexible in terms of addressing different bottlenecks and issues that have arisen- most of which were externalities and outside of the control of the PMU- in order to find solutions.

56. There were numerous occasions during project implementation that required adaptive management as will be highlighted in the examples that follow. In terms of the implementation/execution modality, the decision was made to have UNDP execute the project during its first ten months. At the time of project start up, a new government was just coming into office and the administration felt that it did not yet have the absorptive capacity to take on the execution of the project. UNDP's assumption of this role was very important to jumpstart project activities and prevent the national project from undermining progress at the global level (as this was part of a global portfolio project). After approximately ten months, the government was ready to take on execution functions with a Project Management Unit established within the Forest Department. As a result of this transition from UNDP to FD, the PM took over from the UNDP CO Environmental Programme Analyst, which entailed a learning curve while the new PM became familiarized with the relevant policies and procedures, as previously mentioned. Later on, there was a transition to a new Project Assistant, which also involved a period of adjustment as there was no formal orientation provided. Apart from personnel changes, the project was able to survive two administrations and is now being concluded during a third administration, which has required adaptive management to socialize new actors and to deal with changing government structures and personnel.

57. The decision was made to combine several outputs into one consultancy for the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System. Related to this consolidation of outputs was the reallocation of funds from other activities and outputs to increase the total amount available for this large combined consultancy, which was considered in many ways to be the most important product of the entire project. This change did not materially change the expected project outcomes and was in fact deemed necessary to ensure fulfillment of these outcomes. The changes were brought about mainly by the difficulty of finding consultants to develop the Land Use Policy as a stand-alone consultancy given the funds available; and the economic reality of the cost of the Land Use Policy consultancy. The changes would have been difficult to predict during project conception and were all approved by the Project Executing Group.

58. As part of the reallocation of funds, one of the planned pilot projects, the urban planning and mapping project in San Ignacio/ Santa Elena, under Outcome 2 was eliminated. This was not seen by interviewees as having a significant impact on the achievement of the Outcome. The scope of another one of the pilots, the mining rehabilitation pilot, was modified with the elimination of the establishment of an actual demonstration site to showcase mining rehabilitation. Instead, workshops are planned to take place in sites where some rehabilitation work has already been carried out. This was due to the difficulty identifying a suitable demonstration site after the original site was found to have shifted to private hands. It could be argued that a

decision on how to proceed, given the delays in identifying a demonstration site for the mining rehabilitation pilot project, could have been made sooner by the PMU and the PEG to speed up the execution of this component.

59. Reallocation of funds was also necessary to address other issues that arose. For example, it was realized that the project had a fuel allocation but no vehicle specifically assigned to it, which was serving as a limiting factor. As a result the decision was made to use the project's fuel budget line to purchase a vehicle and to obtain the fuel allocation from government in turn.

60. Finally, the project had to employ adaptive management on several occasions in an attempt to get the consultancy for the development of the Integrated Financing Strategy completed, in order to deal with issues related to co-financing and the withdrawal of consultants (more detail is provided in the Results section under Outcome 3).

- **Stakeholders**

61. The project successfully involved a wide range of stakeholders throughout its implementation. The Project Execution Group (PEG) was a multi-sectoral group with all key stakeholders represented, including the public and private sectors. The only exception were local level stakeholders (e.g., Association of Village Councils and the Association of Mayors), which did not participate on the project board despite the project's attempts to secure their participation. When the MTE brought up the recommendation of trying to expand the PEG membership to include more local representation, the PEG decided to maintain the current size given the existing difficulties of obtaining quorum and the fact that it was already 2011. However, it should be noted that two of the pilot project Technical Advisory Groups did include local level participation.

62. The Chair of the PEG was originally the CEO of the MNRE but this duty was transferred to the Chief Forest Officer (CFO), Mr. Wilber Sabido, and his alternate, the Deputy CFO, Mr. Marcelo Windsor, as a result of the time constraints of the CEO. The composition of the PEG was commended for being heavily weighted toward government representatives, which was very effective in ensuring sufficient technical input and government ownership. One interviewee commented that the PEG could have benefitted from more high-level decision making representatives, but this was not always possible.

63. Interviewees generally felt that the stakeholders on the PEG were actively engaged, though at times it was difficult for the PMU to obtain timely feedback from the PEG given the other commitments of PEG members and their membership on a number of other standing committees. This led to the adoption of several strategies by the PM to summarize and highlight the most relevant issues for which comments were required from the PEG. Overall, there was agreement that the PEG effectively carried out its duties and that it was a dynamic, functional and supportive body that was able to deal with changing conditions. In general, the PEG was very involved in the planning and management of the project with active participation in discussions. One of the interviewees mentioned was that there could have been greater participation from some of the members.

64. The main issues identified by almost all the stakeholders interviewed was the difficulty of scheduling meetings with the PEG members, many of which were senior managers, and the difficulty of obtaining quorum due to the many other responsibilities of the members. As a result, PEG meetings were sometimes postponed. This led to some delays since certain elements required PEG approval to proceed. In addition, during the actual meetings there were often wait times until all confirmed members arrived.

65. In addition to the PEG, the decision was made to establish a government taskforce specifically to accompany the process of development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System in a technical capacity to ease the burden of review of products for the PEG. This was considered by interviewees to have been a

positive decision to garner sufficient technical input from the appropriate entities into this nationally important process and to ensure that the project activities were in line with government priorities. Representatives on this taskforce included a wide range of government bodies[4]. The group met monthly, though there were some difficulties with attendance as a result of members' other obligations. Interviewees commented that it would have been beneficial to have greater input and time from the members. Moreover, while the consultants charged with developing the LUP, Framework and Mapping System would have liked the representatives on this committee to have possessed the appropriate technical background;, this was not always the case for all meetings.

66. Technical advisory groups (TAG) were established for the pilot projects, which were comprised of various stakeholders. For the Landscape Management Pilot, for example, the TAG was comprised of mostly grassroots and local community members. In the case of the mining rehabilitation pilot, the project meetings were incorporated into regular departmental meetings of the Department of Geology and Petroleum, and a separate technical advisory group was not established.

67. During the development of the Land Use Policy and Framework, the consultants carried out various consultations with interest groups, holding a total of five large stakeholder meetings, which looked at infrastructure and urban development; planning; coastal zone management; conservation and forestry; and Toledo-specific issues . The target audience was key public and private sector organizations rather than the general public (with the exception of the Toledo District, which, due to the distinct nature of issues being faced, was felt to merit a different level of consultation). In total, there were 374 participants in these consultations. Substantial feedback was obtained with significant consensus on the main problems that needed to be addressed with the LUP and the Framework. Due to time constraints, a greater level of consultation was carried out earlier on in the process and there was less time later on to go back to the stakeholders to validate the draft final document and obtain their agreement on how their comments had been incorporated. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the opportunity existed through the website for any members of the public to submit ideas and make comments on the Land Use Policy and Framework. The website also enabled interested individuals to access transcripts of the consultations, copies of the presentations, and documents produced by the consultants.

68. Besides the LUP consultations, stakeholders were consulted during the development of the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve. Two workshops to obtain input into the strategy and one validation workshop were carried out.

69. In terms of M&E, key stakeholders were interviewed both as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation as well as the Terminal Evaluation, including the PMU, UNDP, members of the PEG, individuals involved in the pilot projects and consultants hired by the project. In addition, in order for the Project Manager to prepare the final project report, questionnaires were sent to a significant number of stakeholders to solicit their feedback on the project; at the time of the TE, the PM had not yet received all the responses in order to feed into her final project report.

70. Finally, the Project Management Unit also carried out a variety of general outreach and public awareness activities, which reached additional stakeholders. Activities included presentations about the LUP and about

[4] The Government Taskforce included the Agriculture Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Belize Tourism Board; Department of Environment, MNRE; Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Forest Department, MNRE; Department of Geology and Petroleum, MNRE; Land Information Centre, MNRE; Ministry of Public Works; Ministry of Economic Development; Ministry of Housing and Planning; Ministry of Natural Resources- Policy Unit; Ministry of Tourism; National Emergency Management Organization; Physical Planning, Lands and Survey Department, MNRE; Rural Development Department, Ministry of Rural Development and Labour; and the Statistical Institute of Belize. Toledo is a district in the Southern part of Belize.

SLM in general to stakeholders and to school children, participation in a parade with a float, and dissemination of publicity materials, among others. In addition, the project networked and liaised significantly with other projects being carried out and the strong relationships that existed enabled the project to benefit from training being offered by other projects. These outreach activities were not guided by a communication strategy nor was there a significant budget for them (savings from other budget lines were primarily employed.) Some interviewees felt that more could have been done with respect to general outreach and public awareness if the project had had greater resources allocated to this aspect.

- **Partnership Arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)**

71. A number of partnerships were established to facilitate delivery of the project's outputs and to obtain co-financing. The project worked with Galen University, which designed and developed a course on GIS use in SLM for government functionaries. A partnership was also entered into with Friends of Conservation and Development, the NGO that executed the "Instituting a Sustainable Land Management Demonstration Program in the Vaca Forest Reserve" pilot project. Through the partnership with CATIE for this same pilot, the project was able to benefit from the services of a consultant with significant knowledge of landscape management. The project also established a partnership with the Caribbean Agricultural Research Development Institute (CARDI) for the "development of pilot/model integrated farming systems in rural Belize" pilot project, in conjunction with the larger AED project. This partnership enabled the pilot to benefit from CARDI's technical expertise and to expand its activities beyond the Southern part of Belize to include various other regions of the country. Co-financing from the Czech government for the land rehabilitation pilot project allowed funds to be available for training in best practices in land rehabilitation.

72. These partnerships played a useful role in expanding the scope of the project and in allowing more work to be undertaken to address livelihood and gender issues. Partnerships also enabled cash and in-kind co-financing to be accessed (e.g., with BECOL). Final co-financing exceeded the original budget, despite the difficulties experienced in obtaining all promised funding from GM and FAO.

4.3 Project Results

- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*) (*Satisfactory*)

The project objective was "an enabling environment for sustainable land management enhanced through mainstreaming, capacity building, and improvements in policy, legislative and institutional frameworks." The project indeed led to a significant improvement in the policy environment with the development and endorsement of the country's first Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System. In addition, the principles of SLM were mainstreamed into various national policies and several capacity building initiatives were carried out with government functionaries, farmers and the private sector. In terms of Outcomes, three of the four were completed, with the Medium-Term Investment Strategy still outstanding due to a variety of reasons, many of which were outside of the control of the project. The government is currently working with the UNDP to hire appropriate consultants to ensure completion of this Outcome.

- Relevance, Effectiveness, & Efficiency (*) (*Satisfactory)*

73. The rating is Satisfactory for project relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The Land Use Policy was considered highly relevant for the government of Belize and its people, representing a much needed development that has never before been achieved to articulate the government's position on land use and land

allocation. In terms of effectiveness, the main outcomes apart from the Medium-Term Investment Plan were achieved and the project was relatively cost effective, achieving a great deal with a relatively small budget, and taking advantage of significant co-financing (which exceeded the original budget).

Outcome 1: Long term plans for SLM and Integrated Natural Resources Management are developed and supported through enhanced policy, legal and institutional frameworks;

74. The Land Use Policy, National Integrated Planning Framework for Land Resource Development and Land Suitability Mapping System were considered by many to be the most significant achievements of the project and were even touted as some of the administration's most significant achievements over the past four years. The Land Use Policy (LUP) consolidates the government's policies with regard to SLM and sets the foundation for long-term planning based on the principles of integrated and sustainable natural resource management. It is considered a "building block" or a good starting point from which to build, and one that was produced with significant government ownership and widespread consultation. The Land Use Framework contains flexibility in terms of the time period of implementation given the uncertainty associated with the level of funding that will be available to implement it. The UNDP and Forest Department are currently planning to launch the Land Use Policy in May 2012 (the launch had been postponed due to the national elections) and will disseminate a more condensed and readable version of the LUP. The LUP, Framework and Mapping System were endorsed by Cabinet in November 2011, and there is a mandate to move forward with the new administration elected in March 2012. Some elements of the LUP that do not require funds have already begun to be implemented. For example, Phase 2 of the First Time Land Owners Program is being carried out to prioritize first time land owners and give out parcels of land, and the equipment requirements to update the land cadastre are being considered. The policy now needs to be complemented with the development of a national land use plan and local land use plans (to facilitate the latter, the project consultants took the initiative of preparing draft regulations for the development of local land use plans). Interviewees agreed that funding for another project will be required to fully operationalize the LUP, Framework and Mapping System.

75. The Mapping System was developed by the consultants to provide a platform for spatial analysis for improved decision making about land distribution. It complements the Framework and consolidates a significant amount of information, with the end product being significantly more than what was stipulated in the consultants' Terms of Reference, despite some problems experienced in terms of access to data. It could serve as a prototype to build upon and was developed with a view to being upscaled to a web-based application; as commented by one of the interviewees: "its main contribution [is] as a demonstration effect rather than full integration into the data management structures of government". There are currently no mechanisms to update the system, and significant investment in comprehensive database design would still be required to operationalize it. A few government employees who were interviewed indicated that the Mapping System is not compatible with some of the government's hardware systems. Another interviewee felt that even though the current tool may not be fully compatible at present, the development of a tool with more advanced software was a forward-thinking strategic move.

76. In terms of the policy framework in place, it should be noted that besides developing the LUP, Framework and Mapping System, the project also informed parallel processes that led to the mainstreaming of SLM principles into various national development plans and policies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

77. The project took steps to try to establish a permanent Coordinating Body for the UNCCD, including by developing Terms of Reference for it, which did not exist. The project recommended that there be one Coordinating Body for the three 'Rio' conventions, rather than three separate bodies, given the multiple time commitments of stakeholders, but this was not followed up on by government. The Coordinating Body that was established through the project held an inception meeting, but no subsequent meetings. This may have

been because the Coordinating Body was to be tied to the development of the IFS consultancy, which was stalled, as well as due to the members' significant other time commitments.

Outcome 2: Tools and Capacities for SLM Developed within Government, Public and Private Sectors

78. As planned, an information-sharing protocol was developed, which was validated in a workshop in February 2010, published, and widely disseminated to all ministries and through the project website. While the protocol itself was considered well-prepared and was endorsed by MNRE, it has not been implemented or operationalized across ministries as the original Terms of Reference had planned. Interviewees made the point that the issue of data interoperability must be addressed before a protocol for data sharing can be truly implemented. In an attempt to address this issue, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the CEO and Heads of Departments and Units of the MNRE in 2010 in which signatories agreed to implement the first set of recommendations from the protocol document for two years. In addition, two committees were established- a Steering Committee to oversee the protocol's implementation and a Standards and Norms Working Group to create appropriate data standards. The latter met a few times to devise a plan for the protocol's implementation but there was insufficient subsequent follow-up, in part due to lack of funds and lack of prioritization by government. It should also be noted that the incompatibility among operating systems within government served as a constraint to the implementation of the protocol, and one which the project did not have the funds to address. Some interviewees also felt that the protocol is not being applied in great part because of the prevailing mindset of managers who are reluctant to share data. Nevertheless, the protocol remains relevant and helped to inform the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Policy, which was launched in June 2012. The protocol was also consulted as part of the current efforts of the Land Information Centre to establish a National Spatial Data Infrastructure for the country.

79. The GIS training carried out through the project was considered to be useful and was welcomed in various government institutions, such as the Land Information Centre and the Mapping and Surveys Department. Training was provided to both supervisors of departments as well as managers, and software and computers were provided to various government entities (though the Land Information Centre was unfortunately overlooked). There were differing levels of uptake and mainstreaming of this technology within government, with some departments such as the Department of Geology and Petroleum actively using the technology, while others such as the Ministry of Agriculture indicating that they could have done more to apply GIS in their work. It was commented that training in GIS alone is not sufficient to integrate the technology into operations and that a strategic analysis of work flows and of leverage points to change these work flows using GIS is required.

80. Various pilot projects were implemented to promote SLM practices, which reached at least three communities thus far (San Jose and Cerro Villages in the Toledo district and the community of farmers within the Vaca Forest Reserve). The goals of the Vaca Forest Reserve pilot project were to implement a capacity building program on integrated farming systems, promote awareness, and develop an Integrated Landscape Management Strategy (ILMS) for the Reserve in order to reduce land degradation in the area. Despite initial delays in the development of the proposal for the pilot work by the EA due to the latter's unfamiliarity with the requirements, the project successfully implemented extension activities, including training workshops and exchange visits, carried out environmental education with large numbers of community members and students, developed an ILMS with stakeholder consultation, and disseminated information about the pilot through its quarterly newsletter. The latter is currently being reviewed by different stakeholders and has not yet been endorsed by FD nor been presented to Cabinet. In addition, an agro-ecology manual was produced and disseminated to farmers. It was found that farmers are willing to change their practices once they learn to value the benefits of SLM but that it is also important to standardize policies with regard to their rights to the land so they do not feel at a disadvantage compared to others by implementing sustainable practices. If the ILMS is endorsed, it would be the first of its kind for a forest reserve in Belize. The work undertaken through

the pilot played a key role as the forest reserve was at risk of being excised due to pressures from farmers asking for land. However, the Vaca Forest Reserve pilot project was not without controversy. While some recognized the importance of acknowledging the farming activities that were being carried out and of promoting increased sustainability and called it an "important intervention" to preserve the quality of the watershed and the drinking water, others worried about the potential implications of working with the farmers here in terms of the possibility that others will demand land within the reserve as well.

81. A second pilot project was executed by CARDI to carry out technical capacity-building for agriculture officers, develop a training manual, and establish practical demonstrations in degraded areas in Southern Belize. There was high participation in the majority of the workshops that were organized. A soil conservation and slope management manual was produced, which was disseminated to extension coordinators across the country for them to use as a guide when providing technical advice to farmers. The manual was considered a useful tangible output that will continue to be used over time. A shorter, less technical version of the manual submitted by CARDI was developed and there were some translations into local languages so that it would be useful to farmers and not only to "train the trainers" (i.e., the agricultural extension workers). The project also set up several on-farm models of integrated farming systems. The GEF funds allocated for work in Southern Belize and the larger AED project being implemented by CARDI in other areas of the country complemented each other well in terms of promoting both viable agriculture and sustainable natural resource management. While the Department of Agriculture participated in the practical sessions, one interviewee noted that the Department may be restricted in its capacity for follow up due to limited human resources and the many obligations of existing personnel. In addition, some villagers felt that greater technical and financial resources would have been needed, especially after a hurricane in 2010 damaged structures funded by the AED project. A number of community members participating in the two agricultural pilot projects indicated that the projects would have benefitted from a longer time period of implementation to realize benefits. More practical field demonstrations for farmers would have also been useful.

82. The third pilot that was implemented was the land rehabilitation project. This pilot suffered from significant setbacks as the site that was originally identified for the mining rehabilitation demonstration work was later found to be under private ownership and there were long delays in trying to find alternative sites, which did not prove to be successful. It was suggested by some interviewees that project management could have reacted more quickly and decisively to the setbacks to reduce the delays. At the time of the Terminal Evaluation, the pilot project had produced two mining manuals, the first of their kind for Belize, which are being distributed to small-scale and large-scale mining operators in the country. In addition, as a result of the project, the rehabilitation of sites has now been built into the Department of Geology and Petroleum's application process. The workshops for mining operators are still outstanding; there are likely to be three or four interactive workshops in different districts of Belize to highlight the economic and environmental benefits of engaging in rehabilitation practices throughout the mining process. The workshops are planned to take place in existing sites in which some rehabilitation work has been carried out in order to incorporate at least some element of demonstration. Given that no new demonstration site(s) were established as had originally been planned, some of the monies allocated for this pilot were redirected toward the larger consultancy to develop the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, which was felt to be a key project priority and for which insufficient funds were available. Some of the other goals of the project of completing the rehabilitation work, selling the parcels of land for real estate and creating a fund with the proceeds of the land sales for further rehabilitation work could not be carried out without the demonstration site. A fourth pilot project on urban planning and mapping in San Ignacio/ Santa Elena was dropped due to the need to reallocate more funds to the larger consultancy under Outcome 1.

Outcome 3: Medium Term Investment Plan Developed.

83. Part way though project implementation, the decision was made to develop an Integrated Financing Strategy (IFS) specifically for SLM, rather than a Medium Term Investment Plan as originally proposed in the Project Document; this was due to a change in direction at the global level of the project. The IFS was the main uncompleted project deliverable at the time of the Terminal Evaluation though plans are in place for its completion. The first consultant hired by the project who withdrew her services delivered a report on her progress up to that point, particularly in terms of stakeholder consultations; however, the actual strategy remains outstanding.

84. A variety of issues, primarily outside the control of the PMU, contributed to this situation. Early on in the process, FAO's Central American Office (which had committed to co-financing this work) hired a consultant without consultation with the UNCCD focal point, PMU or the UNDP Belize CO. As the project did not feel that this person was fully equipped to carry out the consultancy, the project hired an additional national consultant with the necessary skills. Delays were experienced in the contracting process for the national consultant and in obtaining promised co-financing from GM (which never materialized), and eventually the project-hired consultant pulled out due to other commitments. The contract for the consultant hired by FAO was cancelled by FAO for reasons unknown to the project. The lack of effective inter-agency cooperation undermined the realization of this Outcome. As some of the funds for this Outcome were reprogrammed to Outcome 1, the non-materialization of co-financing was particularly problematic. Later in 2011, the PMU hired a new team of consultants to carry out the work, but they withdrew their services without prior warning in December 2011 due to the loss of critical capacity within their organization. At present, UNDP has committed to ensuring that the IFS is developed by the end of the first quarter of 2013 and will assume the necessary costs.

85. Apart from the problems experienced with coordinating co-financing and with consultants failing to deliver, some interviewees felt there were other issues that contributed to the difficulty in completing the IFS. Firstly, the idea of developing a financing strategy that was meant to be a mechanism to implement the National Action Program, when the latter was outdated (developed in 2006), never endorsed by Cabinet and not aligned with the UNCCD's latest strategic plan, was challenging. Secondly, some felt that the IFS as envisioned in the global project (as part of the portfolio delivery goals) did not meet the needs of Belize in that it was interpreted as isolating financing for SLM from other critical elements, even though SLM is a cross-cutting theme without a specific budget line[6]. At least one interviewee felt that what was really needed was an analysis of how SLM can be integrated into an overarching program within the national financing framework, how it can be mainstreamed into other sectors, and how to increase financing for sustainable development as a whole. Another interviewee commented that an IFS would be useful in that it would apply a broader scope to financing than what was usually applied nationally (limited mainly to writing proposals to international donors).

86. A small working group has now been formed by the PMU and UNDP to develop modified Terms of Reference for this consultancy, which will be focused on the original goal of developing a Medium-Term Investment Plan, rather than a separate Integrated Financing Strategy for SLM. Once the PEG approves the revised ToRs, the identification of consultants and completion of this consultancy is planned.

Outcome 4: Adaptive Management and Learning

87. Adaptive management was employed throughout the project to deal with a variety of issues that emerged (see section 4.2- Adaptive Management for a detailed description). Project learning was distilled in annual and monthly reports to the PEG, the project's final report, the MTE, and the TE, among other documents, as well as through presentations. As for the indicator, "project implementation consistent with schedule", while there

[6] This may have been more a problem of interpretation since according to guidance provided by UNDP-GEF, IFS strategies should be anchored in national budgeting processes and integrated into political decision-making on development priorities.

were delays in project implementation, these were largely outside of the control of the PMU, and the majority of project deliverables were still achieved. In terms of the extent to which project expenditures were within budget, there were variances between planned and actual expenditures that were felt to be necessary to ensure achievement of the project goals. At the time of the TE, the project had achieved 98% delivery. Further monies required to complete the IFS (above and beyond the original budget included in the ProDoc) have been committed by UNDP. The final co-financing figures exceeded the initial projections in the ProDoc.

88. Table 2 provides a summary of the progress made in achieving the project objective and project indicators based on the indicators and targets included in the original logframe.

Table 2: Level of Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes based on Project Indicators

Description	Indicators	Results
Project Objective: An enabling environment for sustainable land management enhanced through mainstreaming, capacity building and improvement in policy, legislative and institutional framework		Overall, achievement of the project objective can be considered *Satisfactory*. The concept of SLM was mainstreamed into a number of national policy documents and was a fundamental principle in the Land Use Policy developed under this project. Capacity was built within government in terms of analyzing land use issues through government's extensive involvement in the development of the Land Use Policy and Framework, and through the training and tools provided on GIS, thus improving the institutional framework for SLM. Capacity building was also carried out with local farmers, government agricultural extension workers and mining operators in terms of best practices through training and the dissemination of manuals. The policy framework was improved substantially as a result of the endorsement of the country's first Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System.
	NAP endorsed by cabinet	The NAP was not endorsed by Cabinet, mainly because it required substantial updating. A significant period of time had elapsed since it was first prepared in 2006, during which time the national focal point for the UNCCDD had changed several times, resulting in the loss of institutional memory. Furthermore, the NAP needed to be aligned with the new UNCCD 10-year strategy. There were no project funds to update the NAP; however, UNDP is currently submitting a proposal to seek funds to review it. Despite the fact that the endorsement did not occur, the target for this indicator was that a framework for SLM would be in place and functioning and that an enabling legal/ policy environment for SLM exists. As highlighted previously, significant progress was made in this respect with the development and Cabinet endorsement of a Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System for Belize, which lays the foundation for SLM and creates an enabling policy environment. In addition, the project developed TORs for the UNCCD National Coordinating Body (NCB), which is meant to provide oversight for the implementation of the NAP, and designated the

Description	Indicators	Results
		Policy and Coordination Unit of the MNRE as the secretariat for the NCB.
	Evidence of NAP mainstreamed into national execution plans	As the NAP was not endorsed, it could not be mainstreamed into national execution plans. However, the concept of SLM itself was mainstreamed into a number of nationally relevant policies and plans, such as the Belize Rural Development Program, the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Horizon 2030. In addition, a number of projects have been executed under the MNRE and the National Emergency Management Organization, which have taken into consideration SLM, including the Land Management Program 2, and the early warning monitoring project.
	No. of best practices are demonstrated	Several best practices in SLM were demonstrated as a result of the project, including integrated farming systems in Southern Belize that incorporate soil conservation and slope management, and agro-ecological farming in the Vaca Forest Reserve. Farmers were provided with some basic equipment to support sustainable practices and manuals were produced for both of these pilots as a reference. In addition, manuals to train operators in appropriate land rehabilitation practices for mining operations were developed and disseminated and workshops for mining operators are planned for May 2012.
Outcome 1: Long term plans for SLM and Integrated Natural Resources Management developed and supported through enhanced policy, legal and institutional frameworks		Achievement of this Outcome is rated as *Highly Satisfactory*. The project succeeded where previous efforts had failed since the 1980s in developing the country's first Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, which were endorsed by Cabinet in November, 2011. In addition SLM was mainstreamed into key national documents such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
	The long term plan for integrated natural resource management endorsed by relevant line ministries by mid 2009	The decision was made that integrated natural resource management planning required the development of a Land Use Policy through this project. A national land use plan and local land use plans still need to be developed.

Description	Indicators	Results
	Specific provisions for SLM incorporated into national development plans	SLM was mainstreamed into a number of national development plans and policies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Belize Rural Development Program and Horizon 2030.
	Policies with relevance to sustainable land management are revised, harmonized	As part of the development of the Land Use Policy, the consultants carried out an extensive literature review to include all existing policies and plans with land implications in the Land Use Policy.
	Legal and institutional provisions for land management within framework of integrated natural resource management	The target for this indicator was the development of a clearly articulated land policy, which was fully achieved by the project.
Outcome 2: Tools and capacities for SLM developed within government, public and private sectors		Achievement of this Outcome can be considered *Satisfactory*. Substantial capacity building in SLM practices and tools such as GIS was carried out with government and the private sector (including GIS training for government workers, sustainable farming training for government agricultural extension workers and farmers in Southern Belize and in the Vaca Forest Reserve, and the production and dissemination of a training manual for mining operators).
	Land allocation processes incorporate planning and land management considerations at national and local levels	Now that the government has endorsed the Land Use Policy, land allocation processes can begin to take into consideration the principles of sustainable land management. However, it should be noted that a national land use plan to complement the policy still needs to be developed as well as local land use plans to ensure that the principles of SLM inform land allocation.
	Agriculture, habitat expansion and enterprise development activities incorporate considerations for best land use practices and mitigating actions in at least 15 communities	The project promoted best practices in agriculture as well as in enterprise development (specifically, mining) in a number of communities (including San Jose and Cerro villages in Southern Belize and San Antonio, Cayo) and in the farming community within the Vaca Forest Reserve. Training activities were carried out as well as demonstrations at farms in these locations to promote the practical application of best practices. In addition, through the project's

Description	Indicators	Results
		collaboration with AED, additional farmers in various other locations throughout the country were trained in good agricultural practices, such as post-harvesting management and received the training manuals. The distribution of the training manual and workshops with mining operators across the country will hopefully lead to the incorporation of best mining practices in various communities across the country (at this point the number of communities that could benefit cannot be determined). Training was carried out with an estimated 200 individuals and awareness was raised with many more, including school children and the general public. Training was provided in GIS, soil conservation and slope management, bee keeping, integrated farming systems, and reforestation, among other fields. The target for this indicator, which was that training on SLM would be provided to 600 residents of cities and towns and 600 villagers, was not fully met, due primarily to the difficulty in obtaining the support of the National Association of Village Councils (NAVCO).
	National Development and sector plans, NPAPSP and SLM strategies informed by outcomes of pilot projects and resource assessments	Three of the four pilot projects were completed and the final results were shared with stakeholders through the PEG and through the pilot project technical advisory groups. The technical advisory groups updated their respective departments and ministries about the projects, thus promoting the incorporation of tools developed and lessons learned within government plans, strategies and modes of operation. In the case of the Landscape Rehabilitation pilot, the Geology and Petroleum Department has built in rehabilitation of sites into their application process, which was not the case before this project. The Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve will serve as the guiding document for the Reserve provided the necessary funds are identified to implement it. In addition, the concept of SLM in general (though not specifically the outcomes of the pilot projects) was integrated into national development plans and the National Protected Area Policy and System Plan (NPAPSP).

Description	Indicators	Results
	Land use management decisions benefitting from information system	A Mapping System was developed under Outcome 1 as part of the large consultancy to develop a Land Use Plan and Framework. In addition, an information-sharing protocol was developed, though this is not yet being implemented and has therefore not yet led to a government-wide information system.
Outcome 3: Medium Term Investment Plan developed	Medium Term investment plan	Achievement of this Outcome is considered *Satisfactory* at the time of the Terminal Evaluation as plans are in place for the completion of the deliverable. As of early July 2012, the TORs for this consultancy were being finalized. This plan had not yet been developed by the time of the Terminal Evaluation, due to problems securing promised co-financing, which led to delays, and due to the withdrawal of the original consultant hired by the project as well as the withdrawal of the team of consultants hired afterward. Thus far, consultations with stakeholders were carried and feedback obtained to feed into the plan, and a report of the results of these consultations was produced. Revised Terms of Reference for this consultancy are being finalized and the consultancy will then be re-advertised to complete this deliverable.
	Utilization of investment plan in Ministry's budgetary exercises	This is pending the completion of the plan.
Outcome 4: Adaptive management and learning		The rating for this Outcome is *Satisfactory* as the PMU and PEG consistently employed adaptive management and made adjustments based on lessons learned. Despite some delays in project execution, mainly due to factors outside of the control of the PMU, the main project deliverables were produced, with the exception of the IFS under Outcome 3, which is underway. Lessons learned were disseminated throughout project implementation through a number of reports that were shared primarily with the PEG. In addition, presentations were made at different workshops hosted by the PMU, and the Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Sub-Committee (NREPS), and in regional workshops hosted by the Caribbean Network Initiative for Rural

Description	Indicators	Results
		Development in St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as with the PEG and other projects being carried out in the MNRE.
	Project implementation consistent with schedule	For a variety of reasons, the project experienced delays in the completion of various activities. Delays early on in project execution had to do mainly with the change in government, which led to the UNDP's assumption of project execution functions for the first ten months of the project. The transition to execution by the Forest Department led to some delays as the new PMU became familiarized with UNDP/GEF project management, policies and procedures. Substantial delays were also experienced in relation to two key consultancies, notably the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, as well as the development of the Integrated Financing Strategy. In the first case the delays were mainly associated with the long contracting process. For the second product, issues related to obtaining promised co-financing and the withdrawal of different consultants led to the delays. Nevertheless, despite these setbacks, the Land Use Policy, Framework, and Mapping System were developed after extensive consultations and were endorsed by Cabinet, and most of the other project deliverables were produced, with the main exception being the IFS, which was still outstanding by the time of the TE.
	Project expenditures within budget	The project employed adaptive management to re-direct funds from different outputs in order to ensure that the most important project deliverables would be achieved. Thus, funds were reallocated from some activities to increase the amount available for the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System and as a result there were variances between planned and actual expenditures. The project was able to achieve a great deal with a relatively small budget. At the time of the TE, project delivery was at 98%, including co-financing, and the final co-financing figures exceeded the original amounts committed in the

Description	Indicators	Results
		Project Document.

- **Country Ownership**

89. Overall, country ownership of the project was felt to be high. As highlighted in section 4.2 of the report (UNDP and Executing Agency Execution), which describes the executing modality employed, the fact that the Project Manager was a civil servant within the Forest Department enhanced ownership and ensured continuous government engagement in the project. There were also a significant number of government representatives on the PEG and substantial input from this body on the various project deliverables.

90. One of the interviewees commented that the level of ownership was somewhat "delivery specific" in that it was higher for certain elements of the project than others. In particular, the process to develop the Land Use Policy and Framework was carried out with significant government involvement and ownership. The government even facilitated the establishment of a government task force to provide technical input into the development of these products, which included strong representation from various different government departments (see section 4.2, stakeholders sub-section, footnote 3, for the specific composition of this taskforce). The Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System were endorsed by Cabinet in November of 2011 on the same day they were presented, with many people surprised by the rapidity of the process. Various interviewees from government expressed significant satisfaction with the Land Use Policy and Framework and were hopeful that the political will to implement it exists, especially since doing so is part of the new administration's manifesto.

91. In terms of the pilot projects, the mining rehabilitation project was executed directly by the Department of Geology and Petroleum and the CARDI agricultural project was implemented with the support and participation of the Ministry of Agriculture. This allowed for government ownership and also facilitates continued engagement after project closure. The Vaca Forest Reserve pilot project was carried out in cooperation with the Forest Department in order to minimize the impact of activities already taking place and to protect the watershed. However, based on the interviews, there were some people in government who were not fully supportive of this particular pilot and were concerned about the potential implications in terms of additional farmers entering into an area that was not set up for the purpose of agriculture.

92. Some interviewees also felt that the information-sharing protocol did not have the same level of government ownership as many of the other project products, particularly in terms of insufficient higher-level commitment/political will to follow up with the Standards and Norms Working Group or to implement the protocol across departments or ministries.

Project Finance

93. To a large extent, the project's financial goals were realized and the project achieved a delivery rate of 98% including co-financing by the beginning of April, 2012. Annual expenditures are provided in Annex 7. One of the most significant variances between planned and actual expenditures relates to Outcome 1, for which 165% of the original budgeted amount was spent. As documented carefully in PEG minutes and in project reports, this was due to the integration of various project outputs (including Outputs 1.1 and 1.2) into one large consultancy and due to the fact that this work had a higher cost than originally expected. In order for sufficient funds to be available for the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, funds were reallocated from some other activities. These changes were approved by the PEG and were felt to be worthwhile as this project element was considered by project stakeholders to be the most important achievement of the project. As a result of the reallocations, the amount spent on Outcome 2 was somewhat less than the original

budget (85% of budget amount). Another significant variation between planned and actual expenditures relates to Outcome 3, which has currently spent 29% of the originally budgeted amount, as a result of the fact that neither the original consultant nor the second team of consultants delivered the final product. This situation was diligently recorded in PEG minutes and attempts were made throughout by the PMU, UNDP and the PEG to address it. UNDP has committed to providing the funds required to complete this deliverable.

94. There was one financial audit undertaken in 2009, which did not reveal any significant issues considered to have a high severity of impact. Examples of the points raised by the auditor relate to the stage plans, some of which were not comprehensive or not submitted in a timely fashion, some account coding errors, inconsistencies in filing, and the project failing to adequately review the Terms of Reference when the contracting process of one of the pilots was carried out through the partner organization, AED, to ensure that all project deliverables would be met (requiring later remedial action). A detailed follow-up action plan was prepared to address each of the issues highlighted in the audit.

95. While the Mid-Term Evaluators noted earlier on in the project that there was insufficient tracking of co-financing, this situation improved as the project progressed. By the time of the Terminal Evaluation, both co-financing and leveraged resources were clearly reported upon and the evaluator was given access to complete information.

96. The original co-financing committed in the Project Document, including grants, in-kind support and other amounts, totals $652,728 (see Table 1 and Annex 7). The total co-financing spent by the time of the project's Terminal Evaluation was $704,108. There is one co-financing commitment made in the original ProDoc that remains outstanding, which is $15,000 in-kind from private sector operators, which is expected to be contributed once the mining workshops are carried out. Nevertheless, co-financing amounts exceeded the amounts originally committed due to additional funds leveraged during project implementation. It should be noted that the total co-financing amount may increase even further as some of the additional leveraged amounts have not yet come through (e.g., some of GM's commitment) or have not yet been spent (e.g., some UNDP funds).In total, the amount leveraged after ProDoc signature was $120,380 and the amount of this additional funding that has materialized to date is $66,380 (leaving $54,000 of leveraged funds that may still come through before project closure). The fact that some leveraged funding has not materialized, and the steps taken to attempt to address the issues were well documented in the PEG minutes.

97. In general, externally-funded project components were well integrated into the GEF supported components. For example, while GEF funding supported the promotion of sustainable farming practices in Southern Belize, external funding through the AED project enabled additional agricultural extension work to be expanded to other parts of the country. Furthermore, co-financing from BECOL was used to support the GEF funded work to develop an Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve. The one exception in which there was poor integration of GEF funding with co-financing relates to the co-financing provided by FAO to support the hiring of a consultant for the development of the Integrated Financing Strategy. Associated perhaps to FAO's distinct timelines and procedures, they hired a consultant without adequate communication and consultation with the GEF project, but the project did not feel that this consultant had the capacity required to undertake the task at hand. Furthermore, the TORs developed by FAO for the two planned consultants were overlapping, which, combined with the mismatched donor timelines, caused frustrations and unnecessary complications. In an attempt to address the problem, the project took on the task of identifying the second consultant, to obtain the necessary expertise to carry out the deliverable. Later on FAO cancelled the contract with their consultant for reasons unknown to the project and this co-financing was lost. This situation points to a lack of sufficient

inter-agency cooperation between FAO with UNDP and the government of Belize. In this case, the co-financing did not effectively serve to facilitate achievement of the GEF project goals but rather led to delays, which contributed to the incompletion of Outcome 3 by the time of the Terminal Evaluation.

Table 3: Summary of Co-Financing

Co-financing (type/ source)	**UNDP own financing (mill. US$)**			**Government (mill. US$)**			**Partner Agency (mill. US$)AED, PACT, FAO,GM, Private Sector**			**Total (mill. US$)**		
	Amount as in ProDoc	Amount committed after project approval	Actual monies spent	Amount as in ProDoc	Amount committed after project approval	Actual monies spent	Amount as in ProDoc	Amount committed after project approval	Actual monies spent	Amount as in ProDoc	Amount committed after project approval	Actual monies spent
Grants	32,500	8,000	32,500*				(Private Sector 10,600 GM 5,000)	(AED - 49,000 FAO - 23,000, GM-29,000,)	(Private Sector – BECOL 10,600, FAO-6,000 , GM 5,000* AED-49,000	48,100	109,000	103,100
Loans/ Concessions												
In-kind support	24,200		24,200	305,428	11,380	316,808	Private Sector Mining Operators, 15,000		Private Sector Mining Operators,	344,628	11,380	341,008
Other (small grants to governmental and non-governmental actors)							PACT-260,000		PACT-260,000	260,000		260,000
Totals	56,700	8,000	56,700	305,428	11,380	316,808	290,600	101,000	330,600	652,728	120,380	704,108

- **Mainstreaming**

98. While the global project did not focus explicitly on mainstreaming other UNDP priorities in its overall design and had more of a strictly environmental focus, various measures were taken during national project execution to ensure that issues such as gender, livelihoods, poverty reduction and disaster prevention and recovery were addressed through the project, including through co-financing.

99. Gender issues were addressed in project implementation in terms of on-the-ground work as well as the composition of the working team. For example, the Land Use Policy takes into consideration the gender component, and the CARDI agricultural pilot actually included gender as one of its indicators. It should also be noted that the Project Management Unit members and the UNDP Environmental Programme Analyst were all female.

100. The three pilot projects promoted sustainable livelihoods in the farming and mining sectors. The direct impact of the promotion of SLM on local populations with regard to poverty reduction and livelihoods was not measured; moreover, some interviewees mentioned that engagement with communities was not the main focus of the project and that the pilots would have needed to be longer in order to have a substantive impact on livelihoods. However, with the endorsement of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, the policy environment provides the foundation for more equitable and sustainable land allocation and distribution based on a wide variety of environmental, social and economic criteria, and this is expected to have a positive impact on local populations. It is also hoped that the implementation of the framework will be associated with improved governance as it relates to the land allocation process. One of the recommendations made in the Land Use Policy is already in its second phase of implementation and is benefitting Belizeans without land, which is the prioritization of first time land owners in the land distribution process.

101. In terms of disaster prevention and recovery, work was carried out to analyze the vulnerabilities of local communities to disasters and to increase their understanding of the links between inadequate land use and increased vulnerability and risk, in cooperation with the UNDP/ BCPR project, "Strengthening National Capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction". In addition, the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) provided input on the LUP through its participation on the government taskforce, and received GIS training provided by the project. Overall, the adoption of SLM techniques such as soil conservation and slope management and the utilization of environmental criteria to distribute land are likely to improve the ability of local farmers to cope with natural disasters (though at the time of the TE this impact could not yet be measured).

102. The project contributed directly to the achievement of the UN Development Assistance Framework for Belize (2007-2011) Outcome 3, which relates to sustainable development. In terms of the UNDP Country Programme Document for Belize 2007-2011, the project contributed to Outcome 3 "*Improving sustainable development practices*", which includes outputs such as "strengthened national capacities in complying with the provisions of multilateral environment agreements, which are mainstreamed into national policies and strategies" and "innovative approaches and strategies established for improved sustainable land use and comprehensive water resources management and utilization knowledge and practices". Some of the indicators are particularly relevant and were targeted by this project, including:

- Integrated natural resource management plan inclusive of poverty alleviation interventions
- Enhanced environment information systems
- Level of inclusion of sustainable resource management into national development plan

- Improved national and local capacities for sustainable land management
- Guidelines and best practice modules across agriculture, forestry, protected areas management and mining sectors
- Percentage of area affected by land degradation
- Pilot projects for landscape approach in watershed management

- **Sustainability (*) (*Satisfactory*)**

103. Overall, the sustainability of the project is rated as *Satisfactory.* This is due to the substantial government commitment to implement the Land Use Policy and Framework and the continued involvement of stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Geology and Petroleum and the NGO FCD in providing training in SLM practices. The following section will assess the level of risks to the sustainability of project outcomes in more detail.

Financial Risks

104. There is a relatively low financial risk that some of the products developed by the project, such as the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System, will not be fully implemented and mainstreamed as a result of insufficient resources with the government's current tight fiscal situation. Some elements, such as the local land use plans, are expensive to develop and maintain up to date. However, UNDP is currently working to identify possible funding sources for a follow-up project, which is fully supported and requested by the government. The political will to implement the Land Use Policy and Framework exists and a commitment to do so is part of the new government's manifesto. Furthermore, the LUP and Framework contain various elements that can already be implemented without additional funding.

105. Funding to roll out the information-sharing protocol has not been allocated although some interviewees indicated that lack of funding is not the main issue preventing implementation. Funding to implement the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve is also required to carry out ongoing work with the farmers within the reserve. FCD, the NGO that executed the pilot project here, has already secured funding for continued engagement in the Vaca Forest Reserve and is actively looking for additional funds. Overall, while there are financial risks to project sustainability, these are not considered to be significant.

Sociopolitical Risks

106. In general, there is strong sociopolitical support to sustain the project outcomes, as highlighted previously in this report, particularly with regard to the LUP and Framework, but also in terms of continued SLM training. Furthermore, the information sharing protocol was referred to in the government's current efforts to establish a National Spatial Data Infrastructure for Belize. It should be noted, however, that according to some interviewees, there is a risk of insufficient commitment from the higher levels of government to implement the information sharing protocol across ministries.

107. With the new government in place, there has been a restructuring of several of the ministries, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, and the Ministry of Agriculture. It remains to be seen what impact this will have on the sustainability of project impacts, but it will be important to receive commitments that departments and ministries will follow up on the progress made with the project.

Institutional Framework and Governance Risks

108. The legal frameworks and policies exist to continue with the work initiated in the project to promote SLM, particularly as a result of the Land Use Policy and Framework developed through the project and other sectoral and development policies that already exist. One of the interviewees suggested that it would be beneficial to develop an overarching Sustainable Development Strategy for Belize to tie together the various sectoral strategies promoting different aspects of sustainable development. However, overall, it is not felt that the existing legal frameworks or policies pose significant risks to the sustainability of project benefits.

109. In terms of governance structures, several interviewees suggested that a true implementation of the Land Use Policy will require a high-level commitment toward greater transparency in land allocation and a commitment to relinquish power to the local level, as land has been used in the past as a political tool and as a vehicle for power. This is a process that will take time to change; however, it is felt that the development and endorsement of a Land Use Policy and Framework for the country, based on various relevant criteria for land allocation, will contribute to improving the status quo.

110. A substantial amount of the required technical know-how to promote sustainable land management in the country is believed to exist, and the project contributed further to this capacity through training and the development of SLM manuals, such as a manual on soil conservation and slope management, and the manuals on mining operations. The Ministry of Agriculture even went so far as to develop a user-friendly manual for field use. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Geology and Petroleum continue to promote SLM activities post-project. NEMO carries out training in risk reduction and FCD continues to work in the Vaca Forest Reserve to promote sustainable farming, increasing the sustainability of project impact.

Environmental risks

111. There are no ongoing environmental activities or threats that are believed to pose a significant risk to the sustainability of project outcomes.

- **Catalytic Role & Impact**

112. In general, despite being relatively small in terms of funding, the SLM project has had a substantial impact. The Land Use Policy is the first of its kind in Belize and is considered the "cornerstone" of the project. The Policy is beginning to be implemented, with a focus on those aspects that do not require significant funding. The perceived importance of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System has led to the ongoing search by UNDP-Belize for funds for a follow-up "SLM-2" project to fully implement it. It is believed that if implemented this Policy and Framework will catalyze significant change nation-wide in terms of the process of distribution and allocation of land.

113. The information-sharing protocol and lessons learned during its development were reviewed in the context of the establishment of the e-governance ICT structure being put in place by the Government of Belize (the National Spatial Data System) and informed the ICT. The protocol was presented to the Ministry of Public Service as a blueprint for information exchange among Ministries.

114. Interviewees suggested that stakeholders continue to adopt some of the SLM techniques and tools in which they were trained (e.g., the Department of Geology and Petroleum is making use of GIS, and agricultural extensionists and farmers are employing soil conservation and slope management

techniques), however, ongoing follow-up and extension is required. The PMU shared the SLM training manuals produced by the project with the FINFOR and Mesoterra projects, which were focused on SLM, to encourage their adaptation to suit their needs. The extent of replication of SLM practices has not been measured, so it is difficult to make a conclusive comment on whether the project has acted as a catalyst for the more widespread adoption of SLM practices. It is believed that more emphasis on establishing demonstration projects might have been beneficial to further increase the catalytic impact.

115. The logical framework did not include status or stress indicators and it is considered somewhat premature to attempt to measure the impact of the project on ecosystem integrity and land degradation levels, but it is believed that the pilot project work had a positive environmental impact. At a larger scale, the enabling policy environment for SLM that was developed (in the form of the LUP, Framework and Mapping System), if implemented, could have a significant impact on ecosystem-level indicators.

5 Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

5.1 Conclusions

116. This project was highly relevant for Belize, given its longstanding interest in developing a land use policy, and the actual and potential future land degradation problems the country faces. In general, the project was well-designed and well implemented, though the logframe could have been adjusted at various points to make it a more useful management tool (both during design and during implementation). The execution modality employed with the hiring of a dedicated civil servant to take on the project management function was considered beneficial once the initial learning curve was surpassed, as it contributed to government capacity building and promoted continuity. The PMU was considered to have effectively carried out its project management functions, including the monitoring of deliverables, financial planning, narrative and financial reporting, among others. In addition, the PEG was recognized as a dynamic body that provided significant input to steer the project, despite the significant other commitments of its members. The implementation modality with UNDP taking on project management functions during the first ten months of the project during a transition in government was critical to jumpstart the project, and later implementation functions of oversight and financial management were performed effectively by the UNDP.

117. In terms of results, the project's main achievements were: the development of the country's first Land Use Policy and Framework for its operationalization accompanied by a Mapping System; the development of an information-sharing protocol; provision of training and tools for GIS; and the implementation of SLM pilot projects. At the moment, the main outstanding deliverable is the development of an Integrated Financing Strategy (or Medium-Term Investment Plan) for sustainable land management, however, plans are in place to ensure its completion. In its execution, the project ensured that UNDP priorities such as poverty reduction and gender equity were addressed. The project is believed to have produced a sustainable impact, given the high-level of ownership over the Land Use Policy and Framework and the political will to implement it, and given that ongoing SLM training is being provided by different government departments and organizations. Nevertheless, funding for a follow-up project to ensure full implementation of the LUP, Framework and Mapping System will be critical to enhance project sustainability.

5.2 Actions to Follow Up Project's Benefits and Proposals for Future Directions

118. The project would benefit from substantial follow-up to ensure that all the policy, institutional and capacity building goals are fully met. The Land Use Policy needs to be fully socialized and to that end, a user-friendly summary of the Land Use Policy is being finalized and will be distributed at a launch scheduled for May 2012, which will target government stakeholders. Given the government's fiscal situation, it will be important to obtain funding to fully implement the Land Use Policy and Framework. The UNDP is already engaging in efforts to identify possible donors for a so-called "SLM-2" project. One important priority will be the development and implementation of a national land use plan to complement the LUP as well as local land use plans.

119. It is evident that any attempt to change farmers' practices will require ongoing engagement for effectiveness. Thus, to reinforce the learning from the CARDI agriculture pilot and the Vaca Forest Reserve pilot, continued extension and outreach will be critical, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Friends of Conservation and Development, and other interested parties. While this is already taking place to a certain extent, it is important to secure the commitment and funding to maintain the momentum achieved through the project. It would also be useful to follow up with farmers of different geographic areas and different levels of expertise (and perhaps even tailor information products to their levels of expertise). Similarly, follow-up workshops with mining operators (after the first workshops take place through project funding) would be beneficial to continue the process of training in land rehabilitation. The development and distribution of SLM manuals, while useful, will not be sufficient to ensure behavioral change. The establishment of more demonstration projects to tangibly showcase SLM techniques and tools (as had been originally envisioned for the mining rehabilitation pilot, for example) is a worthwhile future endeavor.

120. To consolidate project learning on GIS with different levels of government workers, continued training that is tailored to their needs will be required as well as the practical demonstration of the application of this technology to the real-life needs of different line ministries.

121. To facilitate the implementation of the data sharing protocol, there is a need for continued work on making data interoperable and on developing the appropriate standards for data collection. Once this is done, the government will need to determine to what extent and how it will implement the information-sharing protocol and whether the high-level commitment exists to do so. Needless to say, changing the prevailing mindset of government departments being protective of their data will require ongoing follow-up work.

5.3 Best Practices

122. The project benefitted from the application of a number of best practices that merit replication and that will be highlighted in this section.

Effective Executing Modality

- The hiring of the Project Manager as a civil servant within the Forest Department led to increased ownership over the project and also enabled the government to retain the project management and technical capacity that was built once the project concluded. In order for this executing modality to function effectively, it is important that the person be dedicated primarily to managing the project and that other responsibilities and tasks be kept to a minimum so as not to overburden the staff member. In this case, the Project Manager was felt to have been able to dedicate most of her time to this project, while approximately 30% of her time was spent on other related issues.

Ongoing communication and consultation with relevant stakeholders

123. The PMU was very effective at communicating with key stakeholders about the project and garnering their input. One best practice was the realization of several inception workshops at project start-up after the transition in government to socialize the project, build a thorough understanding of its main components, and promote buy-in from the new government stakeholders. This also served to clarify roles and responsibilities within the new administration.

124. Several mechanisms were employed to present project products and encourage feedback and support from relevant stakeholders. The Land Use Policy initiative was presented in a policy paper to Cabinet early on in project implementation to increase buy-in (taking advantage of the fact that the development of a LUP was a campaign promise of that government). This may have contributed to the fact that the completed LUP, Framework and Mapping System were endorsed so quickly by Cabinet.

125. It should also be noted that during the development of the LUP and Framework, as well as the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve, the consultants carried out extensive consultations with stakeholders to solicit their input into these products.

126. Given the heavy workload of PEG members, the Project Manager often distilled products, highlighted areas required for review, presented salient points, and imposed timelines for the provision of feedback. Consultants made presentations to the PEG to summarize their work and to the CEO (which then enabled the CEO to more easily be able to brief her Minister in turn). The PMU also prepared monthly reports to ensure that PEG members, including the CEO of the MNRE, were regularly updated on project progress. In addition, the PMU made regular presentations on project activities and accomplishments to other government officials, which served to obtain commitment and support for project objectives.

127. The PMU was in regular communication with other ongoing projects within the same ministry, which enabled the project to benefit from training being provided by other initiatives, thus maximizing the efficiency of the use of funds. This also enables more linkages to be made and is a best practice to be replicated.

Substantial involvement of government representatives in advisory bodies and pilot projects

128. The composition of the PEG included an emphasis on government representatives and was considered appropriate to ensure that the process was steered by government and that project elements were consistent with what the government was already doing. This served to increase the level of government ownership of the process.

129. The decision was made to create a government task force specifically assigned to accompany the process of development of the LUP and provide technical input, given the time constraints of PEG members. This was a multi-stakeholder body that met regularly during the development of the Land Use Policy, Framework and Mapping System. The establishment of a technical advisory mechanism in a project with large consultancies requiring careful technical review is a practice that should be emulated.

130. Finally, the fact that the pilot projects were either led by, or implemented in partnership with, government agencies allowed for continuity post-project. For example, the mining rehabilitation pilot

project was led by the Department of Geology and Petroleum, the agricultural pilot was executed by CARDI in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the pilot in the Vaca Forest Reserve was implemented by FCD in cooperation with the Forest Department. Both the Department of Geology and Petroleum and the Ministry of Agriculture are now providing follow-up, with the former continuing to distribute the mining manuals produced through the project to mining operators, and extensionists of the latter continuing to provide training to farmers in soil conservation and slope management techniques.

5.4 Recommendations Based on Lessons Learned

Project Design

- **Ensure that all project components are in line with the national context and are realistically achievable**
  In the case of this project, more effort to tailor the Integrated Financing Strategy component to the national context might have led to greater success in the implementation of this aspect (e.g., by analyzing financing for SLM within the national financing context, and identifying the ways in which SLM could be mainstreamed into other sectors). Besides getting the "national fit" right, the project design should not be overly ambitious to ensure that targets can effectively be achieved.

- **Ensure the project time frame is appropriate to achieve deliverables**
  It is important not to underestimate the amount of time it can take to implement all project activities and achieve impact. For example, the process of carrying out meaningful and inclusive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders when developing nationally relevant policies can be very time consuming. In this project, the consultancy to develop the Land Use Policy and Framework took longer than planned, in part because of the extensive consultations carried out to garner input and ownership (and due to delays in the submission of data to the consultants). Similarly, the development of the Integrated Landscape Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve was a lengthier process than originally envisaged. A number of stakeholders considered that three years was insufficient time to implement all the elements outlined in the Project Document.

- **Allocate sufficient budget for awareness and outreach activities**
  By the time the PM took over project execution, there were insufficient funds for this component and the Project Management Unit had to creatively identify possible opportunities for outreach and use savings from other budget lines. In the future, sufficient budget to raise awareness and increase project visibility should be allocated in project design, including for activities to reach out to the general public if appropriate.

- **Include sufficient funds to implement project outputs**
  While this may seem self-evident, it is important to keep in mind that the development of a project output without funds for implementation leads to the risk of inadequate follow-up post-project. In this case, while the information-sharing protocol was developed with the project, no funds were allocated for the work required to develop consistent data standards and implement the protocol across departments and ministries, instead the roll out of the programme has been integrated into the existing work programme of the LIC and is moving very slowly under the guidance of a dedicated few. In addition, the issue of the incompatibility of operating systems within government posed a constraint to implementation of the protocol, and one which the project did not have sufficient funds to address.

- **Explore ways to enhance project sustainability at the design stage**

This could involve building in fundraising for follow-up work after the project concludes into the project's activities. It could also entail obtaining the necessary commitments from organizations for long-term follow up (for example, in terms of training activities). This may also involve promoting greater ownership of project activities at the local level and avoiding over-dependence on project funds.

Project Implementation

- **Provide adequate training/orientation to PMU on UNDP/ GEF project management, policies, and procedures**
  This includes training on M&E procedures, planning and reporting requirements, hiring and contracting processes, expenditure and accounting, among others. This is particularly important when project staff do not have a solid background in these areas. With the executing modality employed in this project, the Project Manager was hired as a Forest Officer within the Forest Department and did not have a background in the management of UNDP/GEF projects. The provision of comprehensive training in the relevant procedures, and the allocation of a mobilization period at project outset for this training before activities commenced would have facilitated implementation. A clear understanding of UNDP and GEF policies and procedures early on in project implementation would enable management systems and arrangements to be set up more efficiently from the outset. In addition, during project implementation, follow-up training should be considered, especially when policies and procedures change. It is also important to provide adequate hand-over notes/ training in the event of personnel changes. Mentors (in the form of other project managers with experience in implementing UNDP/GEF projects) can also play a useful role in helping to orient the PMU, as was the case in this project.

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders at project outset**
  The PMU, Project Director and PEG should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, lines of communication, and lines of decision-making. In addition, the main UNDP and GEF policies and procedures need to be understood by other key parties besides the PMU. This work should be carried out at or before project launch, possibly during a comprehensive inception workshop.

- **Update logical framework to ensure it functions as a useful management tool**
  As the project progressed, adaptive management was carried out and decisions were taken to amalgamate and modify outputs, activities and targets. These changes were never reflected in a modified logical framework. As a result, the logframe was not used by project management as a tool to monitor project progress as much as it could have been. In the future, such adjustments to the logframe should be made proactively by the Project Management Unit, and approved by the project board as early as possible in project implementation. For this project, by the time a logframe revision was recommended by the MTE, the project was already in its last full year of execution.

- **Strive to put in place optimal contract negotiating conditions**
  When negotiating contracts with consultants, it is important to identify a lead negotiator, avoid unnecessary long breaks in the negotiations and maintain a consistent line of communication. This can substantially reduce delays in procurement processes, which were an issue in this project.

- **Reduce possibility of consultant delays and requests for extensions**

In this project, in a number of cases, consultants asked for extensions in the last minute without notifying the PMU earlier of possible delays. It may be useful to include contractual obligations in agreements with consultants specifying the amount of notice they must provide for extensions and the implications of failure to do so. It is also important for the PEG, PMU and consultants to carefully assess how long they feel deliverables will take to produce in order for realistic timelines to be included in the Terms of Reference and project workplans.

- **Request that consultants provide any material that requires stakeholder review in a timely fashion**
  Products such as training materials, manuals, policy documents, and frameworks need to be shared by consultants with board members or technical committee members in such a way as to allow for sufficient time for review and feedback and to tailor the products to planned audiences. This will increase the extent of meaningful input, enhance ownership and increase the relevance of materials to target audiences. The provision of ample time for review needs to be written into Terms of Reference and/or included in workplans in order to reduce the likelihood that this issue will lead to delays in the submission of deliverables by consultants.

- **Set aside sufficient time for consultation throughout all stages of the development of products**
  The Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve ended up taking more time for consultation and revision than planned. Similarly, the consultancy to develop the LUP and Framework was delayed in part because of the time required for multiple stakeholder consultations. The point was made that while there were extensive consultations in the earlier stages of the development of the LUP and Framework, it would have been beneficial to have had more time to validate the later versions of the documents with stakeholders to ensure that their input was adequately incorporated in the documents. In general, the time required to properly consult documents should not be underestimated as this can place a significant burden on consultants and can also lead to insufficient consultation. Full consultation with all relevant stakeholders is critical for ownership.

- **Plan appropriately when international consultants are hired**
  When consultants are from another country, it is important to ensure there is sufficient budget for the required in-country visits to collect data. Alternately, projects need to plan for local teams to provide support in data gathering. In the case of the development of the Integrated Landscape Management Strategy for the Vaca Forest Reserve, FCD decided to hire an international consultation in partnership with CATIE. Since the budget only allowed the Costa Rican consultant to travel to Vaca two times, FCD needed to carry out substantial field work to gather relevant data.

- **Select/screen participants in committees and training sessions strategically**
  The identification of participants should take into consideration factors such as their availability to participate, their abilities/expertise, the likelihood that they will actually apply the knowledge gained on the job (in the case of training sessions) and their individual interest in participating. It may be useful for projects to set out minimum criteria for participation in particular training sessions or committees and to focus on "training the trainers" in order to maximize the impact of this work and increase the number of individuals that can be reached. In this project, there were times when the participants selected were not necessarily the most appropriate because they were not in the position to apply the skills learned (e.g., in some cases with the GIS training). It may also be important to seek high-level directives (such as at the level of the CEO) to ensure that staff can consistently participate and take the time off from their other responsibilities; by following the appropriate government protocol, there is greater likelihood of staff participation. It would also be useful to consider putting in place mechanisms before implementing capacity building activities to make sure that training will be institutionalized by participants so that greater impact can be

achieved; for example, individuals could be asked to sign contracts to outline their commitment to the training and to ensure that it will be integrated into their work flows.

- **Carefully consider the appropriate length and modality of training sessions**

  For training initiatives, a balance should be sought between providing sufficient time for absorption and practical application of new skills versus ensuring that training is not so drawn out over time that participation wanes due to other departmental obligations or staff priorities. In this project, the training in GIS was carried out over a semester and the participation levels were not consistent over time. It is also important to allow for greater lag and slippage time when planning training sessions given the challenges of obtaining participation in workshops.

- **Provide practical demonstration of new technologies and practices**

  To complement stakeholder training, the practical utility of technologies being introduced should be demonstrated. This enables relevant applications to be showcased and allows problems that could be addressed with a particular technology, such as GIS, to be recognized. This would strengthen the impact of training and increase the likelihood that new technologies would actually be adopted by staff. It was also commented that more practical field demonstrations of techniques such as soil conservation, slope management and mining rehabilitation would be useful to increase the likelihood of adoption of such practices.

- **Do not underestimate the cost and planning required to mainstream technologies into government operations**

  Beyond the cost of training and provision of software and hardware, projects need to consider other ongoing costs associated with integrating new technologies, such as GIS, into government systems. These could include software maintenance and upgrades, as well as follow-up training. This will require government commitment to include these costs in the relevant budgets. In addition to the need to adequately identify the costs associated with mainstreaming new technologies, strategic planning and analysis is required at an organizational level on current workflows and leverage points to change those workflows (for example, through the use of GIS).

- **Ensure compatibility of any new tools with government systems and allocate sufficient budget for purchase of necessary tools and equipment**

  In this project, while the "nodes" of the government system were provided with new and compatible hardware and software for GIS, the mapping tool that was developed by consultants was not compatible with the hardware within the hub, that is, the Land Information Centre, which thus reduced its potential application. The Terms of Reference for future similar consultancies should specify that to the extent possible, compatibility of tools with existing government systems must be assured. The identification of a government counterpart to accompany such consultancies could reduce the likelihood of incompatibilities with government systems. However, it must also be recognized that in reality equipment often varies within government, making the goal of compatibility with the entire system difficult to attain. This highlights the need to allocate sufficient funds to invest in the necessary equipment and tools so that newly trained government functionaries can actually apply the skills learned.

- **Request that consultants provide supporting documentation on the use of new tools**

  User-friendly manuals to accompany any new tools that are developed should be provided to government by consultants to clarify their use. This is critical to increase the level of adoption of such tools beyond those departments or ministries with expertise in the particular area. In the case of this project, it was recommended by some interviewees that it would have been useful for the consultants who developed the mapping system to provide a guide to facilitate its use.

- **Clarify proposal and reporting requirements to pilot project managers from the outset**
  Just as the PMU required training in UNDP/GEF policies and procedures, it cannot be assumed that the managers of pilot projects are aware of all the proposal, narrative and financial reporting requirements of different donors. The absorptive capacity of institutions to manage projects cannot be assumed. The provision of debriefing sessions to the managers of pilot projects and any necessary additional follow-up training could serve to minimize delays in the preparation and approval of proposals and reports. It is also useful to provide pilot project managers with templates to facilitate the preparation of required documents. In this project, FCD could have benefitted from more training earlier on.

- **Select agencies to carry out pilot projects that are likely to continue to provide follow-up after project completion**
  Ideally, the pilot project activities should constitute a core part of the work of organizations selected to implement such projects. This will increase the likelihood that the project impact will be sustained once the pilot projects conclude. In the case of CARDI, as explained by one of the interviewees, while the organization continues to work with farmers, its focus is more on grain productivity rather than soil conservation and slope management, and it will therefore not necessarily continue to focus efforts on these aspects.

- **High-level commitment is critical to ensure follow-up**
  With the information-sharing protocol that was developed, a Norms and Standards Working Group was established to work toward the identification of consistent data norms and standards across departments. Unfortunately, perhaps in part because the issue did not receive sufficient prioritization, committee meetings eventually stopped taking place and no further follow-up was carried out. This underscores the importance of high-level commitment to follow through on project initiatives.

- **Identify ways to facilitate scheduling of board and committee meetings**
  As a result of the many other responsibilities of committee members, the project often struggled to schedule meetings and obtain quorum. As was the case with this project, the PMU should ensure that all committee members have designated an alternate to participate in meetings. In addition, it may be helpful to schedule several meetings at once to maximize participation. It is also useful to 'piggy-back' off of other meetings with the same or overlapping members. Another possibility is to offer small financial incentives to participants or to reimburse the expenses of participants traveling to attend meetings. However, this idea requires further discussion and should be approached with caution as it could set a precedent that may not be financially sustainable. Moreover, many feel that the motivation to participate in such committees should be intrinsic rather than external. Other possible mechanisms to reduce scheduling conflicts should be discussed with committee members upon committee establishment.

- **Put in place mechanism to ensure committee members participate actively and relay information to their institution**
  In some instances in this project, members of different committees did not participate as actively as they could perhaps of, which underscores the need to make committee members roles, responsibilities and expected levels of participation clear from the outset. In addition, committee members should commit to ensuring the flow of information from committee discussions to the key individuals within their respective institutions.

- **Explore ways to increase local-level participation**

This project is not alone in Belize in having had difficulties securing participation from the local level on its board. While there was obviously significant local-level involvement in the pilot projects, no representatives from the National Association of Village Councils or from the Mayors Association participated on the PEG. The issue of how best to motivate such participation needs to be further explored. The possibility of paying for travel costs is one option to consider as mentioned under the previous recommendation.

- **Keep members of the opposition party abreast when it comes to the development of nationally relevant documents**
  This serves to increase buy-in and sustainability of project impact in the event of a change in government. In this case, the opposition was less informed of the progress of the LUP consultancy than it could have been, especially in the later stages of its development. This may have been due to time constraints, lack of prioritization, and (near the later stages of development of the products) due to the upcoming elections.

- **Request co-financing commitments in writing and coordinate co-financing**
  In the case of this project, a commitment to provide co-financing made by GM verbally and through e-mails was not adhered to, which led to considerable frustrations and delays in obtaining deliverables. While the issues that arose were largely outside of the control of the project, lessons can still be extracted from the experience. It is critical to secure written formal commitments as soon as possible and refrain from reallocating funds based on informal commitments until the promised monies materialize. If promised co-financing does not come through, decisions should be made as soon as possible to address the situation to minimize the impact on the project implementation schedule. It is also important to ensure that the timeline of co-funders is compatible with project timelines to avoid later problems. To ensure effectiveness of co-financing there is also demonstrable need for the further promotion of effective inter-agency cooperation and for the investigation into more flexible approaches to facilitate joint actions. Finally, it would be useful for co-financing organizations to provide a specific outline as to how funds will be dispersed and what outcomes are expected (this could also be in the form of a written agreement), to enable the PMU to be able to track and report on co-financing more effectively and be able to gauge whether co-financing contributed to project goals.

- **Include a budget for editing and/or translation**
  In a number of cases in this project, consultants' products required editing to make the language less technical or to improve the flow of English when the product was written by a non-native speaker. For example, significant editing was carried out on the CARDI manual on slope management and soil conservation as well as the Vaca Forest Reserve Integrated Landscape Management Strategy. Including a budget for editing and/or translation would reduce the amount of time spent by the PMU in reviewing documents and speed up finalization of documents. It could also enable the required editing to be carried out to transform simple reports and documents into knowledge products.

- **Promote greater knowledge management and inter-project learning at the global and regional levels for future projects adopting a portfolio approach**
  To the extent possible, the Project Manager for this project maintained relationships with other countries implementing SLM projects in the region under the larger portfolio project. However, at the regional or global level, apart from some workshops related to the Integrated Financing Strategy, there was felt to be insufficient networking carried out to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge products, to share lessons learned by the Country Offices, and to

promote learning. As a result, some of the benefits of implementing a large global project with joint objectives were not reaped to the extent possible by the individual countries nor were the individual countries able to contribute as much as possible to the global project.