## Summary of Mid-Term Evaluation Ratings and Lessons Learned

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|  | **Rating** |
| Project Concept and Design | Satisfactory |
| Implementation approach | Satisfactory |
| Monitoring and Evaluation  M&E Plan Design  M&E Implementation | Moderately Unsatisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory |
| Achievement of Outcomes  Outcome 1  Relevance  Effectiveness  Efficiency  Outcome 2  Relevance  Effectiveness  Efficiency  Outcome 3  Relevance  Effectiveness  Efficiency | Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Satisfactory  Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| Overall assessment of the prospects for sustainability  Financial sustainability  Socio-political  Institutional  Environmental | Moderately Unlikely  Moderately Unlikely  Moderately Likely  Moderately Unlikely  Moderately Unlikely |

# PART SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

1. The Project aims to establish increased capacities to prevent and control the introduction and spread of IAS through trade, travel and transport across Seychelles production landscape. Project design established that ‘Seychelles…has an inadequate internal framework for controlling the entry of IAS into, and their spread within, the archipelago.’ The project outcomes were designed to address three core areas of capacity deficit.
2. A strong emphasis in design was placed on the principle that ‘prevention is better than cure’, however development impacts, at both Objective and Outcome levels, aim to improve capacities to ‘prevent and control’ the ‘introduction and spread’ of IAS. The project document identifies a comprehensive package of development results to strengthen Seychelles overall capacity for preventing the entry of IAS, as well as for monitoring and managing IAS impacts within the Seychelles.
3. The project document identifies ‘the need for the respective roles and responsibilities of the Government, private sector and NGOs to be defined in order to ensure efficient use of the limited expertise available within the country’, stressing that ‘more effective processes and incentives are needed to encourage stakeholder collaboration and ecosystem-based partnerships for IAS inventory, monitoring and controls, both within the ENGO community and between it and the Government. ‘National benefits’ under the project are to include: ‘improved cross-sectoral, institutional cooperation systems, coupled with stakeholder participation schemes’ which ‘will lead to a better deployment of funds and human resources’.
4. The development rationale for Global Environment Fund (GEF) support to the project is to ‘ensure safeguarding of Seychelles’ biodiversity against the threat of introduction and spread of IAS, and hence an improved conservation status and ecological integrity of globally important ecosystems and habitats, including globally endangered species’. GEF support is to cover ‘the incremental costs of ensuring that biodiversity management objectives pertaining to IAS are mainstreamed into the production practices of the travel, transport and trade sectors…expanding the management paradigm, to improve risk management (risk identification and action prioritisation), interception systems and private sector involvement’. Co-financing is to support a range of core related areas, in particular to strengthen Seychelles quarantine systems.
5. At MTR it is clear that the project has established a strong focus on strengthening Seychelles border control and quarantine systems, in order to increase national capacity for preventing the entry of IAS to the Seychelles. This is highly relevant. However, it is one element of broader project outcomes to strengthen Seychelles overall IAS management capacity. The project’s core focus on quarantine and border control, and on Seychelles quarantine and agricultural agency, is not currently supporting the establishment of ‘cross-sectoral, institutional cooperation systems, coupled with stakeholder participation schemes’ and a number of areas of project support are unlikely to achieve intended biodiversity conservation results.
6. The MTR has identified an urgent need for the project to take a step back from its focus on building the capacity of PAHS /SAA to look at Seychelles overall IAS management systems. To achieve intended results, the project must increase its support for the establishment of effective inter agency, multi sectoral coordination in IAS management systems. It should ensure that the Biosecurity legislation and Strategy developed under the project support this integrated overall framework and that they support positive biodiversity conservation outcomes. More specifically it should ensure that environmental management authorities are core partners in IAS management frameworks for IAS prevention (including risk analysis and prioritisation) and for monitoring, control and eradication within the Seychelles, alongside PAHS / SAA.
7. Project activities to date have had a strong focus on Outcome 1, which aims to address weaknesses identified in the policy and regulatory framework, and on Outcome 2, which aims to strengthen institutional capacity for IAS prevention and control. Some important studies have been completed under Outcome 3, but many of the Outcome 3 MTR targets have not been met, and work has not yet been initiated in many key areas.
8. Under Outcome 1 the project has developed a national Biosecurity Policy, Strategy and draft Biosecurity legislation. A cost recovery system for Seychelles quarantine and border control agency has been identified and is included within the draft legislation. The project has not undertaken work on the fourth output under Outcome 1 to establish a national communication plan / public awareness strategy.
9. Outputs developed under Outcome 1 establish a legislative and strategic framework that gives the Plant and Animal Health Section (PAHS) of the Seychelles Agriculture Agency (SAA) the core role, and sole mandate, in all aspects of IAS management in the Seychelles. The legislation has relatively few provisions to support effective management of IAS threats to / impacts on Seychelles biodiversity. It also does not adequately reflect or incorporate the mandates of national environmental agencies. Considerable work has been done under the project to ensure that the legislation is complaint with, and supports, Seychelles WTO accession process. The legislation also establishes a multi agency ‘Biosecurity Committee’, mandated to advise the Biosecurity Agency (SAA PAHS) on biosecurity issues. The Biosecurity Committee has helped to bring key agencies involved in national border control together and is a useful discussion forum for border control. However, it has proportionally weak environmental representation, relative to the significance of IAS management to the 50% of Seychelles land area that is under environmental protection as national parks.
10. PAHS is an agricultural support agency under Seychelles Agriculture Agency; it is the national agency responsible for Seychelles quarantine service. It also provides support to the agriculture sector to help manage the impact of agricultural pests and diseases, under Seychelles Agricultural Agency. It does not have the capacity to assess or make informed decisions about environmental impacts of IAS, however, and this is not a strategic objective of its parent Ministry. PAHS has a huge work load relative to its small size. Project Outputs which allocate further mandates and responsibilities for all IAS management to PAHS / SAA will totally overburden it, reducing the effectiveness of its border control and agricultural support work and significantly reducing the effectiveness of overall IAS management systems in the Seychelles. The MTR concludes that in giving all legal responsibility for IAS management to PAHS/ SAA, as Seychelles sole ‘Biosecurity Agency’, the project will not achieve the intended development results under the project; in fact it may work against achieving these objectives.
11. The institutional framework being developed under the project in the draft Biosecurity legislation and strategy does not align with or support Seychelles national priorities as outlined in the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS). The SSDS identifies IAS management as a key priority for national biodiversity conservation. It identifies the Department of Environment, Seychelles National Parks Authority, environmental NGOs and Seychelles Agricultural Agency as partners in achieving national IAS management priorities. The SSDS replaces the EMPS as a key national Strategy with which project Outputs and Outcomes must align.
12. Under Outcome 2, the original concept at project design was to establish a new, integrated ‘Biosecurity Service’ incorporating environmental, agricultural and border control expertise, and to build the capacity of this agency to effectively control the entry of IAS at international borders. In fact support under the project has focussed on strengthening Seychelles existing border control and quarantine systems. Having identified the Plant and Animal Health Section (PAHS) of the Seychelles Agriculture Agency (SAA) as Seychelles sole ‘Biosecurity Agency’ project support has subsequently focussed on this agency. Support under Outcome 2 has significantly helped to increase the capacity of PAHS to undertake its quarantine and agricultural support work. It has also helped to strengthen border control systems, particularly at the international airport. However, it has not achieved the intended Outcome of establishing an integrated Biosecurity Service that consolidates environmental, agricultural and border control components of Biosecurity. Currently international border control systems supported under the project do not include adequate provisions for assessment of IAS threats to biodiversity and for prioritisation of IAS impacts on the environment.
13. Outcome 3, and elements of Outcome 1 were designed to strengthen the information and resource base available to IAS management agencies in the Seychelles, establish standardised management tools and monitoring systems and strengthen platforms for inter organisational networking, coordination and awareness raising. The project has supported two key studies under Outcome 3. However, at the time of the MTR these have yet to be developed in to tools to directly support improved IAS management. No substantial work has been undertaken to establish multi stakeholder networks, communication, awareness raising and monitoring systems.
14. At MTR, the project is a long way from achieving the Normative Solution outlined in the project document whereby ‘‘The country will have developed strong institutional capacities to prevent the entry of new IAS into the country that pose a risk to biodiversity, and thus will have improved the level of security for native species threatened by potential new IAS. In particular, strengthened capacities will be in place for a) assessing the relative risks posed by the different pathways for entry; and b) instituting effective inspection programmes to minimise entry of IAS by the identified pathways.’
15. Although the project has helped to significantly increase the capacity of PAHS, and to strengthen overall border control systems, currently key Outputs under Outcome 1 do not strengthen capacities ‘to prevent the entry of new IAS into the country that pose a risk to biodiversity’. In fact although the capacity of PAHS to detect IAS has been increased, and although improved border security is likely to improve the interception of all IAS coming in to the country, there is no provision within the draft legislation developed under the project to assess or prioritise IAS risks to Seychelles biodiversity.
16. In assessing project impact and evaluating project results it is essential to look at the overall development results intended in the project document, alongside the objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) specified in the project’s logical framework. The MTR has found the OVIs to be weak at all levels, they do not meet the required criteria of being specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART). Objective level indicators are especially weak and do not support measurement and assessment of progress towards achieving intended project results. In evaluating project impact therefore the MTR has reported against the OVIs, and has also assessed the extent to which project results are helping to achieve the ‘normative solution’, and are in line with the intended development rationale for GEF support.
17. The intended EOP impact was to have increased capacities in the Seychelles to the extent that ‘production activities, the trade, travel and transport sectors will have been adapted, to improve controls. This will be driven both by regulatory enforcement, and voluntary action by businesses. There will have been an attitudinal shift amongst the citizenry concerning the importance of IAS controls, which are presently seen as needlessly punitive. Measures to halt the inter-island spread of IAS already established on some islands will be formalized and put in place, and monitoring systems will be assessing their efficacy, and inform management actions. Finally, control and eradication schemes for IAS will be undertaken with full access to knowledge on the efficacy and costs of different treatment options, and with access to a community of practice constituted by local experts, but with ready access to international expertise’
18. Considerable further work and a change of focus are needed if the project is to get anywhere near achieve the ‘Normative Solution’ before EOP. If the project is to achieve intended results it must widen its focus beyond quarantine and border control agencies and establish a coordinated framework for IAS management that supports *all* key agencies, sectors and stakeholders to work in partnership. The Institutional Framework developed under the project should help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the range of agencies involved in IAS management in the Seychelles including for prevention, risk assessment, rapid response, monitoring, control and eradication as well as in raising awareness. This will help to achieve the national benefits identified at design.
19. As outlined in Part 2 of this report there have been considerable changes to the development context since project design. The Seychelles has undertaken a significant economic reform programme over the last four years with associated restructuring of public sector departments and the establishment of a number of parastatal organisations. The main implications of the reform programme for the project have been that IAS prevention and control functions which originally fell under a single Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR), now fall under different Ministries and under associated parastatal organisations, across different sectors. Government Ministries and associated Departments now theoretically have a largely policy oriented, strategic guidance role, while the parastatal organisations are responsible for ‘on the ground’ implementation. There has also been a significant reduction in public sector budgets.
20. The institutional and economic changes since project design have increased the work load and challenges for the project, increasing the institutional complexity of IAS management across sectors and reducing public sector resources available to support IAS management. However, the increased institutional complexity at MTR makes the project’s job of supporting integrated, inter-sectoral management frameworks even more essential than it was at design. The increased scarcity of public sector resources makes it even more important to ensure that the work load of IAS management is spread across relevant agencies, that these agencies have the legislative and technical support to operate effectively, and that overall IAS management frameworks, systems and strategies support effective inter agency coordination and stakeholder participation. Last but not least it increases the importance of establishing effective awareness raising strategies to support voluntary control, in order to help reduce the number of IAS being brought in to the country.
21. The successful implementation of a harmonized and integrated biosecurity approach requires clear and supportive national policy, strategy and legislation, with an institutional framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholder groups. It also requires adequate technical and scientific capability (including use of risk analysis across all areas of risk), well-functioning infrastructure, well co-ordinated monitoring and rapid response systems and effective communication and information exchange. Sector policies, laws and regulations should be harmonized to avoid contradictions, overlaps or gaps. The institutional framework should set out the rules and procedures governing IAS management, and should define the mechanisms through which different organisations work towards shared objectives. The institutional framework should be iterative so that it can be adapted, monitored and amended if institutions or institutional roles change, or if new stakeholders emerge. The Biosecurity Bill and Strategy documents developed under Outcome 1 should be amended to support this overall integrated approach. The project also urgently needs to establish the monitoring systems, tools and networks planned under Outcome 3 and under Output 1.4. The range of agencies that are core to achieving effective IAS management in the Seychelles will then be better able to coordinate their work, taking advantage of the synergies and complementarities in their roles and responsibilities.

## Lessons Learnt

1. The following section highlights some of the **lessons learnt** under the project at MTR
2. Perhaps the most obvious lesson is the need to hold a MTR at mid term! The project is currently near to its original end date and has consequently spent 74% of its resources, and yet the mid term evaluation has only just been commissioned. The maximum amount of time possible for a no cost extension with remaining resources would be 18 months. A number of key project results have however not been achieved, many have not yet been initiated. The project has also put a large amount of work and resources in to a number of activities that are not working effectively to achieve positive results and are not in line with intended outcomes. If the MTR had been held at mid term, as intended, it could have helped to pick up on these issues, and to steer the project back on to a track of supporting a more integrated and consolidated biosecurity system, working to achieve biodiversity conservation outcomes, in line with intended project outcomes.
3. The project also demonstrates the need to ensure that indicators within the logical framework meet the criteria of being specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART) and that the indicators effectively capture intended results at all levels. OVIs that are not SMART and that do not capture key results, tie project managers, evaluators and project partners to an ‘illogical’ reporting and monitoring framework. This is a lesson arising from project design and inception. However, mechanisms should also be built in to support and encourage adaptive management and to enable project teams to amend OVIs that are clearly not relevant or useful monitoring tools. Even if OVIs are SMART at inception, conditions of project implementation may change that make them no longer appropriate.
4. Another lesson from project inception is the need to establish clear reporting systems at start-up of GEF projects to record co-financing data. Linked to this is the importance of clarifying and agreeing with project partners what constitutes co-financing. Project managers can spend vast amounts of time trying to elicit budget and co-financing data from partner organisations at the end of a reporting year if systems are not in place to record financial and in kind co-financing inputs throughout the year. Co-financing is part of the contractual project agreement between a country and UNDP / GEF and it is important that co-financing data is recorded.
5. The importance of ensuring that equipment purchased under a project is appropriate for intended use, and that responsibility for long term operation and maintenance of the equipment is agreed prior to purchase, is a positive lesson from this project. The positive results being generated from involving the civil aviation authority and other key partners in the process of selecting the x ray scanner are clear at MTR. This has helped to ensure that the equipment purchased met the operational needs of the operating agency and that running and maintenance costs following EOP are clear and agreed to. The positive results attained by the UNDP / GEF Biosecurity project can be compared with the experience from an earlier IAS management project funded by the EU. The EU project purchased incinerators to enable safe disposal of biosecurity waste at Seychelles airport and port. However since EOP of that project both incinerators have fallen in to disrepair and are not being used. The reason for this was reported to the MTR to be due to the high operational and maintenance costs. Following project end no agency was prepared to take responsibility for operation of the incinerators and the Seychelles continues to have no means for safe disposal of biosecurity waste.
6. Another key lesson learnt from the MTR is the importance of ensuring that project design captures and incorporates any key strategic or policy changes that are due to occur during the life of the project. This project was designed to align with the Environmental Management Plan for the Seychelles 2000 – 2010; significant emphasis was given in the project document to the importance of project alignment with the EMPS and involvement of related stakeholders in project implementation. The project’s EOP date is 2013. The EMPS was due to end in 2010. It was therefore clear at design that there would be a major strategic review process during the life of the project which would have a significant impact on project outcomes. However, no core project outputs, activities, OVIs or budget were included to ensure the project’s involvement in and alignment with this national strategic review processes. Adaptive management of the project could have picked this up, but in the case of this project did not do so effectively. The lesson here is on the importance of ensuring that projects designed over a period of time where there will be a major strategic or policy revision process affecting that project, should incorporate activities and OVIs to ensure project alignment with the new strategy or policy. Where relevant adequate provision should be given to enable project support for, and involvement in, the strategic revision process. If activities had been included in design of the Mainstreaming Biosecurity Project to support the Seychelles in effectively incorporating IAS management across all relevant areas of the revised EMPS, which in fact became the SSDS, this would have been a key contribution towards intended development impact. It would have significantly contributed to the likelihood of sustainable project outcomes and would also have helped to ensure that project outputs remained aligned with national strategic priorities. Unfortunately this was not the case, and unfortunately due to the late commissioning of the MTR the SSDS is now finalised and the opportunity to ensure IAS management is effectively incorporated across all relevant areas of Seychelles multi-sectoral sustainable development strategy, has been missed.
7. Lessons can be learnt from the impact of the significant number of changes in the development context since project design. The project demonstrated good adaptive management in the way in which it has incorporated and worked to support Seychelles WTO accession process. However, as outlined above a key opportunity to ensure alignment with the SSDS was missed. Project implementation would have greatly benefited from a strategic review of the implications of the major national institutional and economic reform processes for IAS management in the Seychelles. It may be useful across future UNDP/GEF projects to include a section within the monitoring and evaluation plan that emphasises that if there are major economic and institutional reform processes over the life of a project, a special meeting of high level parties within the TPR should be held to review the impact of these changes for the project and to identify any adaptation mechanisms necessary.

The overall findings of the MTR also highlight the importance of a cross sectoral, integrated approach to IAS management. This is particularly relevant on small islands where resources are limited and ecosystems and production landscapes are intricately interlinked. It is perhaps a useful lesson for UNDP / GEF for future IAS management projects. It is essential for biosecurity mechanisms established under projects such as the current one to reflect the institutional mandates, strategic, human and financial capacity of all relevant national organisations, to support an integrated and coordinated framework for IAS management. This MTR also demonstrates the importance of conceptualising IAS prevention, control and eradication (including risk assessments, monitoring and awareness raising etc) as inter-connected components of an integrated overall IAS management system. The dichotomy created at design between ‘prevention’ and ‘control’ and subsequently in project implementation due to different use of the terms ‘biosecurity’ and ‘IAS management’ and a focus on ‘pests and diseases[[1]](#footnote-1)’ in some sectors and ‘invasive alien species’ in others, appears to have caused some level of confusion in project implementation, and an unhelpful dichotomy between environmental and quarantine / agricultural aspects of IAS management.

1. both IAS and non IAS [↑](#footnote-ref-1)