Annexure-A: Terms of Reference

The terminal evaluation of the National Environmental Management System (NEIMS) should properly examine and assess the perspectives of the various stakeholders. The following areas should be covered in the evaluation report:

**1. General Information about the Evaluation**

The terminal evaluation report should include information on when the evaluation took place; places visited; who was involved; the key questions; and, the methodology. The terminal evaluation report will also include the consultant’s TORs and any response from the Project management team and/or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report.

**2. Assessment of Project Results**

The evaluation will assess achievement of the Project’s objective, outcomes and outputs and will provide ratings for the targeted objective and outcomes. The assessment of Project results seeks to determine the extent to which the Project objective was achieved, or was expected to be achieved, and assess if the Project has led to any other short term or long term and positive or negative consequences. While assessing the Project’s results, the evaluation will seek to determine the extent of achievement and shortcomings in reaching the Project’s objective as stated in the Project document and also indicate if there were any changes and whether those changes were approved. If the Project did not establish a baseline (initial conditions), the evaluator should seek to estimate the baseline condition so that achievements and results can be properly established.

Assessment of Project outcomes should be a priority. Outcomes are the likely or achieved short‐term and medium‐term effects of an intervention’s outputs. Examples of outcomes could include but are not restricted to stronger institutional capacities, higher public awareness (when leading to changes of behavior), and transformed policy frameworks or markets. An assessment of impact is encouraged when appropriate. The evaluator should assess Project results using indicators and relevant tracking tools.

To determine the level of achievement of the Project’s objective and outcomes, the following three criteria will be assessed in the final evaluation:

* **Relevance**: Were the Project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies and country priorities?
* **Effectiveness**: Are the actual Project outcomes commensurate with the original or modified Project objective?
* **Efficiency**: Was the Project cost effective? Was the Project the least cost option? Was the Project implementation delayed and if it was, then did that affect cost effectiveness?

Wherever possible, the evaluator should also compare the costs incurred and the time taken to achieve outcomes with that of other similar Projects.

The evaluation of relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency will be as objective as possible and will include sufficient and convincing empirical evidence. Ideally the Project monitoring system should deliver quantifiable information that can lead to a robust assessment of the Project’s effectiveness and efficiency.

The evaluator will also assess other results of the Project, including positive and negative actual (or anticipated) impacts or emerging long‐term effects of a Project. Given the long term nature of impacts, it might not be possible for the evaluators to identify or fully assess impacts. Evaluators will nonetheless indicate the steps taken to assess long‐term Project impacts, especially impacts on local populations, global environment, replication effects and other local effects. Wherever possible, evaluators should indicate how the findings on impacts will be reported to UNDP and EKN.

**3. Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes**

The final evaluation will assess the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes at Project termination, and provide a rating for this. Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of continued benefits after the Project ends. The sustainability assessment will give special attention to analysis of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of Project outcomes. The sustainability assessment should explain how the risks to Project outcomes will affect continuation of benefits after the Project ends. It will include both exogenous and endogenous risks. The following four dimensions or aspects of risks to sustainability will be addressed:

* **Financial risks**: Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustainability of Project outcomes? What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the EKN assistance ends (resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining the Project’s outcomes)?
* **Socio‐political risks:** Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of Project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the Project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the Project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the Project?
* **Institutional framework and governance risks:** Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the Project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of Project benefits? Are requisite systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know‐how, in place?
* **Environmental risks:** Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of Project outcomes? The terminal evaluation should assess whether certain activities will pose a threat to the sustainability of the Project outcomes.

**4. Catalytic Role**

The final evaluation will also describe any catalytic or replication effect of the Project. If no effects are identified, the evaluation will describe the catalytic or replication actions that the Project carried out.

**5. Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation System**

The final evaluation will assess whether the Project met the minimum requirements for Project design of M&E and the implementation of the Project M&E plan. Project managers are expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during Project implementation to adapt and improve the Project. Given the long duration of many UNDP interventions, Projects are also encouraged to include long‐term monitoring provisions to measure mid‐term and long‐term results (such as global environmental effect, replication effects, and other local effects) after Project completion. The terminal evaluation report will include separate assessments of the achievements and shortcomings of the Project M&E plan and of implementation of the M&E plan.

* **M&E design.** Projects should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving Project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results and adequate funding for M&E activities. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.
* **M&E plan implementation.** The terminal evaluation should verify that: an M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of progress towards the Project objective and outcomes by collecting information on chosen indicators continually throughout the Project implementation period; annual Project reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings; the information provided by the M&E system was used during the Project to improve performance and to adapt to changing needs; and, the Project had an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after Project closure.
* **Budgeting and funding for M&E Activities.** In addition to incorporating information on funding for M&E while assessing M&E design, the evaluator will determine whether M&E was sufficiently budgeted for a the Project planning stage and whether M&E was funded adequately and in a timely manner during implementation.

**6. Assessment of Processes that Affected Attainment of Project Results**

When relevant, the evaluator should consider the following issues affecting Project implementation and attainment of Project results. Note that evaluators are not expected to provide ratings or separate assessments on these issues, but these could be considered in the performance and results sections of the report:

**7. Preparation and readiness**

Were the Project’s objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the Project was designed? Were lessons from other relevant Projects properly incorporated in the Project design? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to Project approval? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate Project management arrangements in place at Project entry?

* **Country ownership/drivenness.** Was the Project concept in line with the sectoral and development priorities and plans of the country? Are Project outcomes contributing to national development priorities and plans? Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the Project? Did the recipient government maintain its financial commitment to the Project? Has the government approved policies or regulatory frameworks that are in line with the Project’s objectives?
* **Stakeholder involvement.** Did the Project involve the relevant stakeholders through information sharing, consultation and by seeking their participation in the Project’s design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? For example, did the Project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness? Did the Project consult with and make use of the skills, experience and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector, local governments and academic institutions in the design, implementation and evaluation of Project activities? Were perspectives of those who would be affected by Project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process taken into account while taking decisions? Were the relevant vulnerable groups and powerful supporters and opponents, of the processes properly involved?
* **Financial planning.** Did the Project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds? Was there due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?
* **Delays and Project Outcomes and Sustainability.** If there were delays in Project implementation and completion, what were the reasons? Did the delays affect the Project’s outcomes and/or sustainability, and if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

**8. Lessons and Recommendations**

The evaluators will present lessons and recommendations in the terminal evaluation report on all aspects of the Project that they consider relevant. The evaluators will be expected to give special attention to analyzing lessons and proposing recommendations on aspects related to factors that contributed to or hindered: attainment of Project objective, sustainability of Project benefits, innovation, catalytic effect and replication, and Project monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluators should refrain from providing recommendations to improve the Project. Instead they should seek to provide a few well formulated lessons applicable to the type of Project at hand or to GEF’s overall portfolio. Final evaluations should not be undertaken with the motive of appraisal, preparation, or justification, for a follow‐up phase. Wherever possible, the final evaluation report should include examples of good practices for other Projects in a focal area, country or region.