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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius

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Final Report of the Mid-term Evaluation Mission

March 2014

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Acknowledgements

This is not really the work of the Mid-term Evaluation Team but that of all the staff and people connected with the Protected Area Network Project who gave freely of their time and ideas to make the evaluation process a success. There are far too many people to mention by name – and hopefully everyone who contributed is included in the lists of names annexed to this report – but special mention must be made of the National Project Manager, Arvind Dookhun, who gave unstintingly of his time in coordinating the mission; and of the IAS Coordinator, Parmananda Ragen, who accompanied us during the field visits. Between them they answered every question that we asked and discussed the points we took every opportunity to raise, and provided much of the information that we required – they have our thanks.

Following completion of the Draft Report on 20th November 2013, review comments were received from stakeholders on 19th December 2013 and 13th March 2014. These comments have either been included into the revised text where these related to factual inaccuracies in the draft, or have been reproduced in full and unedited as footnotes to the appropriate text to ensure a fair and transparent hearing to all parties. The Mid-term Evaluator has made responses to some of these comments. The reviewers are thanked sincerely for their efforts and insights which have undoubtedly improved this final report.

The views expressed in this report are intended to offer an overview of, and some of the lessons learned from, the PAN Project at its mid-point. We have tried to balance our thoughts and offer fair perspectives of what was observed and learned from people far more knowledgeable about the Project than we will ever be. Our sincere apologies in advance if anyone should take anything written to be anything other than constructive criticism.

And finally, for PJE, one of the delights of this sort of work remains that of visiting new and extremely welcoming countries and going home again having made new friends, seen new things, and witnessed with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in conserving the important places of the world. I would like to thank them and wish them every success in their continuing endeavours.

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17th March 2014

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Currency of Mauritius is the Mauritius Rupee (MUR). At the time of the terminal evaluation the official UN exchange rate was US\$ 1 = 30.0 Rupees.

CO	Country Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DPS	Deputy Permanent Secretary
et seq.	and sequence (and the following)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ha	Hectare(s)
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
dbh	diameter at breast height
EoI	Expression of interest
FS	Forestry Service
HSBC	Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
MAIFS	Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoE NDU	Ministry of Environment National Development Unit
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
MTET	Mid-term evaluation team
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NPCS	National Parks and Conservation Service
NPD	National Project Director
NSC	National Steering Committee
PAN	Protected Area Network
PAN Project	<i>Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius</i> Project
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SLO	State law Office
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-CO	UNDP-Country Office
US\$	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Mid-term Review Summary Table				
Project Title:	Expanding coverage and strengthening management effectiveness of the protected area network on the island of Mauritius			
GEF Project ID:	3526		<i>at CEO endorsement (US\$)</i>	<i>at mid-term (US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	3749	GEF financing:	4,000,000	454,556
Atlas ID:	73392	UNDP:	0	0
Country:	Mauritius	Government:	4,187,400	Figures still being tracked at completion of report
Region:	Africa	Other:	7,577,000	
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Total co-financing:	11,764,400	
Operational Programme:	GEF 4: BD-1 (Catalysing Sustainability of PAs)	Total Project Cost:	15,764,400	
Executing Agency:	National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security	Prodoc Signature (date project began):	5 th March 2010	
Other Partners involved:	Forestry Service; Private sector	(Operational) Closing Date:	Originally planned: March 2015	Proposed: Dec. 2018 as per this report's recommendations

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Like most oceanic islands, Mauritius has high levels of floral and faunal endemism and has suffered high extinction rates caused by a growing human population, habitat destruction and degradation. In order to safeguard the remaining biodiversity, the Government of Mauritius has established a terrestrial protected area network on the mainland, and associated offshore islets, comprising 20 formal state protected areas (8,027ha). This is supplemented by a number of different types of less secure conservation areas (7,168ha), under varying levels of protection. However, under current conditions this network is not effectively safeguarding the country's unique terrestrial biodiversity because: i) a number of natural ecosystem processes, habitats and species are not adequately represented within it; ii) the capacity of the institutions responsible for the planning and management of the protected areas is generally weak; and iii) the technical knowledge to contain the threats to biodiversity cost-effectively within the network is under-developed. This five-year project seeks to rectify these problems by strengthening the systemic, institutional and operational capacity of the network.

Evaluation Rating Table		
Criterion	Comments	Rating
Project Results		
Attainment of Project Results	The Project has been unable to achieve very much after 44 months because of bureaucratic delays. Some progress has been made with the clearance of invasive alien plants.	Marginally Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness	Given the limited progress made, no assessment of the Project's effectiveness in terms of impacts can sensibly be made.	Not assessed.
Relevance	The Project intervenes in an area of huge importance globally for endemic and highly threatened biodiversity, is congruent with GEF and national priorities, and remains pertinent in the light of the current levels of threat.	Relevant

Evaluation Rating Table		
Criterion	Comments	Rating
Cost-effectiveness (Efficiency)	Would seem generally poor since few tangible results appear to have been achieved for the expenditure of US\$ 454,556. However, costs of IAS clearance have been reduced from US\$ 9,000 to 3,000/ha.	Marginally Unsatisfactory
Sustainability		
Overall likelihood of risks to Sustainability	Each risk dimension of sustainability is deemed to be critical, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest rating.	Moderately Likely
Institutional framework and governance	Appears strong, with clear statements of support about the importance of the Project's aims voiced by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security. Government's recognition of the importance of clearance of IAS from more than just State-owned land is evidenced from its willingness to sign agreements with the private sector.	Likely
Financial resources	State funding appears to be increasing via the most recent budget and new sources of funding such as the Mauritius Ile Durable Fund and that made available through the Corporate Social Responsibility Law 2009. However, some companies are retrenching on their conservation budgets and the Conservation Fund is reducing.	Moderately Likely
Socio-economic	Project has little direct social impact, although it is providing labouring jobs for some of the poorer members of society. Economically, IAS clearance in private forest and future PA designation on private land will depend upon economic spin-offs, e.g. eco-tourism and government incentives.	Moderately Likely
Environmental	Closely tied to the success of the IAS clearance programme.	Moderately Likely
Achievement of outputs and activities	There are no substantive outputs from the Project to date under Outcomes 1 or 2. Significant progress has been made with IAS clearance under Outcome 3 but that is all. Project outputs are ranked individually from Satisfactory to Unsatisfactory.	Marginally Unsatisfactory
Monitoring and Evaluation		
Overall quality of M&E	The Project Document contains a comprehensive M&E Plan with a full budget allocation for its implementation. M&E implementation has been generally of a sufficient standard to provide a basis for adaptive management	Satisfactory
M&E design at project start up		Highly Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation		Satisfactory

Evaluation Rating Table		
Criterion	Comments	Rating
Quality of implementation and oversight:		
Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution	Notwithstanding the very obviously high quality technical implementation of the IAS programme and the reasonable attempts at adaptive management to expedite progress, overall there have been too many inadequacies displayed by the National Steering Committee (insufficient oversight), the Project Management Unit (poor strategic comprehension), Ministry (inadequate implementation of their own cumbersome procedures), and the UNDP-CO (delays in recruitment of key personnel)	Marginally Unsatisfactory
Implementing Partner	The poor implementation of cumbersome procurement procedures by the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security has resulted in significant delays to the Project. Insufficient oversight led by the Ministry has allowed these problems to continue unchecked. ¹ The NPCS and PMU has received insufficient technical support to fully comprehend the Project's strategic rationale to move the Project forward on anything other than clearance of invasive alien plants, but it has made significant progress within this limited field.	Marginally Unsatisfactory
UNDP supervision and backstopping	UNDP-CO took one year to recruit the National Project Manager and eight months to recruit the Chief Technical Advisor. An inadequate number of steering committee meetings has meant that the CO has been unable to exert greater influence over subsequent problems but it could have pushed harder to have these organised more frequently while maintaining a careful balance of not overly interfering with a nationally-executed project, it has provided satisfactory levels of support.	Marginally Unsatisfactory
Miscellaneous:		
Catalytic Role	The Project has been so dogged by delays that to date the Project Management Unit has had to spend most of its time just trying to get the initial activities underway, let alone be thinking about replicability. The main thrust for the Project's catalytic role is definitely on the IAS control and ecological restoration work, but much thought and effort will be required to scale this up to satisfactory levels if anything more than tiny islands of IAS-free land are to result.	Marginally Unsatisfactory

¹ **MAIFS comment:** Procurement is carried out according to legal framework and the Ministry cannot intervene directly in procurement exercise. However, the Ministry will closely monitor the procurement exercise of this project, so that there will be no excessive delays. **MTET response:** The MTET recognizes that the Ministry cannot intervene directly in any procurement exercise, but the National Steering Committee, chaired by the MAIFS, could and should have exercised greater oversight to reduce delays.

Evaluation Rating Table		
Criterion	Comments	Rating
Country ownership	Mixed. Low level of engagement from the GEF Focal Point in the Ministry of Finance ² ; high levels of commitment displayed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security.	Marginally Satisfactory
Stakeholder participation	The Project's limited ability to undertake activities has severely curtailed the involvement of stakeholders. Despite the Government's initiation of the Public Private Partnership, bureaucratic delays are leading to reduced commitment from the private sector, and this will need to be addressed if the Project is to keep them engaged and make any meaningful progress. An Agreement for the Project to fund IAS clearance on private land, which has been vetted and is awaiting signature, will help.	Marginally Satisfactory
Financial planning	Financial planning and management is adequate but tracking of partner-managed funding has been poor.	Marginally Satisfactory
Overall Project Results		Marginally Unsatisfactory

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Key Project achievements are disappointingly few after 44 months since Project commencement, but include: interventions to the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill to include a new category of protected area termed Special Reserve that may be applied to privately-owned land; an Agreement to provide Project funds to ten private landowners/lessees for IAS clearance from 5 ha each of their forest and three years' follow-up maintenance; clearance of IAS from 116.2 ha of State forest land on 12 demonstration sites; undertaken trials to develop a cost effective method for controlling invasive alien plants thereby reducing costs from US\$ 9,000/ha to US\$ 3,000/ha; and initial advocacy and awareness activities that have resulted in a Cabinet Paper being presented making a commitment to the expansion of the PAN.

Although the IAS clearance work has been largely the only activity that the Project has been able to undertake to date, its technical management has been of the highest order. It is undertaken within a clearly defined, scientifically-grounded and logically-constructed strategic framework that overlies the obvious pragmatism of its implementation. Work has concentrated on clearing IAS from strips of between 10-15m wide along either side of the main access avenues within the Black River Gorges National Park to provide internal corridors of IAS-free land linking the Conservation Management Areas (CMA) that have already been cleared and managed for a number of years. Flat land has been preferred to avoid introducing erosion problems, and the least infested areas have been cleared first since these areas are largely closer to being closed-canopy forest whose reduced light transmission will ultimately stop regeneration of most of the invasive plants. By dealing with these areas before the IAS plants can invade and prevent closure of the canopy, subsequent maintenance and its associated costs will be minimised. Monitoring of the biodiversity takes place before, and at regular intervals after, clearance to assess the impacts of the operations. Restoration is based upon waiting for natural regeneration, but where clearance has resulted in large gaps in the forest (> 0.25 ha), native plant species are re-introduced. This restoration is based on even more rigorous scientific work going as far as consulting historical scientific texts and collectors notes before re-introducing highly threatened

² **MAIFS comment:** MOFED was taken up with national budget preparation and their presence in any meeting with the MTET consultants will not have significantly modified their level of engagement. Just not being able to meet the consultant does not mean they have a low level of commitment. **MTET response:** The MTET would not base such a finding purely on a stakeholder not being able to meet with it, especially when there were extenuating circumstances. There is considerably wider evidence of low engagement – see paragraph 80 as an example.

species into exact places where they are understood to have once occurred to ensure soils, slope and microclimatic conditions are correct to maximise successful restoration.

KEY PROBLEM AREAS

The main problem areas identified by the MTET are: extremely poor levels of delivery arising from unacceptably slow recruitment and procurement processes operated by the UNDP-CO and the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security respectively resulting in a full complement of Project consultants still not being in place 44 months after commencement of the Project; insufficient technical support provided to the PMU for it to fully comprehend the Project's strategic rationale; almost no progress made towards Project Outcomes 1 and 2; insufficient and inadequate Project oversight by the National Steering Committee; poor performance of the initial Chief Technical Advisor exacerbating other problems and delays; extremely long bureaucratic delays by the State Law Office over a short and fairly simple legal instrument; and poor communication both externally and internally.

The Mid-term Evaluation of the Project was conducted over a period of 25 days between 15th October and 20th November 2013 by a team comprising one international and one national consultant. It was carried out well behind schedule, 43 months into a 60-month Project, but on time allowing for the year's delay in start-up. The Evaluation's ToR is given in Annex I, its itinerary in Annex II and the list of people interviewed in Annex III. A list of indicators, their end of Project achievement level, together with performance rating is given in Annex IV. After receipt of comments on 22nd December 2013 and 13th March 2014, which have either been added as footnotes to the main text or included in annexes, the report was finalised on 17th March 2014.

KEY ISSUES

The Project exhibits a worrying lack of progress at a point almost three-quarters of the way through its lifespan having disbursed just 11.4% of its budget and just 9.9% of that for Outcome 1, just 8.1% of that for Outcome 3, and nothing at all on Outcome 2. While initial reaction may lay this at the door of the PMU, that would be grossly unfair. The Project has been thwarted throughout by issues that have been largely beyond its capability to influence – the first a 12-month recruitment of the NPM by UNDP because of acute staff shortages; the second, a non-performing CTA is unfortunate, and led to delays in developing the ToR for the team of technical consultants; while the third, the recruitment of those consultants, has taken yet another year, in part because of the Project's budget being incorporated into the National Budget through programme-based budgeting, which has increased the need for high-level clearances at MAIFS level – a system not tailored to project cycle management and deadlines. This requirement has caused delays across many of the projects in the UNDP-CO's portfolio implemented by a variety of ministries and hence is not a result of poor implementation of this project per se. That said, the PMU has received insufficient technical support to fully comprehend the Project's strategic rationale and the key aim for the Project of expanding the current protected area network to cover as many as possible of those habitats and species currently not in receipt of protection appears to have become lost in dealing with the Project's difficulties over the past three years. The Project has made significant progress with the task of clearing invasive alien plants on State-owned land and is about to complete an Agreement with private-sector landowners to fund them to do the same in the privately-owned or leased forests. However, because of its ineffectual strategic grasp of the Project, the PMU has not attempted much preliminary work that could (and should) have been done prior to the technical consultants commencing work. The MTET has noted that GEF is not minded to provide the Project with an extension unless changes are made to address the current problems, and hence it has made a number of recommendations to be met within a defined timescale to extend the Project for two years to achieve a successful conclusion. These include having no further delays in procurement by the MAIFS (assurances have been made by the Deputy Permanent Secretary; provision of proper project oversight through a functioning National Steering Committee meeting twice a year; establishment of a new Executive Committee to ensure progress is maintained and dealing with any problems causing delays as they occur; and ensure that all current recruitment

of Project staff and consultants is completed by the end of January 2014. Assuming that acceptable progress is then made by the July 2014 meeting of the National Steering Committee, the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor can make the final decision on granting the extension.

Recommendations are listed on pages 46-7. Key points are as follows:

The main decision that UNDP-GEF has to take is whether to grant a no-cost extension to the Project or to close it at its current revised planned closing date of December 2016 (but see paragraph 64). Without such an extension being granted, the Project will close without it having achieved most of its aims, and the MTET believes that it is too important in terms of global biodiversity to be allowed to fail. The key question that requires answering, therefore, is “if changes are made to the Project and it continues, will it be able to deliver at least a Marginally Satisfactory rating by the end of its extension”? The MTET believes that it will be able to achieve this if it delivers on the recommendations below and makes the following recommendation – that, in order to provide sufficient time for the restructured Project to achieve its core aims, it be granted a no-cost extension of two years in addition to the extensions already granted such that the recommended revised closing date would become December 2018, conditional on performance to July 2014. This recommendation is conditional upon the following critical recommendations need to be met by 31st January 2014:

- no further delays in procurement by the MAIFS – assurance made; see paragraph 71 and Annex VI)
- all new staff (CTA and Project Assistant) and technical consultancy team be in contract, in-country, and working – see paragraph 66.
- a new CTA be recruited to provide increased strategic direction to the Project over the remainder of its lifetime – see paragraph 67.
- the National Steering Committee meets at least twice a year, once in January and once in July to fulfil its key functions of approving the Annual Work Plan and the PIR – see paragraph 68.
- an Executive Committee is established which meets monthly to provide a mechanism to resolve rapidly problems that are beyond the scope of the PMU to influence – see paragraph 69.

Although the option of keeping the Project open involves a degree of risk, there are significant signs that many of the problems are either in the past or can be addressed. The MTET draws the attention of GEF to the following points in favour of granting such an extension:

- a) the Project has spent only 11% of its budget to date (see Table 4), so a no-cost extension of two years is certainly feasible financially;
- b) the Ministry has recommitted itself to the Project’s success through the Deputy Permanent Secretary responsible – see paragraphs 68, 71, and 82 and Annex VI; and
- c) the UNDP CO has taken on the recruitment of the new CTA and Project Assistant without cost recovery.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1. The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has two overarching objectives, namely to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management, and projects and to improve knowledge and performance. With this in mind, this Mid-term evaluation (MTE) was initiated by UNDP Mauritius as the GEF Implementation Agency for the *Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius* (PAN) Project to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of Project activities in relation to the stated objectives, and to produce possible recommendations on how to improve the management of the project until its completion.

2. The MTE was conducted over a period of 25 days between 15th October and 20th November 2013 by a team comprising one international and one national consultant. It was carried out well behind schedule, 43 months into a 60-month Project, but on time allowing for the year's delay in start-up (see paragraphs 11 and 19). The approach was determined by the terms of reference ([Annex I](#)) which were closely followed, via the itinerary detailed in [Annex II](#). Full details of the objectives of the MTE can be found in the TOR, but in addition to assessing the concept and design of the Project; its implementation in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, financial planning, and monitoring and evaluation; the efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out and the objectives and outcomes achieved; the likely sustainability of its results; and the involvement of stakeholders, the evaluation has also tried to meet the request voiced in the 2013 PIR that:

“... this RTA would like to see the following [three] issues taken into consideration in the MTE: (i) reasons for weak delivery and slow progress; (ii) adequacy of financial oversight; (iii) project's overall success in addressing biodiversity threat drivers, including emerging ones, in particular IAS and habitat fragmentation”.

The report was finalised on 17th March 2014 after receipt of final stakeholder's comments on 13th March.

3. The Evaluation was conducted through the following participatory approach:

- extensive face-to-face and Skype interviews with the project management and technical support staff. Throughout the evaluation, particular attention was paid to explaining carefully the importance of listening to stakeholders' views and in reassuring staff and stakeholders that the purpose of the evaluation was not to judge performance in order to apportion credit or blame but to measure the relative success of implementation and to determine learn lessons for the wider GEF context. The confidentiality of all interviews was stressed. Wherever possible, information collected was cross-checked between various sources to ascertain its veracity, but in some cases time limited this. A full list of people interviewed is given in [Annex III](#).
- face-to-face interviews with senior members of the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security; other stakeholder Ministries including some members of the National Steering Committee (NSC); and with a number of private sector stakeholders;
- a thorough review of project documents and other relevant texts, including the Project Document, logframe, Inception Report, and monitoring reports, such as annual progress and financial reports prepared for UNDP, GEF, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), annual work plans, relevant correspondence, and other project-related material including technical reports produced by the project staff or partners; and
- field visits to the Black River Gorges National Park and a number of privately-owned forests.

4. Wherever possible the Mid-term Evaluation Team (MTET) has tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the *UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, namely:

- Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organisational policies, including changes over time.
- Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
- Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
- 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 original logframe in the Project Document was revised and restructured during the Inception Workshop held on 11th August 2011. This logframe with three Outcomes, fourteen Outputs, and 18 indicators has been used throughout as the basis for this evaluation (see [Annex IV](#)), and the MTET has evaluated the Project's performance against these according to the current six-point evaluation criteria provided to it by the GEF. This is reproduced in Table 1 for clarity. An additional scale has been used to cover sustainability (Table 2).

TABLE 1: CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE THE PROJECT BY THE FINAL EVALUATION TEAM

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Marginally Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

TABLE 2: SCALE USED TO EVALUATE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

Likely (L)	There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

6. The results of the evaluation were conveyed informally through a de-briefing meeting to the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security, the UNDP-CO, and the Project Management Unit on 8th November 2013 with a separate de-briefing for the UN Resident Representative later the same day, prior to the evaluators' departure from Mauritius (see [Annex V](#)).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

BACKGROUND AND DURATION

7. The Project appears to have arisen from a failed highway scheme that was to have passed through the Ferney Valley but was cancelled after it was recognised that the private forests there held important biodiversity. This prompted the realisation that much privately-owned forest in Mauritius was likely to be rich in biodiversity but there was no inventory and no management. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) approached UNDP with a concept and with the support of the National Parks and Conservation Service, which at that time was part of the Ministry of Agro-industry and Fisheries³, the Project Identification Form (PIF) was formalised. The main ideas were to: i) expand the protected area network in Mauritius to better protect a representative sample of its terrestrial biodiversity; and ii) to manage this protected area network more effectively as a whole, to ensure that it is fulfilling its conservation function. The PIF was cleared for inclusion in the GEF Work Programme by the CEO in December 2007 and approved by the GEF Council in June 2008, which marked its official entry into the GEF's pipeline. The Project was designed using a GEF Project Preparation Grant. Although this was approved in February 2008, implementation commenced only in December 2008, and was completed in October 2009 when a complete set of Project documentation was submitted to the GEF for CEO Endorsement. In fact a milestone extension request was approved by the CEO, upon request from UNDP, so as to avoid cancellation of the project, given the imposition of tight pipeline-dwelling timeframes that started being enforced by the GEF as part of its reform process. Final CEO Endorsement was obtained on 15th December 2009 for a Full-sized Project as part of Strategic Objective Biodiversity #1 *To Catalyse Sustainability of Protected Area (PA) Systems* and in keeping with Strategic Programme (SP) 3: *Strengthening Terrestrial PA Networks* of the GEF Business Plan. It targets two focal area outcomes: (i) *Improved ecosystem coverage of under-represented terrestrial ecosystems areas as part of national protected area system*; and (ii) *Improved management of terrestrial protected areas*. The UNDP Project Document was signed on 5th March 2010, after the final approval of the document by UNDP and government, through the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) held in February 2010, as a five-year intervention with an official closing date of 28th February 2015.

Problems addressed

8. The Project Document does not contain an explicit problem statement. In its analysis under its “*Threats to Biodiversity*” section it states:

“The key threats to the terrestrial biodiversity of Mauritius and the offshore islets, and their root causes and barriers, may be summarized as follows:

- a. Uncontrolled spread of invasive alien species*
- b. Forest clearance for productive land uses*
- c. Poor regeneration of native forests*
- d. The protected area network does not effectively conserve the remaining high value forests*

On its front page, the Project Document summarises the problems of the existing protected area network (PAN) thus:

“Mauritius, like most oceanic islands, has high levels of floral and faunal endemism and has suffered high extinction rates caused by a growing human population, habitat destruction and degradation. In order to safeguard the remaining biodiversity, the Government of Mauritius have established a terrestrial protected area network on the mainland, and associated offshore islets, comprising 20 formal state protected areas (8027ha). This is supplemented by a number of different types of less secure

³ This was subsequently reorganised and renamed the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

conservation areas (7,168ha), under varying levels of protection. Under current conditions, the terrestrial protected area network (PAN) is however not effectively safeguarding the country's unique terrestrial biodiversity because:

- (i) a number of natural ecosystem processes, habitats and species are not adequately represented in the existing PAN;
- (ii) the capacity of the institutions responsible for the planning and management of the protected areas is generally weak; and
- (iii) the technical knowledge to cost-effectively contain the threats to biodiversity within the PAN is under-developed."

Project Design

9. The Project itself is functional and typical of many similar projects designed at the time with an emphasis on expanding the existing protected area system to improve its representation and coverage, improving the institutional frameworks and individual capacity to enable adequate management of the expanded system, and development of a pilot site to demonstrate some new aspect of protected area management – in this case improved methods of controlling invasive alien species and restoring native forest. The Project Document is generally argued coherently and is well-written despite numerous grammatical mistakes. The reports attached as annexes under Section IV Additional Information are of the highest technical quality and constitute a major reservoir of information available to the PMU and its technical consultants to help guide the Project's implementation. The public-private partnership initiative for developing a conservation stewardship programme is highly innovative. Although the Project is generally well-designed, there are a number of issues arising from the Project Document where lack of clarity or weaknesses in design have, or may lead to, difficulties in implementation. These include:

- Treatment of Mountain Reserves and River Reserves: Mountain and River Reserves fall largely on private land which is one of the key targets of the Project's design when considering expansion of the PAN. Paragraph 20 of the Project Document describes these, thus:

"Some 6,553ha of privately owned or administered land is classified as Mountain Reserve or River Reserve in terms of the Forest and Reserves Act of 1983. Mountain Reserves occupy the upper third of mountains while River Reserves vary in width between 3, 8 and 16 m on each side, depending on the size of the river. Deforestation is not permitted in these reserves, although the enforcement of this remains weak. The Forest Service is responsible for overseeing the administration of the Mountain and River reserves."

Table 4 lists these reserves under "Privately owned/managed conservation areas", yet when it comes to the main objective indicator (indicator #1), they are not included as being part of the formal protected area network. The baseline area is given as 8,027 ha which, with a little work, one can derive from the figures given in Table 4 for National Park, Nature Reserve, Forest Reserve and Bird Sanctuary on the mainland totalling 7,292 ha, plus 735 ha of National Park, Nature Reserve and Ancient Monument on the offshore islets. The 3,800 ha of Mountain Reserve and 2,740 ha of River Reserve are ignored, but no reason is explicitly provided within the Project Document. This decision has clearly caused perplexity within the Project team since the combination of an existing PA designation with private land is seen as an easy way of achieving an important part of the Project's aims. This is a symptom of the lack of strategic comprehension of the Project by the PMU which is discussed at length under paragraph 21.

The NPCS and FS would argue that the enforcement of the no deforestation rule is not weak, e.g. a recent case of illegal deforestation in a River Reserve was met with a requirement to re-plant the area with native species; and that such an assumption is insufficient for leaving them out of the calculations of the baseline PAN. Indeed for the purposes of the Maurice Ile Durable

Fund⁴ (MID Fund), these Reserves are included within the PAN. However, the real reason is clarified in footnote 12 found on page 22 of the Project Document where it says:

“While privately owned Mountain and River Reserves do exist, these areas have limited security and, while aimed at reducing deforestation, permit land uses that have adverse impacts on biodiversity and put no onus on the landowner to properly manage the native forests. Accordingly, this category of Reserve does not provide a robust framework for protecting biodiversity.”

A response to the GEF Secretariat comments received at the PIF/Work Program Inclusion and published in the Review Sheet, echoes this:

“It is true that Protected Areas have been created on State land, and privately-owned Mountain and River Reserves exist. However, the latter have limited security, and while aimed at reducing deforestation, permit land uses that have adverse impacts on biodiversity. For example there are few controls on deer ranching in these areas, and overstocking is leading to forest degradation. Similarly, there are few if any controls on invasive species. Accordingly, this category of Reserve does not provide a robust framework for protecting biodiversity.”

Both the footnote and the same Review Sheet goes on to state:

“Technically, such Reserves also lie outside of the National PA System.”

but neither explains the basis of this technicality. The MTET recognises that the consultancy team⁵ about to be recruited by the Project will review this decision as part of their work but, in light of the current confusion within the Project team, wishes to stress two points:

- 1) If the currently-designated Mountain and River Reserves are included in the existing PAN **in their current form**, then this inclusion will not be able to be counted towards the target for expansion of the PAN. To avoid ambiguity, if the Mountain and River Reserves are included in the existing PAN, the baseline for indicator #1 would become 14,567 ha⁶ and the target would become 18,240 ha (i.e. the same increase of 3,673 ha as required under the existing target).
 - 2) For the Mountain and River Reserves to be included in the PAN and **count towards the target for expansion**, new legally-binding regulations would need to be introduced to apply to these categories to provide a stronger framework for biodiversity conservation within them; or a new designation such as Special Reserve would need to be applied in tandem to the same area.
- **Over-ambition:** The Project is very ambitious involving developing/changing new policy and legislation, introducing new public-private partnership to protected area management, expanding the current PAN by around 86%⁷, reviewing and possibly undertaking extensive institutional reform, developing new business-oriented financial and business plans for the PAN as well as improving the management and operational aspects of individual reserves, to name but some aspects. Many of these takes time, and lots of it, particularly where land issues and

⁴ The Maurice Ile Durable concept is to make Mauritius a world model of sustainable development, particularly in the context of SIDS (Small Island Developing States). The initial thrust was to minimize dependency on fossil fuels through increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, but it broadened to include all aspects of development, i.e. economic, social and environmental. The MID project rests on five designated 5Es, namely Energy, Environment, Education, Employment and Equity and is funded directly from Government, with some private sector contributions – but not from corporate social responsibility money.

⁵ The consultancy team referred to throughout this report refers to the following positions being recruited under a single procurement – International Protected Area Planning and Management Specialist; National Protected Area Planning and Management Consultant; National Environmental Law Specialist; National Nature-based Tourism Development Specialist; International Land Stewardship Specialist; International Environmental Economic Specialist.

⁶ 8,027 ha (current indicator) + 3,800 ha (Mountain Reserves) + 2,740 River Reserves = 14,567 ha.

⁷ Indicator #1 targets an expansion of 6,893 ha on a current estate of 8,027 ha.

legislation are involved and where the processes are largely outside of the Project's control. Five years may be an adequate timeframe if everything goes well, yet paragraph 68 of the Project Document makes the following astute observation:

“PA institutions (as with many other government institutions in Mauritius) tend to be fairly bureaucratic with complex and inflexible procedures which often end up delaying implementation of projects, leading to a loss of momentum with the accompanying frustrations for staff, project partners and project stakeholders. This lack of flexibility is currently stifling institutional and individual initiative.”

The issue is identified within the risk table where it is given a rating of “High” and addressed largely through establishment of a legal working group; hiring international and national specialists in environmental law; and programming the expansion activities

“for years 3-5 of the project to provide sufficient time for the enabling legal reform processes to be completed”.

yet the MTET cannot but wonder whether designing the Project to last six years rather than five may not have been an even stronger practical action in the light of the perceived risk.

- **Public-private partnership:** The intention to establish and administer a conservation stewardship programme to implement PA expansion initiatives on privately owned or managed land is both highly innovative and highly commendable. Nonetheless, it is predicated upon the supply of land which, on a small and densely-populated island, is in short supply and under great pressure. This applies to State-owned land too. Establishment of such a programme on private land will require the voluntary relinquishment of control over that land to the State to at least some degree – a highly emotive issue. While the Project Document has provided the PMU and its consultants with considerable conceptual and technical background on stewardship schemes through its technical annexes, the MTET believes that the design lacks sufficient understanding of the land pressure issue and the need for advocacy activities to garner the considerable support of the private sector that will be needed to get them to volunteer for inclusion in the scheme.
- **Weak indicators:** While all the indicators in the Project's logframe are SMART⁸, a number of them show weaknesses in assumption or logic that render them poor in application (see also paragraph 83 for recommendations for improvements. These include:
 - *#2 Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management* – is not necessarily influenced directly by the Project activities since it is set independently by the Government. This is clear from the 2014 budget announced during the MTE mission which showed a very large increase in the financial resources provided to protected areas management but there had been no Project action towards this happening.
 - *#8 Number of rare and threatened plant species (of 231 with a known distribution) having at least 1 wild population represented in the PAN* – was designed with the intent of having new PAs protecting previously unprotected threatened rare plant species, but it is open to being achieved through the alternative means of species discovery within existing PAs; and this is exactly what has occurred through the increased survey work associated with IAS clearance monitoring.
 - *#9 Reach (estimated number of people) of the communications and awareness programme* – is based solely on the number of people reached but could have been improved by recording the degree of take-up of any message/training.
 - *#11 Income from other sources (i.e. non-state budget allocation), as a percentage of the total operational budget of the PAN* – the designers could not have been expected to have recognised the inherent links between this indicator and #2 in case of a sharp rise in the former. An increase in State Budget from US\$ 2.3 million to US\$ 4.1 million (indicator

⁸ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

#2) and an increase in other-source funding from 33% to 54% (indicator #11) would require other-source funding to rise from US\$ 1.13 million to US\$ 4.8 million⁹ for both targets to be met – a 424% increase; unlikely to be achievable. The designers also appear to have assumed that the scale of the state budget increase would remain within the bounds of the target, however during the MTE, the State increased its budget for the PAN to US\$ 8.97 million meaning that the target for other-source funding would now have to rise to US\$ 10.53 million for this indicator (#11) to be met – a 930% increase¹⁰; a totally unrealistic expectation. The indicator also assumes that the finance required to fund the PAN will exceed the ability or willingness of the State to fund it fully (thereby requiring other-source funding) but the big increase announced in the 2013 budget may render this assumption obsolete.

- *#18 % of PAs with no, or poorly, demarcated boundaries* – the designers have continued to maintain that the boundaries of the PAs are not marked physically on the ground in Mauritius, yet the 2011PIR notes that this was a matter of intense discussion during the Inception Workshop (although the Inception Report does not mention this). During the MTE, the NPCS and FS continued to maintain that the boundaries of all PAs in Mauritius are demarcated physically on the ground through marker stones and/or fences, and that FS surveyors are defining digital boundaries by providing GPS coordinates for all these boundary markers using the world geodetic system WGS84. In light of such consistent counter information from the stakeholders concerned, the MTET questions the value of having continued to include this indicator since it appears to serve no purpose.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Logical Framework and Revisions

10. Despite some small weaknesses in the logical framework described above, it was generally well designed, uncomplicated, and with an agreeable number of indicators. The short timeframe between the submission of the Project Document in October 2009 and its signing on 5th March 2010 meant that the logframe was effectively up-to-date, and although there was a delay of 17 months between that and the Inception Workshop in August 2011, there was no need for any major reorganisation to meet a changed enabling environment. Minor changes were proposed and approved to the values of some of the indicators. The following are the key objectives formulated under the logframe. They have been used throughout this evaluation as the basis for assessment (see also [Annex IV](#)):

Objective

To expand, and ensure effective management of, the protected area network to safeguard threatened biodiversity

Outcome 1

Systemic framework for PA expansion improved.

Outcome 2

PA institutional framework strengthened.

Outcome 3

Operational know-how in place to contain threats.

⁹ 2.3 million + 1.13 million = 3.43 million total of which 1.13 million equals 33%. 4.1 million + 4.8 million = 8.91 million total of which 4.8 million equals 54%.

¹⁰ 8.97 million + 10.53 million = 19.5 million total of which 10.53 million equals 54%. The increase from 1.13 million to 10.53 million is 930%.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

11. UNDP signed the Project Document with the Government of Mauritius on 5th March 2010, thereby commencing the Project, yet the PIR indicates that first disbursements were not made until May 2011, some 15 months later. A UNDP-GEF Project inception workshop was organised and held on 18-19th August 2011 with the initial report prepared shortly after, but it was not finalised until June 2012 after several draft versions.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

12. The Project is being nationally executed (NEX¹¹) by the **Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security (MAIFS)** in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA, 1974) between the UNDP and the Government of Mauritius, and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for 2009-2011. The MAIFS is responsible overall for the project implementation, and the timely and verifiable attainment of project objectives and outcomes. It is providing support to, and inputs for, the implementation of all project activities. **UNDP** is the GEF Agency for the project and accountable to the GEF for the use of funds. It provides technical advice and support services and quality assurance. A UNDP staff member has been assigned with the responsibility for the day-to-day management and control over project finances. The Project is being implemented nationally by the **National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS)** of the MAIFS.

13. Financing contributions have been in cash from the GEF (US\$ 4,000,000); with partner-managed co-financing being committed from the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security \$3,600,000; Mauritian Wildlife Foundation \$3,200,000; The Medine Sugar Estates Co. Ltd. \$2,000,000; CIE Sucriere De Bel Ombre Ltd. \$1,200,000; Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development \$587,400; Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd. \$422,000; Flacq United Estates Ltd. \$300,000; Deep River-Beau Champ Ltd. \$250,000; The Mount Sugar Estate Co. Ltd. \$125,000; and Baie Du Cap Estates Ltd. \$80,000; Total: US\$ 11,764,400, but see also paragraph 28-29 for further discussion of this co-funding).

Stakeholder Participation

14. The Project has worked with a number of stakeholders, but its limited ability to undertake activities has severely curtailed their involvement. A range of key Government ministries have been involved with meetings but since there was little of substance to discuss, their interest has waned; the more so since a number of ministry personnel reported staffing problems or capacity issues meaning that what is perceived as a low-priority project could no longer guarantee their attendance. The private sector is represented by nine landowners and the NGO community by the inclusion of the MWF. The main thrust here has been towards IAS clearance on privately-owned or leased land but again, since progress with anything substantive has been slow, interest has waned. Despite the Government's initiation of the Public Private Partnership, bureaucratic delays are leading to reduced commitment from the private sector, and this will need to be addressed if the Project is to keep them engaged and make any meaningful progress. Given that there is only one meaningful initiative currently on the table with the private sector at present, it is pertinent to note the four-page legal Agreement enabling transfer of funds to the private sector for IAS clearance has taken the Government over one year to approve. Not surprisingly, one interviewee called the Project "*a sleepy project*" while another noted "*PAN est en panne*" (PAN has broken down), while a third opined that while "*there was no real impatience* [amongst the private sector], *there was little hope*".¹² The MTET believes that the

¹¹ Since initiation of the Project, this has changed to the National Implementation Modality (NIM).

¹² **MAIFS comment:** *The Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security as the implementation partner has always recognized the importance of private sector partnership at the onset of the project, and responded by initiating the drafting of the MOU with all the 10 private sector, though the project had made provisions for only one as demonstration /pilot basis. Moreover, new private forest land owners were invited to participate in the IAS removal and ecosystem restoration. Moreover, the MoU of a duration of three years initially, is also renewable over the long term with a provision for ecosystem stewardship. Hence, the time taken for the drafting of a strong MoU is justified considering, the project is working with private forest land*

Project is doing its best to maintain stakeholder engagement but that this will not improve until activities begin in earnest (see also paragraph 18).

The Project has worked with a number of stakeholders, but its limited ability to undertake activities has severely curtailed their involvement, hence stakeholder participation is evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Project Oversight

15. Project oversight has nominally been undertaken at the strategic level by an inter-institutional **National Steering Committee** (NSC). The NSC was to have been chaired by the National Project Director (see next paragraph) but in the event is chaired by the Principal Assistant Secretary¹³ of MAIFS. The Project Document also states that:

“[The NSC] will meet according to the necessity, but not less than once in 4 months, to review project progress, approve project work plans and approve major project deliverables. The NSC is responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document.”

In the event, the Inception Report overturned this, stating that:

“The Prodoc makes provision for a PSC [Project Steering Committee] to meet at least every four months with seven specified roles including:

- *Oversee project implementation*
- *Approve all project work plans and budgets.*

It is proposed to formulate the PSC to undertake these key roles [by] meeting at least once a year and thus approving work plans, budgets and reports on an annual basis.”
[MTET emphasis.]

but then it has failed to meet even this commuted frequency by meeting just twice within the Project’s current 44-month lifespan – 11th August 2011 and 6th February 2013. The MTET notes that this is an inadequate frequency, especially for a project with the low levels of delivery that this one demonstrates and it is to the new Chairperson’s credit that she looked to rectify this immediately; item 1.2 of the minutes of the second meeting stating that:

“[The Chair] asked when the first NSC meeting was held, and the reason for the apparent delay in holding the second NSC meeting. The PAN Project Manager ... stated that the first NSC meeting was held on 11 August 2011, and an NSC meeting was on schedule late in 2012, then postponed to early in 2013. ... [The Chair] recommended that the NSC meeting should preferably be held at least twice per year to ensure that the project is progressing towards its objectives. The committee then agreed that the next NSC should preferably meet in four to six months’ time.”

Unfortunately, the meeting ended without scheduling a date for the next meeting and this has failed to be held at the time of the MTE mission in October – eight months later. This needs rectifying – see paragraph 68. The minutes of the two NSC meetings also show that the Committee is acting at too superficial a level and that although it is examining achievements and problems, there is inadequate attention to the latter’s resolution. One member noted that there was no follow-up.

owners democratically at a National level, instead of what has been proposed. **MTET response:** The MTET acknowledges the MAIFS’ commitment to the private sector, but is pointing out that it does not appear to have recognized the implications of the delays. The time taken in drafting the MoU may well be justified, but should have been better communicated to the private sector as the comments received from them would suggest. See also the second main bullet point in paragraph 20.

¹³ Now promoted to Deputy Permanent Secretary and referred to by that title throughout the remainder of this report.

Project Direction

16. Overall guidance and coordination of the project implementation has been the responsibility of the **National Project Director** (NPD), a part-time position held by Mr. Mannikchand Puttoo, Director of the NPCS. The NPD is a state employee and is an unpaid position covered by the Government's in-kind contribution to the Project; he estimates he spends around 15% of his time working on the Project. Although he has been responsible for overseeing the execution of the Project on behalf of the Government, for achieving the Project's objectives, in practice his decision capacities have been undermined, since the Project budget is now integrated into the MAIFS whole budget and all financial decisions need clearance and approval by the MAIFS Permanent Secretary.

Project Management

17. Day-to-day implementation has been the responsibility of a **Project Management Unit** (PMU), which is housed in the offices of the Forestry Service in Curepipe because of space constraints within the NPCS. However, a single office is available for the use of the National Project Manager and the Invasive Alien Species Coordinator in the NPCS offices in Reduit, as well as conference facilities on a limited basis. The PMU is very small and comprises a **National Project Manager** (NPM), a position filled by Mr. Arvind Dookhun who was recruited on 22nd March 2011, a whole year after the signing of the Project Document; a **Project Assistant** Cindy Armance between 5th April 2011 and October 2013; and an **Invasive Alien Species Coordinator**, Mr. Parmananda Ragen, a Scientific Officer of the NPCS deputed to the Project from 8th March 2012. Since purchase of a Project vehicle (see paragraph 19 bullet point 3), a driver has also been allocated to the PMU. The PMU was advised by a **Chief Technical Advisor** between 1st August 2011 and 31st July 2012. Difficulties over professional style and failure to deliver work to levels acceptable to the MAIFS meant that what was to be a three-year appointment was curtailed after 12-months when the contract was not renewed. The PMU has been without a CTA since, although a recruitment of a new one had reached the short-listing stage at the time of the MTE mission (see paragraph 67). At the field level, the Project has recently recruited 45 labourers for IAS clearance and has mobilised around another 45 for such work from the FS on an overtime basis.

18. During the Inception Workshop, a **Technical Advisory Group** (TAG)¹⁴ was added to the implementation arrangements. The terms of reference listed in the Inception Report shows considerable overlap of function and membership with the NSC, e.g.:

"i) overseeing project implementation; ii) approving all project work plans and budgets annually ...; iii) approving any major changes in project plans or programmes; (vii) arbitrating any conflicts within the project and/or negotiating solutions between the project and any parties beyond the scope of the project".

It has met just once to date on 22nd March 2012 and the agenda and minutes of that meeting reflect the lack of clarity as to what the TAG's unique function is supposed to be. The overlap with the NSC is apparent at item #5 on the agenda where "*Approval of Inception Report*" is a task that would not normally be within the remit of a TAG but an NSC function, and indeed the minutes show this was not undertaken. There is also a record of a meeting of a "*PAN PMU/UNDP/NPCS sub-committee*" on 19th April 2012, the minutes of which open with:

"Further to the TAG Committee held on 22 March 2012, a sub-committee comprising of the PAN Project Manager, the UNDP Environment Analyst, DCF and the IAS Coordinator met to discuss about the implementation of the Project."

yet there is no record from the TAG minutes of any sub-committee being formed, and since there are records of similar meetings before and after this on an *ad hoc* basis with similar participants, this appears to be little more than an internal management meeting with UNDP present. The Project Document also makes reference to the fact that a number of specialist working groups would be

¹⁴ Note that this is also referred to in some documentation as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – further evidence of the confusion over its identity.

formed, e.g. PAN Policy Working Group of the NBSAP Committee; Legal Sub-Committee of the NBSAP Committee; BRGNP Park Planning Team; Nature-Based Tourism Working Group, but to date only one, the *IAS Technical Working Group*, has been formed.

19. The implementation of this Project has been held hostage by a number of factors that have been largely outside the PMU's ability to influence. As will be seen, financial delivery has been extremely slow with just 11% of budget disbursed by September 2013 – month 44 of its 60-month lifespan. However, the MTET finds that this is not the fault of poor management by the PMU as may be, erroneously, construed, but rather has been brought about by the combination of inadequate implementation of bureaucratic systems and the unfortunate poor-performance of the CTA which have worked together to compound the delays.

- **Slow recruitment of a Project Staff:** Although the institutional memory for this period is severely eroded due to staff turn-over within the CO, the initial period of 12 months to recruit a NPM appears to have resulted from acute staff shortages within the UNDP CO, e.g. vacancy announcements were not published until some five months after the ProDoc was signed. Table 3 shows that thereafter, procedures appear to have been followed with a degree of efficiency but the three-month gap between short-listing and interview (for the NPM) is inexcusable even if getting the large number of people together to constitute the interview panel was difficult. Peak time for annual vacations for Government and UNDP-CO in Mauritius (December-January) then added further delays, as did the need to constitute a Contract Asset and Procurement Committee (a requirement since scrapped by UNDP corporate procedures) to approve the final selection and make a recommendation to the Resident Representative for approval. Hence, an appointment that should take 2-3 months to achieve took twelve – a performance that all at the UNDP-CO admit was unacceptable.

TABLE 3: DATES OF STEPS IN THE RECRUITMENT OF PROJECT STAFF

Step	National Project Manager	Project Assistant
Advert published	2 August 2010	2 August 2010
Closing date	27 August 2010	27 August 2010
Short list completed	29 September 2010	27 September 2010
Written test	14 December 2010	27 October 2010
Interview	22 December 2010	4 November 2010
CAP meeting	31 January 2011	27 January 2011
Offer made	9 February 2011	?
Starting date	22 March 2011	1 February 2011

- **Poor performance of the Chief Technical Adviser:** Recruitment of the CTA by the UNDP-CO was barely more efficient. The vacancy was announced on the UNDP global website in January 2011 suggesting that if the terms of reference for this and the above two posts were developed consecutively that this took at least four months for this post. Short-listing was complete by 8th March 2011; phone interviews and evaluation reports by 19th April yet submissions to the Regional Bureau for Africa were not made for another ten weeks – 28th June. The Regional Bureau provided their approval two weeks later and the CTA commenced his contract on 1st August 2011, seven months after the job was advertised. While this period is still too long, this was not the main problem with the CTA. Unfortunately, he simply did not perform – something that even the most rigorous selection procedure cannot guarantee. It is not for a report of this nature to divulge details; needless to say difficulties were encountered on a number of fronts including unprofessional behaviour, disputes over roles, friction with other members of the PMU, and ultimately levels of work not to the standard the MAIFS required. His contract was not renewed and he left the Project on 31st July 2012. This had significant repercussions for the recruitment of the technical consultants on which the Project is so highly dependent since one of the main tasks of the CTA was to have been the development of their terms of reference. Without the CTA, this task fell to the NPM and NPD who had to develop these from scratch in

consultation with the main project stakeholders. All the inputs of the stakeholders were considered and incorporated.

- Slow implementation of procurement procedures: By the time the project commenced, the Government had changed the way that projects were executed such that all project funds were passed through the national budget. This meant that while all procurement procedures still had to comply with the Public Procurement Act, the relatively quick and flexible implementation of these by the NPCS was replaced by implementation at Ministry level. Procurement through the MAIFS is not tailored to project cycle management and deadlines since it necessitates numerous clearances at different ministerial level creating delays between procurement stages. The procedures appear to be cumbersome – the need for an expression of interest (EOI)¹⁵ and its evaluation followed by a request for procurement (RFP) process and evaluation is just one example. The result has been chronic delays on projects across the UNDP-CO's portfolio (see paragraph 28). Unfortunately, in this case, implementation has been slow with even the preparation for many activities having been enacted consecutively rather than concurrently, e.g. the identification of potential evaluation committee members and meeting dates not being undertaken until after tenders have been received, rather than during the tender period itself thereby minimising delays. The key problem has revolved around the procurement of technical consultancy services for the Project, but has not been confined to this since the procurement of labourers for IAS clearance, computers, and other equipment have all been subject to the same delays. Procurement of the Project vehicle by the UNDP-CO was greatly delayed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs raising issues over VAT quotas being exceeded followed by the need for new quotes and then a new exemption certificate. A four-page legal Agreement enabling transfer of funds to the private sector for clearance of IAS on their land was approved in draft by the Project and its stakeholders at a meeting held on 21st September 2012, yet clearance by the State Law Office after some very minor changes was received only on 17th October 2013, 13 months later. However, the consultancy team remains key. As will be seen under the section on Project Results (see paragraph 46 *et seq.*) the Project displays a high dependency on these technical specialists. The procurement process for them was planned to have started in November 2012, with the terms of references finalised (belatedly as explained in the preceding bullet point) and the budget earmarked. Yet the Ministry did not publish the EOI until March 2013 having to await the necessary internal clearances and then the evaluation of the three responses took three months with the Bid Evaluation Committee managing to meet just twice during this time. The resulting RFP, which should have been published immediately after, was not advertised until October 2013 – a delay of three months. Thus, one year after the delayed finalisation of the terms of reference, at the time of the MTE, two bids were received and the evaluation process was about to start.

20. Having outlined the main causes of the delays, one of the key questions to ask is “*could the PMU have done more to speed things up?*” There appears to be a dichotomy of views from those on the outside believing they could and those within the PMU suggesting that they have done all they can. In part, logic supports the latter: after all the initial delays came from the UNDP-CO in recruiting the members of the PMU in the first place, and there is little that anyone could do about the difficulties with the CTA. Having taken eight months to recruit him there was a definite reticence to fire him any earlier and go through the whole process again, thereby definitely incurring further significant delays. Could the PMU have influenced the Ministry's procurement procedures? There is verbal evidence to suggest that they tried on many occasions but a) held too junior positions to have any significant influence, and b) did not want to lose the long-term goodwill of the people involved in case that would be to the detriment of the Project later on. Approaches (or more urgent approaches) could have been made to the Ministry's more senior representatives, notable the Deputy Permanent Secretary who is Chair of the NSC. It is noted in the minutes of the second NSC meeting of 6th February 2013 that:

¹⁵ **MAIFS comment:** According to Public Procurement Act, project with value above MUR10 million should go through EOI.

“The Chairperson deplored that the procurement procedures are too lengthy and cumbersome, whereas any procurement should be completed within three months”

and the MTET found the same Chair to be remarkably responsive to the Project’s need for haste (see paragraph 71), so the evidence suggests that these were not made – perhaps because of discouragement arising from earlier unsuccessful attempts by the PMU to move things forward. Undoubtedly a properly-functioning NSC could have provided a route, but better (or more regular) links between the NPD and the Chair of the NSC would also have helped (see paragraph 69). Given the significant goodwill now displayed by the MAIFS towards the Project, the PMU, now needs to build on this and imbue all those connected with the Project of a sense of urgency if it is too achieve all of its aims within a revised timetable (see paragraph 66) – simple reactive management will not suffice.

21. Away from the obvious problem that there has been very little activity undertaken by the Project so far, the MTET finds that there are two other key areas of concern:

- **Strategic deficit:** During the evaluation mission, the MTET found that the PMU had received insufficient technical support for it to fully comprehend the Project’s strategic rationale, probably due to the lack of a reliable CTA since the start of the project. The PMU will require strengthening in this aspect through the recruitment of a new CTA – a process that is currently underway (see paragraph 67). The key aim for the Project of expanding the current protected area network to cover as many as possible of those habitats and species currently not in receipt of protection appears to have become lost in dealing with the Project’s difficulties over the past three years. This is exhibited directly and indirectly through the following inter-related symptoms (see also paragraph 9):
 - **Insufficient comprehension of the goals:** The lack of adequate technical support provided to the PMU has led to insufficient understanding of the Project’s main goals which in turn has led to a misplaced focus. In particular, the importance of the first objective indicator relative to others was not clearly realised, with the targets for IAS clearance prevailing as the pre-eminent goals. Its requirement for the current network to be expanded by designating new protected areas covering 3,673 ha of state land and 3,220 ha of private land, as being necessary by the close of the project was also not realised; the preparatory work to achieve this thought to be sufficient. Similarly, the processes required to be completed in order to identify areas suitable for PAN expansion appear not to have been fully explained. As a result, the primacy of the gap analysis and the subsequent identification of target areas that would most effectively increase the representativeness of the PAN had been replaced by a focus on the inclusion of existing Mountain and River Reserves as part of the PAN. The new CTA will help to rectify this¹⁶ – see paragraph 67.
 - **Concentration on IAS clearance:** The Project has made excellent progress in clearing IAS and it has been at pains to show that when it is unhindered by bureaucracy, it can make such progress. The problem is that clearance of IAS has always been seen by the Project as the main goal (see sub-bullet point above), as evidenced by the fact that the first CTA was a specialist in IAS control rather than being a specialist in protected area strategic planning and management, in part because it is something that it clearly understands, as witnessed by the fact that the only technical work undertaken without waiting for recourse to the technical consultants has been the development of an Agreement with

¹⁶ **PMU comment:** *The Gap analysis for the designation of new PAs has already been initiated by the PMU. The new sites identified are as follows: Anse Jonchee and Mon Vert which are presently being restored due to their high biodiversity value. These two sites are potential new addition to our present PA network and their proclamation as special reserves will be initiated soon. These two areas have not been identified in the project design. All the 10 demonstration sites are found in mountain and river reserves which are privately owned. These sites will at a later stage designated as private special reserve on voluntary basis. Other areas will be considered by the team of consultants with all stakeholder inputs.* **MTET comment:** No evidence was presented to the MTET of any gap analysis having been initiated. While certain sites may already have been identified as being likely candidates for future inclusion within an expanded PAN, in many cases this appears to be based on pragmatic criteria rather than on one stemming from a rigorous scientific gap analysis – a point made repeatedly to the PMU during the MTET mission.

private landowners to provide payments to them to mobilise their own labour to clear IAS from their forests. The focus upon this one component almost to the exclusion of all others has warped the Project's progress. As one interviewee observed, "*it has grasped at the lowest hanging fruits*" and concentrated upon them. For example, while the Project has been actively clearing IAS from state-owned land and has developed the aforesaid Agreement regarding the same on private land, these are rather isolated and relatively easy to do. Harder tasks such as working on the formal and informal stewardship agreements required by Indicator #13 have not yet begun, and while the MTET recognises that this will require inputs from the technical consultants, the Project could have been making initial consultations with the same landowners to determine their aspirations and concerns regarding a conservation stewardship strategy and possible tools (see paragraph 49), as well their attitudes towards voluntarily designating private land as part of the PAN. This has not been done *in lieu* of a strategy of using IAS clearance as an entry point to such discussions.¹⁷

- Too little preparatory work: To expand upon this last point, the lack of overall vision that a CTA could have provided to the Project while awaiting the arrival of the technical consultancy team has meant that the preparatory work that could (and should) have been done has not been. For example, groundwork could have been carried out to form the legal sub-committee of the NBSAP working group to provide an initial review of the legislation relating to the planning and management of the PAN (see paragraph 47); or internal discussions could have been initiated with the FS and the MAIFS over possible management and governance options for the expanded PAN (see paragraph 52); or, *in lieu* of not having the communications and marketing team on board, preparatory work on influencing public opinion on the need to expand the current PAN could have been carried out through a series of media articles based around that single message had the Project's strategic aim been fully comprehended, but the main message sent out in the few articles so far published has been concerned with IAS clearance (see paragraph 51). The uncertainty surrounding the start of the technical consultancy team has also played a part in this – the PMU being reticent to start work with stakeholders who then lose motivation because of continuing delays in the Project being able to carry work forward.¹⁸
- Focus on indicators rather than intent: In trying to show progress, the PMU has become focussed on the minutiae of the numerical indicators, attempting to find ways of fulfilling these targets without keeping in mind the intent of the Project's designers. This is widespread but best exemplified by indicator #14 where the training of labourers, rangers and related staff in IAS clearance and supervision has been taken to fulfil the requirements of the short-course training programme, the mentoring programme, and the train-the-trainers programme whereas a quick perusal of the relevant section of the Project Document shows that under Output 2.5 the intent is to identify

“the desired skills and competence standards required for effective protected area planning, development and management at the different occupational levels within the PA agencies.

and assess the current skills base and identify the critical ‘gaps’ and develop an institutional skills development and training programme to fill these. Specifically it goes on to require:

¹⁷ **PMU comment:** Consultations with the private sector concerning conservation stewardship strategy and to explore the possibility to voluntarily designate private land have already been addressed when NPCS/PMU was carrying a consultation exercise for nominating the national park as a World Heritage Site. It has also been discussed during the inception workshop and carried forward during consultation workshop for discussing the new legal framework for conservation. We are awaiting the team of consultant to fine tune this issue since groundwork has already been carried out by the NPCS and the PMU.

¹⁸ **PMU comment:** The PMU had already started negotiating with private stakeholders after the inception workshop on developing more ecosystem restoration stewardship demonstration site in working group meeting in Sep 2012 and drafting of MoUs.

“Implementing short-course training and development programs for at least 40 protected area staff from the NPCS, FS, affected private landowners and other Ministry’s (e.g. MoE NDU) in different aspects of PA planning, development and operations, including inter alia: strategic and business planning; staff management; financial management; risk management; stakeholder participation mechanisms; cooperative governance; knowledge management; recreational and tourism planning and management; fire management; IAS control techniques; restoration and rehabilitation techniques; legal compliance and enforcement; and monitoring and evaluation.

Developing and implementing a mentoring and career-pathing program for four senior management staff from the NPCS and FS.” [MTET emphasis.]

Clearly this list is a considerably wider scope and undertaking than simply training people in the implementation and supervision of IAS control and forest restoration. The issue acquires much more importance when discussions by the PMU for fulfilling the numerical indicators for the expansion of the PAN take precedence over the processes required to identify the right areas in the first place, notably the gap analysis – see previous sub-bullet point.

- Reticence to include parallel NPCS activities: One of the strengths of the Project’s design, particularly for its sustainability, has been the fact that the Project is actually viewed as part of a longer sequence of activities being undertaken by the NPCS all aimed at strengthening the PAN. As such, the NPCS is carrying out work in parallel with the Project but which often has the same (or very similar) end. There would appear to be no reason why, where appropriate, some of these activities should not be part-funded by Project funds, nor *vice versa* – that NPCS funding of these activities should not be counted as co-funding over and additional to that already being contributed. Such greater integration would help both parties and offer as yet untapped synergies, yet there appears to have been a strange reticence to do so until now; again the MTET believes because of the lack of clarity over the strategic thrust of the Project.

The MTET recommend that the NPCS should look to integrate the Project more fully into its own activities to develop greater strategic and financial synergies.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/NPCS	Undertake strategic review of planned PAN-related activities to identify areas where increased integration would be beneficial in terms of action or financing. Summarise these in a memorandum or a joint plan.	By end of Q2 2014.	Improved accuracy of financial reporting

- Poor communication: – The Project has been marked by poor communication, both external and internal. Notwithstanding that the fact that the Communication and Marketing consultants have only just been recruited, the MTET feels it is pertinent to ask why this was not done at the beginning of the Project. Even allowing for the inevitable delays in the procurement process, these consultants could have been recruited early in 2012 had a full understanding of their importance been realised from the outset. As it is, the Project has no communications strategy or plan; no logo (and therefore no brand image); no website; no idea of the messages it wants to send nor the mechanisms by which it can most efficiently reach its target audiences. While the MTET is certain this is about to change, since the consultants recruited (Cread and Company) appear to be of highly capable, recruitment of the new CTA will enable better guidance to be provided to the communication team over the strategic aims of the Project – see paragraph 73.

Internal communication has also been poor. The channels between the NPD and the Chair of the NSC within the MAIFS might be too formal or restricted to resolve the issues of procurement delays, and more regular and possibly informal channels would benefit problem-

solving (see paragraph 69). Crucially, the communication between the PMU and the private sector stakeholders appears to need improvement. There is a clear inconsistency with this issue, however, because on the one hand the IAS Coordinator is on extremely good terms with many of the representatives of the private sector, a fact witnessed repeatedly by the MTET in the field, and the PMU maintains that it provides information to the private sector as necessary. On the other hand, those private sector stakeholders interviewed indicated to differing degrees a common theme that they knew little about the Project and what it was trying to achieve other than they may be paid for some IAS clearance work. These interviews revealed clear issues of miscommunication with the PMU illustrating the importance of ensuring that messages are received and understood. In direct contrast to the perceived need to open less formal channels of communication between the Ministry and the NPD, here the MTET believes that a more formal mechanism needs to be instigated – see paragraph 70.¹⁹

Adaptive Management

22. The adaptive management displayed by the Project is mixed. On the one hand the problem-solving has been poor; the UNDP-CO reports work plans being done for the beginning of the year, again in July and again in September, each failing to solve inherent problems and simply re-vamping timetables backwards in the face of missed disbursement targets without really achieving anything. On the other hand, the PMU has displayed a number of intuitive ideas to overcome problems. These range from doing things themselves, e.g. producing the terms of reference for the technical consultants in the absence of a CTA, mobilising innovative PA financing sources (green marketing, CSR public-private partnership building), and drafting the Agreement for use with the private sector stakeholders; to getting others to help, e.g. using existing contracted labour within the NPC and FS on an overtime basis to get the IAS clearance work started in the face of prolonged procurement delays for dedicated labour; to re-vamping things, e.g. recruiting the technical consultants all under a single contract rather than try to get the Ministry to recruit six consultants individually. Lessons have also been learned during activities, e.g. it was noted that having included two women in the IAS clearance teams, the rate of successful treatment of the cut stems increased because the women were more careful in the rapid application of herbicide (see paragraph 58). Since then, the PMU has ensured that women are included on all teams working on IAS clearance around the country.

Technical Management

23. Although the IAS clearance work has been largely the only activity that the Project has been able to undertake to date, its technical management has been of the highest order. It is led by the highly knowledgeable and hugely enthusiastic and optimistic IAS Coordinator, and in contrast to the wider Project, there is a clearly defined, scientifically-grounded and logically-constructed strategic framework overlying the obvious pragmatism of its implementation. All of the work has taken place to date on state land and mostly in the Black River Gorges National Park. Here work has concentrated on clearing IAS from strips of between 10-15m wide along either side of the main access avenues to provide internal corridors of IAS-free land linking the Conservation Management Areas (CMA) that have already been cleared and managed for a number of years. Flat land has been preferred, not only because it is easier to work, but because clearing on slopes will introduce erosion problems, and development and testing of current clearance methods will be easier if free from additional complications. The strategy also involves clearing the least infested areas first, not just because this means that larger areas can be cleared quickly, but because these areas are largely closer to being closed-canopy forest. The reduced light transmission within closed-canopy forest will ultimately stop

¹⁹ **PMU comment:** *Almost all the private stakeholders did participate actively in the inception workshop and know the content of the project and as such have also given their views on the way forward. All members of the PMU do communicate with the private stakeholders to inform them about delays in drafting the MOU on a regular basis by phone. Moreover, it should be noted that several other private stakeholders, other than that listed in the project document contacted the PMU, and expressed their interest in participating in the ecosystem restoration of their native forest, after reading newspaper articles on the project and its objectives.* **MTET response:** The MTET notes the information provided and reiterates that it recognizes that the PMU is making serious efforts to provide information to the private sector. Nonetheless, evidence gathered during the MTE mission showed repeatedly and unambiguously that the private sector considered itself not to be fully informed.

regeneration of most of the invasive plants, especially strawberry guava²⁰ (*Psidium cattleianum*). By dealing with these areas before the IAS plants can invade and prevent closure of the canopy, subsequent maintenance and its associated costs will be minimised. Monitoring of the biodiversity takes place before, and at regular intervals after, clearance to assess the impacts of the operations. Where possible, restoration is based upon waiting for natural regeneration, but where clearance has resulted in large gaps in the forest (> 0.25 ha), native plant species are re-introduced. This type of restoration of the forest is based on even more rigorous scientific work going as far as consulting historical scientific texts and collectors notes before re-introducing highly threatened species into exact places where they are understood to have once occurred to ensure soils, slope and microclimatic conditions are correct to maximise successful restoration. (See also paragraph 58 *et seq.*)

Notwithstanding the very obviously high quality technical implementation of the IAS programme and the reasonable attempts at adaptive management to expedite progress, overall there have been too many inadequacies displayed by the NSC (insufficient oversight), the PMU (poor strategic comprehension), Ministry (inadequate implementation of their own cumbersome procedures), and the UNDP-CO (delays in recruitment of key personnel) for implementation to be regarded as acceptable. Therefore, the implementation approach is evaluated as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

UNDP supervision and backstopping

24. The UNDP-CO has clearly been responsible for precipitating the delays which have beset the Project through it taking one year to recruit a NPM. The key factor explaining the five-month delay between project signature and vacancy advertisement appears to have arisen from a change in Programme Officer immediately after the Project signature, such that there was insufficient close monitoring and prioritization. After a rapid short-listing exercise which was completed in just one month, there is yet another delay of almost three months before candidates were tested and interviewed – this at a time when alarm bells over the length of time this process was taking should have been sounding both within UNDP and the MAIFS/NPCS. With Christmas/New Year holidays then intervening, the Central Asset and Procurement Committee did not meet until the 31st January 2011, with an offer being made nine days later and the candidate starting work six weeks later.

25. Putting this poor performance aside, the UNDP-CO has clearly been torn between leaving a nationally-executed project to be managed by the Government, and trying to intervene to ensure some sort of progress is made – an extremely difficult balancing act; and one that the MTET believes that it has done its best to achieve. As noted in paragraph 81, individual personalities and priorities can play a crucial role in the degree of success a project enjoys and the CO has had to deal with cumbersome Government processes exacerbated by slow decision-making in the MAIFS leading to even Quarterly Reports being delayed. Low priorities amongst former MAIFS personnel have resulted in inadequate NSC meetings being held which has resulted in inadequate oversight. The MTET feels that the CO could and should have exerted greater influence in organising more frequent NSC meetings. Notwithstanding this, the CO appears to have continued to work closely with the PMU to push the Project forwards and provide help wherever required. The present team responsible for the Project appear highly competent and the MTET is confident that they will be capable of overseeing the changes recommended in this report. A significant measure of the CO's good intent is shown by the fact that it is expediting the recruitment of new CTA without cost-recovery from the Project (as required by UNDP corporate policy but which would involve significant political and bureaucratic delays).

The UNDP-CO took far too long in the initial recruitments of National Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor putting the Project on the back foot from the start, and has perhaps been overly cautious in balancing the needs of the Project with not interfering in its national execution. Subsequently it has provided adequate levels of support, hence UNDP's supervision and backstopping role is evaluated as **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

²⁰ Sometimes referred to as Chinese guava but erroneously so since it is native to Brazil.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

26. Total disbursement of funds to the end of September 2013 (the most recent figures available to the MTET) amounted to US\$ 454,556 (see Table 4). If Project spending can be taken as a crude measure of the progress of implementation, then the views already provided, that the Project is achieving very little of the progress originally envisaged, is reinforced since this sum represents only 11.4% of the total budget projected in the Project Document, with 73.3% of the Project period elapsed (44 out of 60 months). Table 4 also shows that total spending on all of the Outcomes is substantially less than this, with that on Outcome 1 being 9.9%, on Outcome 3 just 8.1%, and nothing at all on Outcome 2. However, and significantly, project management costs remain as expected at 53.5%, if the first year without a staffed PMU is discounted, making the project period 32 months out of 60 (53.3%).

TABLE 4: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTCOME TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2013 (US\$) AGAINST TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET AS IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT (FIGURES ROUNDED).

	GEF		
	Budget	Actual	%
Outcome 1	478,000	47,278	9.9
Outcome 2	745,000	0	0
Outcome 3	2,377,000	193,436	8.1
Proj. Man.	400,000	213,843	53.5
TOTAL	4,000,000	454,556	11.4

SOURCE: UNDP from Atlas. Note, it is outside the scope of the MTE to independently verify the financial figures contained in any of the tables and figures presented here through an audit.

27. A key factor behind the slow delivery of this Project has been the requirement for all Project funds to be routed through the national budget – a system referred to as programme-based budgeting. This has resulted in all financial decisions having to be referred back to the highest-level of MAIFS for clearance; all Project-based procurements having to be carried out by the MAIFS officers using procedures laid down by the Public Procurement Act 2006, a process not tailored to deal with Project needs or timetables; and which have undermined the role of the National Project Director since he no longer has the authority to make direct decisions for the Project. The UNDP-CO reports that since the introduction of this system, most of the projects in its portfolio spread across many ministries are also suffering delays, so the problem exhibited here is not the result of poor implementation of this project *per se*. It is clear that while the Government's decision to incorporate project budgets into the central budget, is based on increasing transparency, accountability, and ownership, in practice it is causing significant reduction of flexibility and delays to project implementation in general and the MTET believes that the PPA should be enhanced to cater for Project cycle implementation. A formal recommendation to this effect, however, is beyond the scope of the MTET's mandate.

28. Recent changes to GEF's financing policy have redefined in-kind and cash co-financing such that monies or goods supplied to a project on a current accounting basis, i.e. that were included in a given year's budget (e.g. electricity or telephone costs in an office or fuel for stakeholder vehicles used by the project) are now counted as cash co-financing. However, an analysis of Government and private sector co-funding of this Project by the MTET has proved to be impossible since it appears that these contributions have simply not been tracked in any meaningful way by the Project. The best-guess estimates are contained in the 2013 PIR for the period ending June 2013, (edited for comprehension):

“There is no confirmed information on the Ministry of Environment's contribution, but also no reason to assume that the promised co-financing would not be realised. Government co-financing for 2013 amounts to approximately US\$ 650,000 being the amount estimated for [partner-managed] services for PMU office space rental, equipment and materials, and contribution of government technical and administrative staff,

procurement, human resources, finance, senior management, supervisors, drivers, vehicles, fuel, and other supervisors in relation to IAS. In 2012 the approximate amount of government co-financing was US\$ 175,000. Hence, the total estimated amount of US\$ 825,000 has been spent up to now. ... Private sector stakeholders have agreed in principle to participate in the process of IAS removal by allowing IAS removal and ecosystem rehabilitation of at least 2 ha of land for each private stakeholder on 10 sites identified during field visits. The total extent of private land where IAS removal and ecosystem rehabilitation will start is 20 ha with the estimated value of work to be effected at US\$ 100,000 per year, at a ratio of co-financing of 1:1. The cost of IAS removal for each site is approximately US\$ 10,000 co-financed by the project. The extent of private forest land under conservation management, as co-financing 1:1 is estimated at US\$ 5,000/ha/year. A total figure of US\$5 million for the actual private sector co-financing is recorded (by project end), of which US\$ 2 million is to be accounted as disbursed. The co-financing from MWF was linked to the management of Illes aux Aigrettes, to be maintained IAS-free and conserved with the NGO's mobilised funds. The amount of US\$ 3.2 million is for the period 2012-2014 and it should be considered 60% disbursed.”

Note the wide-ranging assumptions used throughout and the absence of hard data. Furthermore, some of the calculations in this PIR make no sense. Given that the legal agreements between the private companies and the Government have not yet been signed, and as such none of these companies have yet undertaken IAS clearance work under the auspices of the Project, it is inconceivable that US\$ 2 million of this co-financing can yet be “*accounted as disbursed*”.

29. While the MTET recognises the difficulties in tracking these partner-managed funds, but recommends that it needs to invest more time and effort in doing so. That for Government-managed co-funding should be relatively easy since most of it will be passed through the NPCSC accounts. That committed from the Ministry of Environment may prove a little more difficult. Where estimates have to be made because of proportionality, these should be realistic with assumptions spelled out. The MTET notes that the PMU has expressed discomfort over attempting to track the private-sector partner-managed co-funding, believing that any attempt by “Government” to seek financial data from the stakeholders may bring friction, and damage the delicate relationships that they are trying to build. The MTET believes that such discomfort could be substituted by a much more dynamic, creative, and strategic approach to private sector partners through ideas such as sponsorship, and suggests that such tracking is done on a voluntary basis with the PMU explaining that it is in the stakeholders interests to demonstrate that they are meeting their financial commitments to the GEF.

The MTET recommend that the PMU increases its efforts in tracking the expenditure of partner-managed co-funding resulting in better financial reporting.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Request partners to provide details of their co-funding expended over an appropriate timescale (monthly, quarterly, half-yearly) to improve the financial reporting of the Project in its PIRs and to facilitate same in the terminal evaluation.	Immediately	Improved accuracy of financial reporting

30. Table 5 gives the figures for the disbursement of GEF funds by Outcome against budget in each of the years as per the Project Document. Figure 1 illustrates these figures showing the actual amount disbursed in each period by Outcome, and Figure 2 shows the cumulative percentage of the budget disbursed. These Figures illustrate a number of points, that:

- the common pattern of slow spending at the start of the Project has been prolonged in this case to at least the first three years;
- the work when it did begin in 2012 has concentrated almost solely on Outcome 3, but then has decreased sharply;
- work on Outcome 2 has been effectively ignored; and

- d) project management costs, although cumulatively running below budget, show considerable annual variability largely as a result of the CTA's costs being out of synchronisation with the budget because he was employed considerably later than expected.

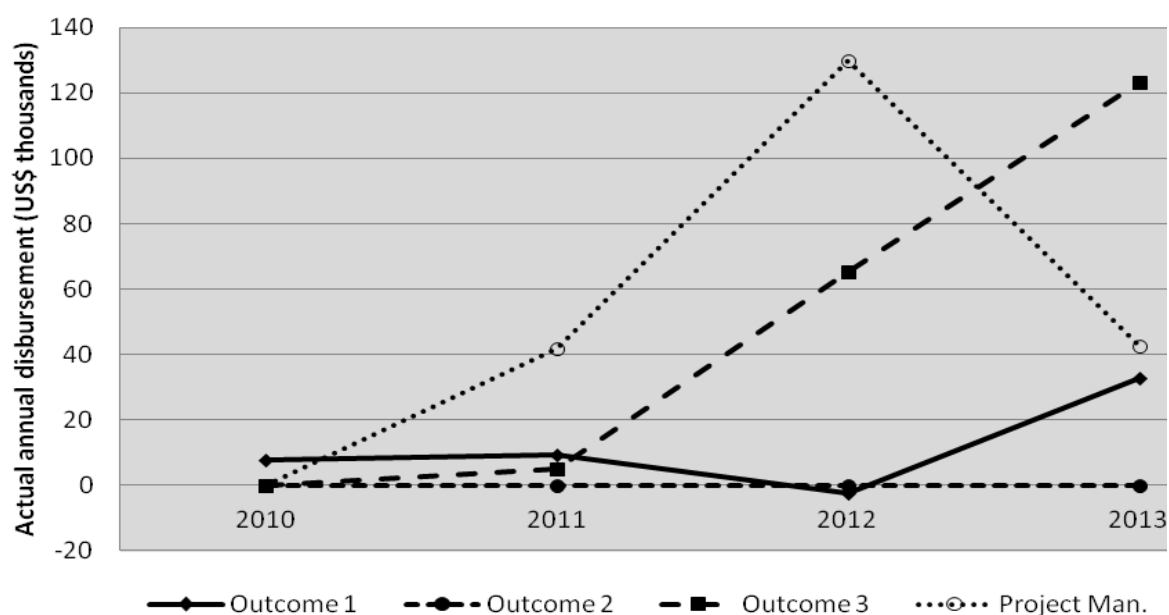
TABLE 5: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY OUTCOME BY YEAR AGAINST BUDGET AS IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT

	2010			2011			2012			2013†		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Outcome 1	116,000	7,545	6.5	204,500	9,386	4.6	96,000	-2,446	-2.5	38,000	32,793	86.3
Outcome 2	21,000	0	0.0	140,000	0	0.0	232,500	0	0.0	204,500	0	0.0
Outcome 3	246,000	0	0.0	537,500	4,902	0.9	639,500	65,440	10.2	560,500	123,093	22.0
Proj. Man.	95,900	0	0.0	76,400	41,686	54.6	76,400	129,711	169.8	76,400	42,447	55.6
Total	478,900	7,545	1.6	958,400	55,974	5.8	1,044,400	192,705	18.5	879,400	198,332	22.6

SOURCE: UNDP from Atlas. †: figures for 2013 actual are to 30th September only, and 2013 budget is taken as 75% of that for Year 4 in the Project Document.

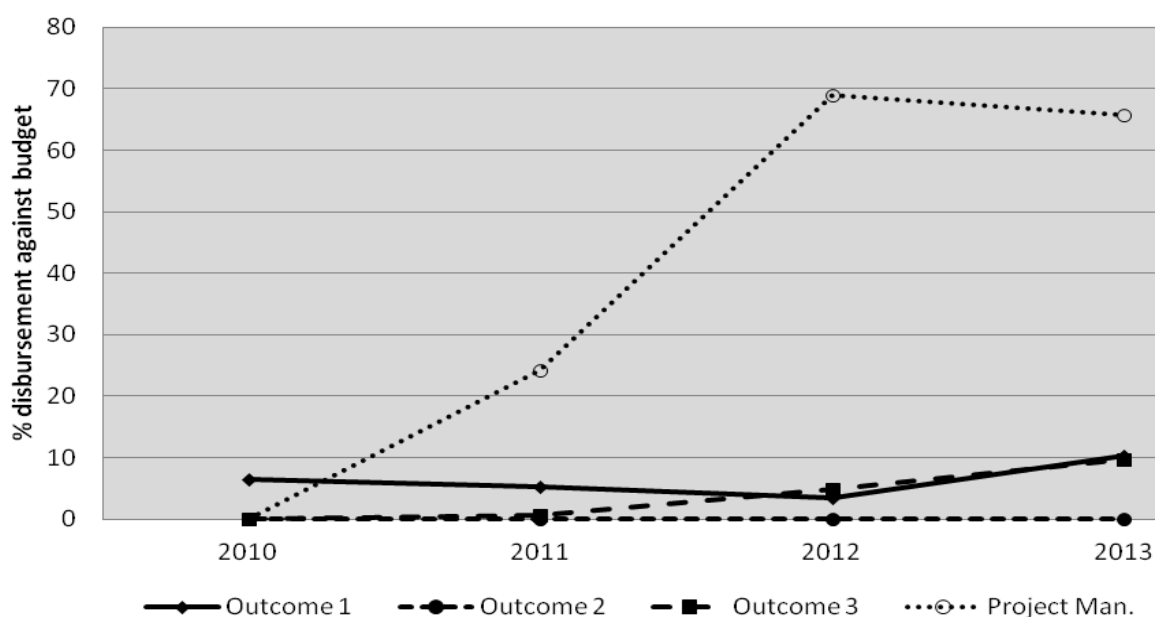
The figures for the totals in the Combined Delivery Report differ slightly from the figures presented here since they include foreign exchange gains/losses which result in marginally higher levels of expenditure (max. 2.3% in 2011).

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY OUTCOME BY YEAR AGAINST BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT



SOURCE: UNDP from Atlas.

FIGURE 2: CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS (US\$) BY OUTCOME BY YEAR AGAINST CUMULATIVE BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT



SOURCE: UNDP from Atlas.

Financial planning and management is adequate but tracking of partner-managed funding has been poor, hence financial planning has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.

Cost effectiveness

31. At present this is difficult to ascertain but would seem generally poor since although only 11.4% of the GEF budget has been disbursed, over half of this has been spent on project management (see Table 4) but few tangible results appear to have been achieved by the Project for the expenditure of US\$ 454,556. Nonetheless, the IAS clearance activities are showing considerable cost-effectiveness with costs of clearing forest having fallen from US\$ 9,000 to US\$ 3,000 per hectare and maintenance weeding reduced from US\$1,000 to US\$ 850. However, it remains to be seen if this can be maintained (or even improved) when operations are scaled up.

Cost-effectiveness would seem generally poor since few tangible results appear to have been achieved for the expenditure of US\$ 454,556. However, costs of IAS clearance have been reduced from US\$ 9,000 to 3,000/ha, hence cost-effectiveness has been evaluated as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Project Document contains a comprehensive M&E Plan with a full budget allocation for its implementation. M&E implementation has been generally of a sufficient standard to provide a basis for adaptive management, hence the overall rating for monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

M&E Design

32. The Project Document devotes six pages to a full M&E Plan listing required actions, the person(s) responsible, and a timeframe, together with a full associated budget allocation. The logframe is generally well-designed and contains indicators that are SMART.

The Project Document contains a comprehensive M&E Plan with a full budget allocation for its implementation, hence it can be considered as “good practice” and monitoring and evaluation design has been evaluated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

M&E Implementation

33. Monitoring and evaluation of Project activities have been undertaken in varying detail at three levels:

- i. Progress monitoring
- ii. Internal activity monitoring
- iii. Impact monitoring

34. Progress monitoring has been good and has been made through quarterly and annual reports to the UNDP-CO, although the quarterly reports have frequently been late, most often because of delays arising in the Finance Section of the MAIFS. The annual action plans have been developed at the end of each year by the NPM in close collaboration with the NPD and other members of the PMU to a more detailed level than contained in the UNDP template, but surprisingly no procurement plans have been produced. These draft action plans have been submitted to the UNDP-CO which, along with the RTA in Addis Ababa, has provided comments. These were then incorporated into a final version, nominally for onward transmission and approval by the National Steering Committee but with the NSC meeting just twice; actual formal approval has come from the MAIFS and the UNDP-CO. Even where the action plan was presented to the NSC in February 2013, the minutes do not record any discussion or even outline approval (the MTET being informed that formal approval would come only with the adoption of the minutes by the following meeting – a somewhat convoluted means of approving something that would already be well under implementation by that time). Because of the very slow implementation of the Project, Action Plans have frequently been revised and then re-revised as the new targets have still not been met, itself a time-consuming task. The NPM has been in weekly communication with the UNDP-CO by phone or e-mail regarding implementation of, and progress with, the work plan, but perhaps only 1-3 times a month through face-to-face meetings (largely because the offices are distant from each other). It is noted that these are always held in the NPC's offices at Reduit and never in the CO. Furthermore, the UNDP-CO has made just a single field visit to sites in Black River Gorges National Park; this being the result of the Project having made little progress on the ground to date and the fact that such visits have been curtailed by the slow procurement of a project vehicle, with no other means of transport available to the CO.

35. The PMU has also ensured that the UNDP-CO received quarterly progress reports providing updates on the status of planned activities, the status of the overall project schedule, the products completed, problems incurred, and an outline of the activities planned for the following quarter, complete with outline dates. These report formats contained qualitative estimates of technical progress and quantitative estimates of financial disbursements. The UNDP-CO generated its own monthly financial reports from Atlas from data provided by the PMU. These expenditure records, together with Atlas disbursement records of direct payments, served as a basis for expenditure monitoring and budget revisions when required. The UNDP-CO has also required delivery projections along with work plans (derived from the annual work plans) that are updated quarterly by the PMU. From the quarterly reports, the UNDP-CO has, until recent changes to the requirements, prepared Quarterly Operational Reports (150-word fixed-format) which have been made available to UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Addis Ababa via the UNDP intranet, and in turn submitted to UNDP HQ and to GEF. The major findings and observations of all these reports have been given in an annual report covering the period July to June, the Project Implementation Report (PIR), which is also submitted by the PMU and UNDP-CO, to the Regional Technical Adviser (RTA) at the UNDP-GEF Regional Centre for review and official comments, followed by final submission to GEF. These key reports have not been submitted to the NSC because it has not met with the desired frequency.

36. The Project risk assessment has been updated once a year by the PMU and UNDP-CO in concert, at the time of producing the PIR. Although apparently infrequent, the CO deems that since only the long-term risks are entered, this is sufficient. Short-term risks, better termed “issues” are dealt with as they occur and responded to accordingly, but are not entered into the risk log on Atlas because it is a cumbersome tool (e.g. risks cannot be deleted; no modifications can be made; it does not provide an official way of tracking management responses and adaptations to risk). Such

impracticality and inflexibility of the tool makes it of little use to an important part of the management of the project and is seen as adding no value to the response. Management responses listed appear adequate. Four risks were classified as “Critical” in the 2011 risk log, yet this would appear to be a mistake, since the very same risks were classified as “High” in the Inception Report, and are no longer identified as critical in the 2012 PIR. As a result, the MTET does not consider the Project to be “At Risk” which four critical risks would imply, although the low rate of delivery and the strategic deficit identified herein should now be considered critical risks (the former identified as becoming critical in the 2013 PIR). The MTET recommend that the risk management of the Project is improved, such that a) risks are assessed on a quarterly basis as required by the Project Document; b) all risks are entered onto the risk log in Atlas, since despite the CO considering it to be cumbersome, it provides a means for providing a full record of the risk assessment and adaptive management processes (the current informal system can be continued in parallel if that is deemed to be easier and more effective); and c) there should be consistency in the categorisation of the levels of risk applied with any changes to such levels of a given risk being documented. The Project is subject to a mandatory nationally-implemented audit undertaken by an independent company appointed by open tender, but the Project’s low level of expenditure has not yet met the required threshold levels to trigger such an audit.

The MTET recommend that application of the Project’s risk assessment be improved.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-CO/PMU	Risk assessment to be undertaken quarterly; results recorded in Atlas, with greater consistency of categorisation and changes in levels recorded.	Immediately	Risk assessment details in Atlas

37. Internal activity monitoring undertaken by the Project’s management appears generally to have been good comprising a range of mechanisms to keep abreast of albeit a limited amount of work and to respond to any areas of concern. These comprised many of the methods used to track progress, and implementation has been heavily guided by the Annual Work Plan and the quarterly plans submitted to release funds. Employees’/consultants’ Terms of Reference provide/will provide the overarching framework for work carried out. The majority of the work to date has comprised clearing IAS, and day-to-day supervision of this has been undertaken by the IAS Coordinator through monthly workplans. The NPM makes regular site visits (announced and unannounced) to check on the technical details of the methods employed and to assist with remedial measures where necessary. Since labourers are paid by the day, any problems causing cessation of work involves their redeployment to other sites, if feasible. Team supervisors provide weekly feedback on the estimated areas of IAS cleared and this is entered into a spreadsheet for use in the Quarterly Reports. These figures are verified by Forest Land Surveyors from the Forestry Service intermittently when certain benchmarks for various sites are believed to have been achieved (i.e. clearance of a given area). The impending employment of consultants will all be conducted under performance-based contracts with payment made according to the achievement of pre-determined milestones.

38. Impact monitoring at present is unusually well-developed with rapid assessments of biodiversity being undertaken to update those done at the time of the Project Document ahead of the commencement of IAS clearance in any area. These areas are re-surveyed every 3-6 months to measure the effects of clearance and to determine the need for maintenance activities. The MTET notes that while the impacts of many of the activities within Outcomes 1 and 2 will manifest themselves in the expansion of designated protected areas, it recommends that attention should be paid to developing adequate quantitative means of measuring impacts of other activities, e.g. training and awareness. A weakness in the Project’s indicators (e.g. numbers 9 and 14), common to many projects, is that numbers of people being reached or taking part does not provide a measure of impact. This is also noted by the RTA in the 2013 PIR, thus:

“Capacity development is difficult to measure. One can focus on activities and products, but for impact, what really matters is uptake. If this is not on focus, number of workshops, number of people trained, number of materials produced start becoming meaningless.”

Appropriate measures such as before-and-after quantitative questionnaires should be designed to provide measures of change in behaviour or knowledge, thereby providing an assessment of the

efficacy of the methods employed and guiding re-design where necessary. Two of the three GEF tracking tools have been completed for the baseline and mid-term but their accuracy and consistency leaves something to be desired – see paragraph 44.

The MTET recommend that the Project develops adequate quantitative means of measuring the impacts of all activities.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/Consultants	Appropriate measures should be designed to provide measures of change in behaviour or knowledge resulting from Project interventions, particularly those relating to awareness and training	Prior to relevant activities commencing	Quantitative measuring systems

M&E implementation has been generally of a sufficient standard, with progress monitoring to the level specified in the Project Document; good internal activity monitoring of the limited activities to date, and with good impact monitoring applied to IAS removal; all of which have been fed back into adaptive management actions, hence the implementation of monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Satisfactory**.

PROJECT RESULTS

ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES

39. A Summary of the Project's achievements is given directly below, followed by an outline of the attainment of objectives. A summary evaluation of Project Outputs is given in Table 6 followed by a more detailed description. A detailed evaluation of the level of achievements made against the indicators of success contained in the logframe is given in Annex IV.

Summary of Achievements

40. The Project exhibits a worrying lack of progress at a point almost three-quarters of the way through its lifespan having disbursed just 11.4% of its budget and just 9.9% of that for Outcome 1, just 8.1% of that for Outcome 3, and nothing at all on Outcome 2. While initial reaction may lay this at the door of the PMU, that would be grossly unfair. The Project has been thwarted throughout by issues that have been largely beyond its capability to influence – the first a 12-month recruitment of the NPM by UNDP because of acute staff shortages; the second, a non-performing CTA is unfortunate, and led to delays in developing the ToR for the team of technical consultants; while the third, the recruitment of those consultants, has taken yet another year, in part because of the Project's budget being incorporated into the National Budget through programme-based budgeting, which has increased the need for high-level clearances at MAIFS level – a system not tailored to project cycle management and deadlines. This requirement has caused delays across many of the projects in the UNDP-CO's portfolio implemented by a variety of ministries and hence is not a result of poor implementation of this project per se. That said, the PMU has received insufficient technical support to fully comprehend the Project's strategic rationale and the key aim for the Project of expanding the current protected area network to cover as many as possible of those habitats and species currently not in receipt of protection appears to have become lost in dealing with the Project's difficulties over the past three years. The Project has made significant progress with the task of clearing invasive alien plants on State-owned land and has completed an Agreement with private-sector landowners to fund them to do the same in the privately-owned or leased forests – this despite impressively long bureaucratic delays emanating from the State Law Office. However, because of its ineffectual strategic grasp of the Project, the PMU has not attempted much preliminary work that could (and should) have been done prior to the technical consultants commencing work.

Overall, the Project has achieved some of its major relevant objectives but it has major shortcomings, hence its attainment of objectives and results is evaluated as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

41. Key Project achievements are disappointingly few after 44 months since Project commencement, but include:

- interventions to the *Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill* to include a new category of protected area termed Special Reserve that may be applied to privately-owned land;
- an Agreement to provide Project funds to ten private landowners/lessees for IAS clearance from 5 ha each of their forest and three years' follow-up maintenance;
- clearance of IAS from 116.2 ha of State forest land on 12 demonstration sites;
- undertaken trials to develop a cost effective method for controlling invasive alien plants thereby reducing costs from US\$ 9,000/ha to US\$ 3,000/ha; and
- initial advocacy and awareness activities that have resulted in a Cabinet Paper being presented making a commitment to the expansion of the PAN.

42. The main problem areas identified by the MTET are:

- extremely poor levels of delivery arising from unacceptably slow recruitment and procurement processes operated by the UNDP-CO and the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security respectively resulting in a full complement of Project consultants still not being in place 44 months after commencement of the Project;
- insufficient technical support provided to the PMU for it to fully comprehend the Project's strategic rationale;
- almost no progress made towards Project Outcomes 1 and 2;
- insufficient and inadequate Project oversight by the National Steering Committee;
- poor performance of the initial Chief Technical Advisor exacerbating other problems and delays;
- extremely long bureaucratic delays by the State Law Office over a short and fairly simple legal instrument; and
- poor communication both externally and internally.

Immediate Objective Indicators

43. Development objectives, those things that the project will *contribute towards*, are best assessed independently of the project and are currently done at the Country Programme level. However, the immediate objective is something that the project is trying to achieve *in its lifetime* or shortly thereafter, and is a key element in the M&E framework because it defines the project's target. In the case of this Project, the revised logframe contains five indicators for the "Objective" (taken to be the immediate objective), few of which show progress (see [Annex IV](#)).

- Coverage (ha) of the terrestrial formal protected area network of mainland Mauritius and the islets

- At the mid-term, the coverage of the protected area network shows a tiny net increase of 25.4 ha as a result of two former forest reserves being designated as a national park.²¹

Suggestions have been made that the area of the Mountain and River Reserves should be included within the protected area network, in part because the Maurice Ile Durable Fund has recognised them as legally protected area. However, the designers believed that the "*category does not provide a robust framework for protecting biodiversity*" and the value of them with regard to native forest biodiversity remains to be ascertained. Should forthcoming technical studies undertaken to review and formalise the definition of what constitutes a 'protected area' in Mauritius (Output 1.1) lead to a decision being taken to include these areas within the PAN as it relates to this Project, it will be important to retro-fit the area of these reserves to the

²¹ The Bars D'Eau National Park (497.2 ha) was designated in December 2011. This area includes 452 ha of land formerly designated as the Bras d'Eau Forest Reserve and 20ha formerly designated as Mare Sarcelles Forest Reserve, hence a net gain of 25.2 ha.

baseline prior to calculating any expansion unless the degree of protection afforded by them changes – see paragraph 9.

- Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management
 - The national budget announced on 9th November 2013 allocated a total of US\$ 8,968,567 for protected area management. This is a significant increase, but there is no evidence that the Project had any influence on the allocation.
- Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas
 - 31%. This shows a significant rise from the baseline score of 18% and represents achievement of the lower end of the Project’s target range. However, the MTET can find little evidence that the increase is a direct result of Project activities rather than general increases being brought about by other actions of the NPCPS.²² Furthermore, the MTET remains concerned that the scorecard lacks sufficient detail, despite the significant inputs that it made, and recommends that it is re-done by the new CTA or the PA financial consultant early in 2014, and that this score is then used as the mid-term score.
- Capacity development indicator score (%) for protected area system
 - A workshop was planned to see how to “*apply the Capacity Development Scorecard in an analytical manner ... involving key institutions (Forestry, Parks and Environment)*” [PIR 2013]. No such workshop has taken place, and no scores were available for verification by the MTET.
- METT scores for different categories of formal protected areas on mainland Mauritius and the islets:
 - The METT score targets for all the different categories of protected area have been achieved, yet little or no work outside of IAS clearance has been undertaken by the Project to develop the capacities of the protected areas. The scores are unusually high and were filled out by members of the PMU rather than the original team of independent consultants that did the baseline. The MTET had no time to check the facts independently. The PMU claims that the low baseline scores are a result of inadequate scoring by the independent consultant who failed to appreciate the true situation in the protected areas. The MTET remains concerned that the true picture is confused and recommends that the METT scores are re-done by the new CTA as one of his/her first tasks and that those scores are used as the mid-term score.²³

The MTET recommend that the Financial Scorecard and METT scores are recalculated by the new CTA or a member of the technical consultancy team, and that those versions are used as the mid-term scores.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
CTA	Re-calculation of METT scores as an independent exercise	Q1 2014	METT scores
CTA/Financing consultant	Re-calculation of Financial Scorecard as an independent exercise	Q1 2014	Financial Scorecard
CTA	Submit Financial Scorecard and METT scores to UNDP-GEF RTA	Before end Q1 2014	Financial Scorecard and METT scores

²² **PMU comment:** The METT score and Financial score have increased due to contribution of the Project Activities through IAS removal and ecosystem restoration works on all the protected areas under the METT and innovative and new sources of finance from private sector corporate sustainability and green initiatives and by working with the Maurice Ile Durable. **MTET response:** The MTET stands by its statement in the text.

²³ **PMU comment:** The PMU has worked out the METT and Financial scores independently with MTET consultant during the Mid-term evaluation process. **MTET response:** No – the Lead Evaluator provided considerable guidance to the PMU in how to fill out the scorecards, especially the Financial Scorecard, but he did not help with the actual scoring. Furthermore, the PMU cannot be considered to be independent when working out these scorecards. He remains concerned over the veracity of the scores derived – hence the recommendation.

GEF-4 Tracking Tools

44. Two of the tracking tools required by GEF-4, i.e. the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) and the financial sustainability scorecard, have been completed by the PMU and are attached as Excel files to the submission of this report, although concerns remain as to their accuracy – see previous paragraph. No progress had been made with the third, the capacity scorecard, at the time of the MTE. The METT scores, the financial sustainability, and capacity scores are all included as indicators in the results framework (see [Annex IV](#)).

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OUTPUTS

45. This section attempts to provide an overview of the main achievements of the Project. Although it is not intended to be a comprehensive account, it is unfortunately less complete than normal because very few concrete results have been achieved by the Project. The MTET acknowledges the help of the PMU in providing information for this section.

TABLE 6: EVALUATION OF THE END OF PROJECT SITUATION AS PER THE REVISED LOGFRAME

Component		Evaluation*					
		HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
<i>Outcome 1</i>	<i>Systemic framework for PA expansion improved</i>						
Output 1.1	Enabling national policy for a representative system of protected areas is formulated						
Output 1.2	Legislative and regulatory framework for the PAN is updated and reformed						
Output 1.3	Rationale for PA expansion in place, and conservation stewardship strategy and tools established to guide implementation						
Output 1.4	Business-oriented financial and business plan prepared for PAN						
Output 1.5	Awareness of the need to conserve native biodiversity is improved						
<i>Outcome 2</i>	<i>PA institutional framework strengthened</i>						
Output 2.1	Management and governance options for the PAN reviewed						
Output 2.2	Strategic planning for PA institutions completed						
Output 2.3	Financial sustainability of PA institutions improved						
Output 2.4	Conservation stewardship unit established and pilot programme implemented						
Output 2.5	Skills and competencies of PA staff improved						
<i>Outcome 3</i>	<i>Operational know-how in place to contain threats</i>						
Output 3.1	Integrated management plan prepared for Black River Gorges National Park						
Output 3.2	Cost-effective IAS control measures, and ecosystem restoration techniques, developed and tested						
Output 3.3	Enforcement and compliance capability improved						
Output 3.4	Information management system for recording, exchanging and disseminating information in place						

* Note: HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; MU= Marginally unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly unsatisfactory. Hatched colour = basis for much of the Output disputed hence progress is difficult.

There are no substantive outputs from the Project to date under Outcomes 1 or 2. Significant progress has been made with IAS clearance under Outcome 3 but that is all. Project outputs are ranked individually from Satisfactory to Unsatisfactory with the overall achievement of outputs and activities being evaluated as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

Outcome 1: Systemic framework for PA expansion improved

Output 1.1: Enabling national policy for a representative system of protected areas is formulated

46. The Project Document states that:

“A working group of the NBSAP Committee comprising senior representatives of the MoA (FS, NPCS), MoE NDU, MoT, MoHL, State Law Office, MoF, MWF, private landowners and research institutions will be convened by the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) to oversee the development of the national policy on protected areas.”²⁴

The Project has established a Technical Advisory Group and this has met just once on 22nd March 2012. As indicated in paragraph 18, it is unclear to what its function is supposed to be. Importantly, if this is the committee referred to in the Project Document tasked with overseeing the development of the national policy on protected areas, the membership as listed in that single meeting’s minutes crucially lacks representatives from the State Law Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Environment’s National Development Unit, although it does contain eight members representing different private sector interests out of a total of 24 members – the MTET suggests a rather too heavy bias. Almost no work has been undertaken towards formulating a policy, in part because of the inability of the original CTA to undertake the preliminary phase of the process, and in part because of the delay in recruiting the technical consultancy team. The PMU has managed to compile relevant existing policy documents to be provided to the consultants, thus: National Development, Tourism, Planning Urban and Rural Outline Planning, Forestry, Environment, Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, Environment Sensitive Areas, Coastal Zone Management, Land Management.

Output 1.2: Legislative and regulatory framework for the PAN is updated and reformed

47. Little work has been undertaken in relation to this output. The legal sub-committee of the NBSAP working group referred to in Output 1.1 has not been formed and no review work on defining “protected area” and the various categories and management objectives has begun. While the MTET recognises that there has been delay in recruiting the team of technical consultants, this appears to have formed an excuse for not even attempting to undertake what could have been much useful preliminary work on the tasks laid out in the Project Document, e.g. initial areas of agreement/disagreement could have been reached on the institutional roles and responsibilities for the management of the different categories of protected areas; on the compliance and enforcement regimes for the different categories of protected areas; or on the incentives, and compensatory mechanisms, that could support the establishment and management of the different categories of protected areas.

48. That said, the PMU has made interventions on two key pieces of legislation to date. The Inception Reports notes that:

“A Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill may include some ‘stewardship provisions’ relating to the conservation of private land. The PAN project team needs to ensure that such provisions are derived from ideas developed by the project and its Stewardship Consultant in liaison with private stakeholders. ... The way the PAN project is designed, legislation changes would come in later to reflect the stewardship arrangements agreed to. Premature legislation could be a significant complication.”

Unfortunately, the scheduling of the *Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill* has not been favourable to the Project (although the delays to the Project have not helped), but the PMU has held consultations with relevant major stakeholders to compile comments and submit these to the drafting committee of the State Law Office (SLO). The PMU also participated in meetings with the SLO and was a prominent advocate for aspects relating to the proposed expansion of the PAN,

²⁴ MoA = MAIFS; Ministry of Environment National Development Unit; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Housing and Lands; Ministry of Finance.

particularly the innovative but delicate issue of public-private partnership in land use, and provisions relating to the conservation of private land in Mauritius. As a result, the Project has managed to include a new category of protected area termed Special Reserve in the Bill under Section 11 which may be proclaimed by the President and administered under the NPCS. Crucially for the Project, these Special Reserves may be applied to privately-owned land on which a conservation covenant or easement may be agreed and be binding upon the landowner and his successors in title. Concurrently, the PMU also made inputs into the amendments that are being made currently to the *Forests and Reserves Act 1983* for regulating the felling of trees on private land and crucially “*protecting endemic trees*”. Although developed ahead of the policy review and work with the private-sector on the establishment of reserves and stewardship arrangements, the work represents a timely intervention to provide at least a basic legal framework to the wider and longer-term aims of the Project, although subsequent amendments may still prove necessary to support and guide the new policy.

Output 1.3: Rationale for PA expansion in place, and conservation stewardship strategy and tools established to guide implementation

49. Again, the dependency of the Project upon the technical consultancies has meant that little progress has yet been made with this output. The PMU has initiated discussions for the voluntary incorporation of privately-owned and privately-leased land into the expanded PAN through the *IAS Technical Working Group*, but interviews with the private sector showed little understanding of such incorporation of their land. Most of the discussions have revolved around what may be considered to be a pilot phase, i.e. that of paying for IAS clearance on 5 ha plots of forest and assisting with restoration.

Output 1.4: Business-oriented financial and business plan prepared for PAN

50. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants.

Output 1.5: Awareness of the need to conserve native biodiversity is improved

51. Contracting the communication activities to an environmental NGO or coalition was judged risky in view of possible conflicts of interest, so a Communication and Marketing consultancy (Cread and Co.) were finally recruited in October 2013. Unlike many of the other outputs described above, the Project has already undertaken a limited amount of awareness-raising activities. There was national television and radio coverage on the Inception Workshop held in August 2011, and five press articles on the need for expansion of the PAN and on the removal of IAS and forest restoration have appeared in the local media, notably in *Scope Magazine* and *L’Express* newspaper between 2011 and 2013. The strategy to expand the PAN was also mentioned several times in the speech of the Minister of Agro-industry on the inauguration of the visitor centres at Black River Gorge and Bras D’Eau National Parks on 19th July and 1st October 2013 covered by the National Media Coverage. The Project has also undertaken advocacy activities through various discussions held with government agencies and other stakeholders to foster a pride in the native biodiversity of Mauritius; to encourage the qualities and attributes of joint responsibility for custodianship of this biodiversity; and to promote the role of protected areas in the conservation of this biodiversity. It has held at least 20 meetings promoting the project through meetings with various government and private sector agencies, and these culminated in a Cabinet Paper²⁵ being presented by the Minister of Agro-industry on the Project in September 2013. The Paper noted the progress and aims of the Project and spelt out the Government’s commitment that:

“Under the Project, the total protected area network would be increased to 14,920 hectares in the next five years.”

Advocacy has also begun with the private sector aimed also at advancing the building of a public-private partnership and more importantly of expanding the PAN.

²⁵ <http://pmo.gov.mu/English/News/Pages/Cabinet-Decisions---20-September-2013.aspx>

Outcome 2: PA institutional framework strengthened

Output 2.1: Management and governance options for the PAN reviewed

52. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants.

Output 2.2: Strategic planning for PA institutions completed

53. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants.

Output 2.3: Financial sustainability of PA institutions improved

54. Some work has been achieved in parallel to this output, but little of this has been directly linked to the Project, and while the Government's budget for protected area expenditure has increased, as one of the stakeholders commented, this in itself does not equate with increased financial sustainability. The PMU has participated in meetings for supporting the establishment and implementation of a system of entry and other user fees across the PAN. Discussions at these meetings centred on pricing structures; assessing expected revenue generation; developing controlled entry points to PAs; developing compliance systems to support user fee arrangements; and monitoring the income from, and costs of, implementation. In 2012 the Cabinet approved charging user fees for protected areas from early 2013 onwards. Although the infrastructure for fee collection has been established by the NPCS, their collection has not yet commenced. Similarly, the Maurice Ile Durable Fund has been funding management and restoration work in newly identified areas – the 2013 PIR reporting that Plaine Raoul and Coin de Mire already have funding. The Project's main activities await the recruitment of the technical consultants.

Output 2.4: Conservation stewardship unit established and pilot programme implemented

55. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants; but see also paragraph 59).

Output 2.5: Skills and competencies of PA staff improved

56. Capacity-building for PA staff has been undertaken for personnel connected to the IAS clearance works only. A total of 70 manual part-time workers have been given on-the-job training to clear invasive alien plant species. This training usually lasts about a week and includes the identification of the target species to clear (along with instructions to leave anything they are unsure about so as to avoid removing any native species) and the methods required to remove and treat them, the latter developed during this Project and from others (see paragraph 58). A total of four Park Rangers, 12 Assistant Parks Rangers, and ten Forest Officers have been trained as supervisors. A new group of 45 workers will commence full-time work in December 2013 and will be given formal training by the IAS Coordinator prior to this. The Project has also trained ten labourers of a private company who had been performing restoration work in the Black River Gorges National Park in 2012, and these workers are now employed on the HSBC-funded project which started there early in November 2013. Supervisors working for Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre Ltd. (a private company involved in the restoration of their private forest) have been participating in guided tours at one restored site so as to learn the guiding techniques being used.

Outcome 3: Operational know-how in place to contain threats

Output 3.1: Integrated management plan prepared for Black River Gorges National Park

57. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants. Poor communication from the Project has led to confusion over the role of funding received by the MAIFS from the Agence Française de Développement for the funding of management plans. This is not for use to assist the Project with the integrated management plan for Black River Gorges National Park but to complement the Project by producing management plans for all of the

country's Nature Reserves under the administration of the Forestry Service. The MTET believe that the two projects could collaborate to produce significant synergies and benefits from cross co-financing.

Output 3.2: Cost-effective IAS control measures, and ecosystem restoration techniques, developed and tested

58. The Project appointed an IAS Coordinator in March 2012 to supervise the control of invasive alien species and restoration of native forest. Work has concentrated on the removal of four key invasive plants, namely strawberry guava (*Psidium cattleianum*), travellers palm (*Ravenala madagascariensis*), (see Figure 3) hiptage (*Hiptage benghalensis*), and a privet (*Ligustrum robustum* var. *walkerii*) from 12 demonstration sites – six in the Black River Gorges National Park, one in Bras

D'Eau National Park, and one each in three Nature Reserves (Le Pouce, Cabinet and Gouly Père) and two State Land Forests (Mon Vert and Anse Jonchée). Work plans have been developed for each and extensive monitoring and evaluation has been carried out of the work and its impacts (see paragraph 38). A total of 116.2 ha of forest land has been cleared and restored largely using techniques developed and refined from lessons learnt during the implementation of a UNEP project at Plateau Remousse in the Lower Gorges where 10 ha of highly degraded forest was successfully restored. These techniques vary depending upon the size of the plant. For small plants with a diameter at breast height (dbh) of < 1 cm, the plants are simply uprooted. For those between 1 and 15 cm dbh they are cut at about 5 cm above the ground level and the herbicide Garlon²⁶ coloured with a pink dye (see photograph on front cover) is applied to the cut stump within five minutes beyond which time the cut surface would suberise (start to become corky) and form a barrier to the herbicide. Stems > 15cm dbh are ring-barked and left to die over time. Trials where holes were drilled and filled with herbicide proved time consuming and expensive and the method was discarded. Experiments were undertaken into the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of different types and doses of herbicide; use of 100% Garlon have proved most effective and have been adopted as standard. Similarly, trials of mechanical cutters have not proved particularly practical and the need for fuel has meant that they are not cost-effective. Because of delays in the recruitment of workers, the IAS clearance has been undertaken by a group of about 70 labourers employed by the NPCS and FS but working overtime (evenings and weekends) for the Project. While this is not particularly efficient or cost-effective, it has resulted in significant progress that otherwise would not have been made. A group of about 45 labourers who will work full time for the Project on IAS clearance and restoration activities will begin work in December 2013. While on-the-job training has been provided to the work force and its supervisors (see paragraph 56), the MTET was shown that in some places the herbicide had not been applied quickly enough and regeneration of the cut stems was occurring; and it noted in several places that the cut stems (they are placed in piles and left to rot) were not being stacked in lines to allow easy access for future maintenance weeding but were dumped randomly on the ground (see Figure 4). More stringent supervision or repeat training may be required.

FIGURE 3: IMPENETRABLE WALL OF STRAWBERRY GUAVA AND TRAVELLER'S PALM



Photo © Phillip J. Edwards

²⁶ Active ingredient trichlopyr 485 E.C.

FIGURE 4: CUT STEMS CORRECTLY STACKED ALLOWING FUTURE ACCESS AND DUMPED WHERE CUT



Photos © Phillip J. Edwards

The Project is intending to trial wood chipping machines for transforming the stems into chips for compost or other use, this being a first step in identifying commercial opportunities associated with IAS control. Opinions were also voiced by some that the herbicide translocated into the roots of the IAS also remains active in the soil and some sensitive native plants, notably *Syderoxylon puberulum* and *S. cinnereum*) are killed by it. The IAS Coordinator disputes this. As indicated in paragraph 23, where clearance results in large gaps in the forest (> 0.25 ha), or where there is non-regeneration of native plants, a wide variety of native species are re-introduced. To date, over 1,000 individual plants have been planted. These plants are provided by the Native Plant Propagation Centre located in Curepipe (see Figure 5). The Centre has built up a stock of over 50,000 plants comprising over 300 native and endemic species. The Centre is now able to produce some 20,000 plants for restoration per year. To meet the forecast needs of the Project, two new nurseries will be established by the Project in 2014 at Bras d'Eau National Park and Terre Rouge

59. Work is also now beginning in partnership with the private sector. An *IAS Working Group* has been established and through this, an Agreement with nine private companies and an NGO was due to be signed shortly after the MTE mission after almost a year's delay. This Agreement provided for Project funds to be transferred to the private sector to pay their labourers to clear 5 ha of IAS from forest land and to maintain those areas for three years. This can also be considered as preliminary work towards a stewardship programme (Output 2.4). Direct implementation by private business also started in November 2013. HSBC, after a long wait for approval by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee (established under the CSR Law 2009), embarked upon the parallel clearance of 7 ha of IAS-infested forest along the Petrin-Macchabe trail in the Black River Gorges National Park along with viewing stations and corporate signage. The work is being undertaken through a national NGO Fondation Ressources et Nature (FORENA) which does one side of the trail, while the Project does the other. In another initiative, sometimes referred to as “*adopt-a-plot*”, the Lions Club of Quatre Bornes requested approval to sponsor the restoration of 1 ha of native forest at Plaine Champagne and are expected to start this in December 2013. The Lion's Club is keen to seek funding from other private companies to embark on restoration of native forests in the national parks. Similarly, Ireland Blyth Ltd., working through one of its subsidiaries, has restored 2.5 ha of native forest at Petrin in the Black River Gorges National Park and are currently maintaining it through use of their own funds. This company is keen to continue restoration work at that site.

FIGURE 5: NATIVE PLANT PROPAGATION CENTRE



Photo © Phillip J. Edwards

60. Not all IAS control work has been with plants. Control of rats has been stepped up in the Conservation Management Areas and buffer areas within Black River Gorges National Park – 150 kg of bait has been purchased and is regularly placed in traps with the collaboration of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Two hunters are licensed to operate in the Park and have been active in shooting deer and wild pigs but this is proving difficult. More attention will be given to this problem. Activities will begin shortly on eliminating rats from Ile D'Ambre, a small island lying just 150-200 m offshore with the aim of making it a safe refuge for the reintroduction of endemic birds and reptiles which would be undertaken in parallel with the restoration of its forest. However, its proximity to the mainland means that it may be easily re-colonized and final decisions on whether this work will continue have not yet been made. Plans for the experimental control of red-whiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*), one of the main dispersal agents of strawberry guava, will also be considered during the Project.

Output 3.3: Enforcement and compliance capability improved

61. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants. However, proposed activities within the Project Document relating to improved demarcation of PA boundaries on the ground are strongly disputed by both the NPCS and FS since they insist that all boundaries are already in place. Furthermore, they report that FS Surveyors are defining digital boundaries by providing GPS coordinates for all boundary markers using the world geodetic system protocol WGS84.

Output 3.4: Information management system for recording, exchanging and disseminating information in place

62. No work has taken place under this output ahead of the recruitment of the team of technical consultants, except that data on areas covered by the IAS clearance operations are already being compiled.

KEY ISSUES

63. As can be seen from the foregoing part of the evaluation, this Project has had significant problems in the form of exceedingly slow delivery arising from poor implementation of procurement procedures, inadequate oversight, a poor grasp of the strategic dimension of the Project, and weak communication. This section attempts to chart some options for a route forwards.

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

To extend or not?

64. The main decision that UNDP-GEF has to take is whether to grant a no-cost extension to the Project or to close it at its currently planned closing date. There is, however, considerable confusion over exactly what this currently proposed closing date is – in the 2011 PIR the “*revised planned closing date*” is given as March 2016; in the 2012 PIR the “*revised planned closing date*” is given as December 2016; while in the 2013 PIR this is given as “*28-Feb-2015*” (see paragraph 66). The MTET is aware that GEF has changed its policy towards allowing extensions for projects and no longer looks favourably upon this practice, particularly in cases where poor management is the core problem, although it is not totally inflexible on this. It is also aware that the RTA in Addis Ababa is not minded to authorise such an extension on a business-as-usual scenario, as the 2013 PIR makes clear:

“... this RTA may be reluctant to authorise a no-cost extension beyond, say, 1.5 years counting from the revised closing date, if there are no indications that the management and implementation style will radically change. ... There are good reasons for continuing with the project for perhaps another two years, but if recommended by the MTR, the extension of the project's duration extension should not be an open-ended and unstructured continuation of business-as-usual.”

However, without such an extension being granted, the Project will close without it having achieved most of its aims, and the MTET believes that it is too important in terms of global biodiversity to be allowed to fail. The key question that requires answering, therefore, is “*if changes are made to the Project and it continues, will it be able to deliver at least a Marginally Satisfactory rating by the end of its extension*”? The MTET believes that it will be able to achieve this if it delivers on the recommendations below. The Lead Evaluator has seen a number of projects with far more significant problems than this one at the mid-term which have gone on to successful conclusions after significant remedial actions have been taken. For example, in October 2011 he undertook the final evaluation of the *Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia’s Altai Sayan Eco-region* Project (PIMS 1929) which the MTE had assessed as being Unsatisfactory. He was able to evaluate its final overall performance as Satisfactory, and write that:

“The adaptive management displayed by the Project has been outstanding, and the Project stands as a truly excellent example of the value of a perceptive MTE. It is very clear to all that without the recommendations made by the MTE, and their full implementation by the UNDP-CO and the Project, the Project would have failed. That it has not, and that it has gone on to produce very successful achievements, is nothing short of remarkable and a testament to the hard work and skill that the Project staff have displayed.”

This is also true in reverse – the Lead Evaluator carrying out the mid-term evaluation of the *Demonstrating New Approaches to Protected Areas and Biodiversity Management in the Gissar Mountains as a Model for Strengthening the National Tajikistan Protected Areas System* Project (PIMS 1786) in June 2008 which he evaluated as Marginally Unsatisfactory, and that required much more radical measures than will be proposed below, and of which the Final Evaluator noted:

“Implementation approach is rated as Satisfactory, with respect to Project implementation, on the basis that the strategic decisions and decisive actions taken in response to the MTE secured a reprieve for a Project that had meandered off-course and was unlikely to meet many of its targets. The previous Marginally Unsatisfactory MTE rating, based on strategically poor and technically unsound implementation, has been overcome by the huge improvement in relevant technical competence of the CTA and PMU, strategic focus on the Project objective, and delivery of most outputs. ... This highlights the timeliness and value of the MTE and subsequent interventions, which ‘saved’ a project that was clearly heading for disaster.”

65. Although the option of keeping the Project open involves a degree of risk, there are significant signs that many of the problems are either in the past or can be addressed. The Deputy Permanent Secretary within the MAIFS has provided the MTET with her assurance that she will personally monitor all the Project’s procurement needs made through the Ministry thereby removing a major problem that has dogged a good part of the Project to date (see paragraph 71). She has also agreed to improve the Project’s oversight (see paragraph 69). The UNDP-CO has committed to prioritise any remaining procurement to be made through it. Recruitment of a Communications Consultant is complete, while that of a new CTA and a full complement of technical consultants is nearly complete enabling work to begin on Outcomes 1 and 2 early in 2014; while significant progress has already started to be achieved on IAS clearance under Outcome 3 (see paragraph 58). The Memorandum of Agreement between the Project and the private sector was recently approved and signed by the Government. While none of these guarantees problem-free delivery, the MTET believes that the Project should be given the chance and the means to continue, albeit with some strict provisos. As such, much of the rest of this report sets out a strategy and a series of milestones for an extension to be granted – a sort of probationary period during which change can be demonstrated to have truly occurred and on the basis of which an extension should be granted. Key requirements include the following, with cross-references to paragraphs where more details and recommendations can be found:

- No further delays in procurement by the MAIFS (assurance made²⁷ – see paragraph 71 and Annex VI);
- Provide proper project oversight through a functioning NSC meeting twice a year (see paragraph 68);
- Establish a new Executive Committee to ensure progress is maintained and to deal with any problems causing delays as they occur (see paragraph 69); and
- Ensure that all current recruitment of Project staff and consultants is completed expeditiously.

The MTET believes that these issues need to be resolved within a reasonably tight time frame to prove intent and capability of the Project and its stakeholders to deliver, followed by a period during which improved delivery has been assured so that a decision to extend the Project can be taken with confidence. Allowing for the time necessary to consider this report and for the annual holiday period in December-January, the MTET believes that **all of these requirements should be in place by end-January 2014**. Since the MTET deems each task to be critical to enabling the Project to succeed, **failure to achieve any one should be considered to be evidence of a continuation of business-as-usual and result in no extension being granted**.

No-cost extension

66. The MTET has indicated that the Project is generally well-designed, and although a little ambitious in nature, the five-year timeframe was certainly plausible to allow it to achieve its aims. Unfortunately, issues largely beyond its control (and which have plagued many other projects within the UNDP project portfolio) have led to a crippling low delivery rate, with at least two years lost to poor administration of the procurement of key staff. That the Project requires an extension to succeed is beyond doubt, and that this extension should be tied to structural reforms in its implementation is also quite clear. The issues that remain are how long should the extension be for, and when should the decision be made? The MTET notes that the Project already appears to have been given a one year extension in the 2011 PIR from the original date of planned closure in March 2015 (five years after the signing of the ProDoc in March 2010) to March 2016; and that this has been further extended in the 2012 PIR to December 2016 (while the date of 28th February 2015 given in the 2013 PIR is clearly an error). This extension would appear to have been granted because of the 12-month delay in hiring the Project Manager and a 15-month delay in making the first disbursements. Notwithstanding this, the MTET believes that a minimum extension of an additional two years should be granted making the proposed revised closing date December 2018, subject to requirements detailed herein. This should allow sufficient time to make up for the subsequent delays experienced and for any political process necessary to legalise the designations of the areas identified by the Project for expanding the PAN – a process whose timing is beyond the direct control of the Project to influence. The MTET recommend that the following timescale for decisions be adopted:

- By end-January 2014 – all new staff (CTA and Project Assistant) and technical consultancy team be in contract, in-country, and working.
- By end-January 2014 – first meeting of the NSC be complete and have adopted the recommendations within this report, as well as the Action Plan and Procurement Plan for 2014.
- By end-January 2014 – new Executive Committee have been formed and meeting monthly.
- By end-Sept 2014 – decision on a two-year extension be taken by the RTA at second NSC meeting to discuss 2014 PIR (new end-date for Project being end-December 2018).

The MTET draws the attention of GEF to the following points in favour of granting such an extension:

²⁷ **RTA comment:** “What if the Project engages a procurement specialist if there are no improvements on this element?”

- a) the Project has spent only 11% of its budget to date (see Table 4), so a no-cost extension of two years is certainly feasible financially;
- b) the Ministry has recommitted itself to the Project's success through the Deputy Permanent Secretary responsible – see paragraphs 68, 71, and 82 and Annex VI; and
- c) the UNDP CO has, in this one exception, taken on the recruitment of the new CTA and Project Assistant without cost recovery.

The MTET recommend that, in order to provide sufficient time for the restructured Project to achieve its core aims, it be granted a no-cost extension of two years, conditional on performance to July 2014.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP-CO	Revise budget and workplan to provide sufficient overview to show how extension to Project would allow it to meet its targets and do so using the remaining finances	For NSC meeting in July 2014	Outline model of finances
UNDP-GEF RTA	UNDP-GEF RTA to decide on formal extension to Project – 24 months to December 2018.	Sept 2014	Minutes of NSC meeting and/or letter of approval for extension / PIR 2014.

Strategic deficit – the need for a new CTA

67. As discussed in paragraph 21, the MTET is concerned that the current lack of technical briefing provided to the Project team has resulted in insufficient understanding of the Project's strategic rationale to bring it to a wholly successful conclusion. While the Project is about to recruit a team of technical consultants who will provide increased technical input to the Project and are likely to operate under a "Team Leader", their terms of reference focus on specific technical aspects of Outcomes 1 and 2. What is required is someone who can provide a holistic overview of the Project's strategy and who can cover all aspects from reviewing the consultants' technical reports and recommendations, through making meaningful contributions to the communication and marketing strategy, to assisting with the technicalities of completing the GEF tracking tools, and much, much more e.g. advising on the strategy and needs of an institutional skills development and training programme. The MTET is aware that there is a degree of reticence within the PMU and Ministry as to why such a person would be necessary; they argue that the main requirements for having a CTA are in the past e.g. developing terms of reference for technical consultants, and that they have managed to deal with even this without one (i.e. the CTA's contract was not renewed). Initially, the MTET concurred with that argument quite strongly, and is keenly aware that the need for having a new CTA should not be seen to be donor-driven. It is unclear as to how much the PMU's and Ministry's outlook have been coloured by their unfortunate experience with the first CTA, but the MTET knows that having a really good CTA can bring immense benefits not only to the Project but to the institutions concerned through informal capacity building, mentoring, and exposure to new ideas and information. Furthermore, given the fact that even with a two-year extension, this Project will be operating effectively within a three-year timescale rather than the five-year one originally proposed, any strengthening of the PMU should be regarded as being beneficial. However, given that the PMU will now comprise the NPM, the new CTA, and a high chance that the firm recruited to supply the technically consultancy team will have nominated a "Team Leader", the reporting relationships between these three, and to the NPD, will have to be firmly established and formally stated in contracts to avoid any misconceptions and friction between the parties. Exactly how these reporting lines should be organised will ultimately be down to the NPD, and the MTET will state only that the CTA should be tasked with taking primacy for the overall implementation strategy of the Project.

The MTET recommend that a new CTA be recruited to provide increased strategic direction to the Project over the remainder of its lifetime.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-CO	Complete recruitment of a CTA for the remainder of the Project (contract to be a mixture of full- and part-time as the budget allows)	CTA to be in post and working by end-Jan 2014	Signed contract and CTA in-country

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Project Oversight

68. Despite the Project Document stating that:

“A National Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be convened by the MoA, and will serve as the project’s coordination and decision-making body. ... It will meet according to the necessity, but not less than once in 4 months, to review project progress, approve project work plans and approve major project deliverables. The PSC is responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document.” [MTET emphasis]

it has met just twice in the 44 months since the Project commenced, and by failing so to meet it has relinquished its mandate to be ultimately responsible for the delivery of the Project. While it may not have been able to overcome some of the issues that have plagued the Project, this level of oversight has clearly been inadequate. To be fair, the new Chair clearly recognised this and at the start of the second meeting on 6th February 2013, the minutes record her asking:

“... when the first NSC meeting was held, and the reason for the apparent delay in holding the second NSC meeting. ... [The Chair] recommended that the NSC meeting should preferably be held at least twice per year to ensure that the project is progressing towards its objectives”,

As a result, the minutes also state that:

“The committee then agreed that the next NSC should preferably meet in four to six months’ time.”

but unfortunately the end of the meeting failed to set a date noting only that:

“The next NSC meeting is scheduled in four to six months’ time”

and as a result it has failed yet again to have met since. Part of this problem undoubtedly lies with the Project’s lack of delivery, with one NSC member interviewed indicating that *“there was nothing for him to be involved in”* when attending – something of a Catch-22 situation. This needs to be addressed by having the NSC meet regularly and take responsibility for the Project’s progress and strategic direction. While the NSC is mandated to meet *“not less than once in 4 months”*, the MTET believes that realistically it will not meet more than twice a year whatever it recommends since a number of ministry personnel interviewed reported their ministries had staffing problems or capacity issues meaning their attendance would be irregular. Nonetheless, the MTET believes that if it meets regularly twice a year – once in January to approve the Annual Workplan and Procurement Plan, and once in July to approve the PIR – and focuses upon resolving outstanding problems, then it will fulfil most of its functions. One of the keys to doing this will be to firmly schedule the next meeting at the end of the current one.

The MTET recommend that the National Steering Committee meets at least twice a year, once in January and once in July to fulfil its key functions of approving the Annual Work Plan and the PIR.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
MAIFS	Request and implement at least two NSC meetings per year.	From January 2014	Minutes of NSC meetings
Chair NSC	Ensure date of next meeting is scheduled at the end of the current one	Each meeting	Date of next meeting in minutes

Executive Committee

69. Given that most of the delays affecting the Project have come from the outside, even the most upbeat assessment for change would have to recognise that there is every likelihood that such problems will continue to occur to some extent, that new ones may arise, and that personnel within the Ministry and NPCS could change before the Project ends. It is therefore important that a mechanism is put in place that can deal with these issues efficiently. The MTET recommend that a Project Executive Committee be formed to provide impetus to problem-solving and to provide greater accountability of all involved for delivery of the Project. The composition of the Executive Committee would be based upon the *PAN PMU/UNDP/NPCS sub-committee* that met irregularly during the early part of the Project but crucially with the addition of the Deputy Permanent Secretary from the MAIFS (NSC Chair). The proposed composition would be:

- National Project Director PAN and Director of the NPCS (chair)
- Deputy Permanent Secretary from the MAIFS
- National Project Manager PAN
- Chief Technical Advisor PAN
- Programme Officer UNDP-CO
- Conservator of Forests FS
- Other members co-opted as necessary

Meetings should be scheduled to be monthly, organised by the NPD, but could be missed if there are no issues to be discussed. Since attendance of the DPS is seen as being key, but the MTET is acutely aware of the pressure on her time, meetings should be arranged to facilitate her involvement – meetings held in the Ministry in Port Louis or by teleconference, Skype or similar. It is intended that meetings would be as short as possible and should be focussed purely upon solving any outstanding problems besetting the Project or avoiding any that may be foreseen. Reporting of progress and activities can remain with the NSC.

The MTET recommend that an Executive Committee is established which meets monthly to provide a mechanism to resolve rapidly problems that are beyond the scope of the PMU to influence.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
NPD	Establish and call meetings of Executive Committee.	With immediate effect	Minutes of meetings

Private sector representation

70. As indicated in paragraph 21, communication with the private sector appears not to be as effective as it should be and the MTET recommend an improved mechanism be tried. The ten private-sector stakeholders²⁸ who will be recipients of the Project funds are members of the *IAS Technical Working Group* (which has met just once to date on 21st September 2012). The MTET recommend that this Group elects a chair from the private sector (i.e. not a Project person or MWF) and that this Chair becomes the key liaison link between the private-sector stakeholders and the PMU; and this Chair is given a seat on the NSC in place of the Secretary of the Mauritius Meat Producers Association who is currently representing their interests. The MTET stresses that its recommendations are not in any way passing any judgement on the performance of the Secretary, indeed the minutes from the two NSC meetings show a high level of engagement from her, but the communication function will become increasingly onerous as the Project progresses, especially so with regard to reserve establishment, and it deems that liaising through a stakeholder with a direct involvement would be better than through a representative who has no vested interest in the Project. Those private-sector stakeholders interviewed concurred with this assessment, although a dissenting voice was noted from another party. Therefore, the MTET offers an alternative arrangement to the same principal which is that, if the private-sector stakeholders so wish, the Secretary of the Mauritius Meat Producers

²⁸ Actually nine plus the MWF (an NGO).

Association is made Chair of the IAS Technical Working Group and thereby undertakes all the liaison duties envisaged as well as keeping her seat on the NSC.

The MTET recommend that a Chair be elected of the <i>IAS Technical Working Group</i> and this be made the main liaison role between private-sector interests and the Project including being given a seat on the National Steering Committee.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Elect a chair to the IAS Technical Working Group	With immediate effect	Minutes of meetings
NSC	Provide seat on NSC to Chair of IAS Technical Working Group	January 2014	Minutes of meetings

Prioritise procurement

71. The main delays to this Project have come from the procurement processes run by both the UNDP-CO and the MAIFS and as foregoing discussion has shown, this is largely down to the poor implementation of the processes rather than the processes themselves. These delays need to cease if the Project is to have any chance of success. The UNDP-CO is currently involved in recruiting a new CTA and a replacement Project Assistant, and these should be the last time it is involved in procurement for this Project. The deadline set in paragraph 66 for having these two positions filled and operational is end-January 2014 and this should provide sufficient incentive for the procurements to be expedited efficiently. For the MAIFS, it will continue to be involved in recruitment and procurement of resources and hence it needs to prioritise those actions necessary to avoid any further delays. At a meeting facilitated by the MTET, and chaired by the Deputy Permanent Secretary (also Chair of the NSC), the following decision was taken:

“Mrs Jhowry, as Chairperson of the National Steering Committee and Schedule Officer for the biodiversity conservation sector, undertook to personally monitor all procurement matters in respect of the PAN project with all the units and officers concerned. She will ensure that appropriate measures are taken to expedite all remaining and future procurements for the project.” – see 5.0 Decisions Taken in minutes of meeting appended as Annex VI.

The GEF should recognise that this is a considerable commitment from the DPS and demonstrates significant support for the Project from the Ministry. As first proof of the practical effects of this commitment, the Ministry has agreed to work to the same timetable as the UNDP-CO above, this time for ensuring that the technical consultancy team that it is responsible for recruiting is in contract and in-country by end-January 2014²⁹. Retrospective recommendations to these ends by the MTET would seem unnecessary.

72. One issue that those working in the various procurement departments raised during meetings and interviews was that if the Project produced Procurement Plans it would help them to be able to manage their work (with regard to the Project) much more effectively rather than always having to deal with a reactive situation. The MTET was surprised to learn that the PMU does not produce such Procurement Plans – the Lead Evaluator had always understood them to be an integral part of producing the Annual Work Plan. Therefore, the MTET recommend that the PMU adopts this procedure hereon.

²⁹ The MTET, MAIFS and UNDP discussed what would happen if neither of the firms who have responded to the bid can undertake to have their consultancy teams in-country and working by the end of January 2014 despite the best efforts of the MAIFS. The MTET maintain that in the event that this should arise, a short delay may make little difference but a long delay may require other measures (e.g. recruitment direct from UNDP’s rosters of technical consultants). Since not every eventuality can be foreseen at this point, the final decision on any delay with regard to the associated request for an extension would lie with the UNDP-GEF RTA.

The MTET recommend that the PMU produces a Procurement Plan as an integral part of its Annual Work Plan.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Produce Procurement Plan as part of Annual Work Plan	With immediate effect	Procurement Plan

Improve communications

73. A theme common to many of the interviews conducted by the MTET was that communication between the Project and its various stakeholders was poor. Contact between the PMU and the UNDP-CO seems abnormally low; the UNDP-GEF noted pointedly that she “*rarely received reports from the Project*”; private-sector stakeholders indicated that they did not know about the content of meetings; links between the PMU and the MAIFS regarding problem-solving have been weak and ineffective. Externally, the Project is invisible with no website, no presence on social media, and very little published through the main media. It has not even developed a logo. Many of these problems will be resolved by the measures already recommended – a new CTA, an Executive Committee, improved liaison with the private-sector – and the recent recruitment of the Communications and Marketing Consultant will provide an overall strategy for communicating externally. However, the MTET is concerned that the inadequate technical guidance provided to the PMU, as discussed in paragraph 21, has repercussions here too. In a meeting with the consultants, the brief they had received was articulated as having two main components best paraphrased as:

- 1) To raise awareness of the unique things in Mauritius to provide an end result of increasing the number of people coming and visiting the protected areas (primarily Black River Gorges National Park); and
- 2) To showcase what work the Project is doing in the forest.

Given that the consultants are intending to deliver their strategy and materials in a very short space of time (end of December 2013 was stated), this consultancy needs to be properly oriented. First, the MTET recommend slowing the timescale for this work so that it can coincide with the start of work by the new CTA. The Project will lose nothing through the delay and gain much from coordination with the CTA and a better understanding of the strategy outlined here. Second, the main messages to be communicated need to reflect the overall strategy of the Project itself, not something peripheral. Those messages should be:

- 1) Mauritius has biodiversity that is unique and occurs nowhere else in the world (endemic) and which is famous in and valued by, the international community.
- 2) Many of these species are highly threatened and on the edge of extinction. This cannot be allowed to happen – there can be no more dodos.
- 3) Mauritius has a good network of protected areas but it does not provide protection to all of these species.
- 4) The protected area network needs to be expanded to make sure that as much as possible is protected – that is the aim of this Project.³⁰

³⁰ **PMU comment:** *The MTET consultant met the marketing and communication consultants, just after the first working meeting on marketing and communications with the PMU. The articulation of the marketing and communications strategy was therefore at an embryonic stage, with preliminary inputs and understanding by the marketing and communications consultants and to say that there is lack of technical guidance by the PMU is not true. The terms of reference of the marketing and communication consultants clearly shows the level of technical inputs provided by the PMU, the main deliverables are as follows:*

1. *Developing a simple strategic message to underpin a communications and awareness programme. This strategic message should seek to: (i) foster a pride in the native biodiversity of Mauritius; (ii) encourage the qualities and attributes of joint responsibility for custodianship of this biodiversity; and (iii) promote the role of protected areas in the conservation of this biodiversity.*
2. *Designing and developing appropriate communications resources and media as follows: newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, website, blogs, booklets, interpretation boards, press releases, local radio inserts, short films, exhibitions, posters etc. to present and articulate this strategic message.*

Therefore, the communications strategy needs to be aimed at influencing public opinion to support the Project's aims of expanding the existing PAN and identifying political "champions" who will support this cause, e.g. the Minister of Agriculture who is also the Attorney-General, or even the Prime Minister who championed the creation of the Bras D'Eau National Park. While there may be some subsidiary messages, e.g. the threat from IAS and the work the Project is doing to combat these, the main message remains the need for the expansion of the PAN. Creation of the Project's identity through its logo, website, and branding needs to reflect these aims as well. Influencing public opinion in this way is a very different task and will involve very different techniques than those that the consultants would employ if they are dealing with the two messages that are contained in their current brief, hence a review of their terms of reference may be required.

The MTET recommend that the brief of the Communications and Marketing Consultants be reviewed with respect to both content and timing in order to better align its messages with the requirements of the Project and provide better coordination with the new CTA.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Delay work of the communication consultants until recruitment of new CTA is complete	Commence work when CTA is recruited by end Jan 2014	Coordinated contracts
PMU/CTA	Review brief in relation to messages and identity required to promote successful expansion of PAN	January 2014	Revised brief

Sustainability

74. In view of the extremely limited progress that has been achieved so far on this Project, a discussion on the sustainability of its outcomes is somewhat academic. Nonetheless, some indications are apparent. The institutional sustainability would appear strong, with clear statements of support about the importance of the Project's aims voiced by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the MAIFS. Importantly, such statements are being backed by action (see paragraphs 69 and 71). Furthermore, clearly any establishment of new protected areas is a binary process – it either will happen or it will not. If it does, the establishment of the designation will be sustainable, i.e. it is not suddenly going to be reversed, but the degree to which it will function is dependent upon the financial mechanisms and institutional structures that will support it. The clearance of IAS by the Project is actually just a (large) step in a much longer process that commenced before the Project and is which is intended to continue beyond. Clearance rates pre-project were in the order of 10-15 ha/year and the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2006* targets the removal of 1,000 ha of IAS by 2016. Similarly, the *National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan* for 2009-18 states repeats the same target. The Government's recognition of the importance of clearance of IAS from more than just State-owned land is evidenced from its willingness to sign agreements with the private sector, but the sustainability of this approach will in part lie with the benefits (primarily economic) that private stakeholders experience as a result of the Project. Increased awareness of non-economic gains such as

3. *Initiating outreach programmes (talks, presentations, exhibits, clean-up programs, guided day walks etc.) in local communities and primary and secondary schools to market the strategic message.*

4. *Initiating experiential learning programme in protected areas to demonstrate the value of the strategic message.*

5. *Establishing a 'road show' for presentation to key public decision-makers to demonstrate the contribution that an increased investment in the PAN could make to improving socio-economic development in Mauritius.*

6. *Identifying and developing opportunities for public-private-civil society partnerships in realising the objectives of the strategic message.*

Moreover, the marketing consultants have proposed a series of sub-deliverables in terms of biodiversity branding exercise and branding guide line and public relations for the road show. **MTET response:** The MTET is grateful to the PMU for providing this information. It was requested from the marketing consultants but no response was received in time for the report. However, a) the report does not say there that "there is lack of technical guidance by the PMU" but says "inadequate technical guidance provided to the PMU" has meant that the central thrust of the PR strategy as articulated by the marketing consultants did not reflect accurately the Project's needs; and b) while the development of the deliverables as stated in the PMU's comment is comprehensive, the core messages required are not spelled out and it is this issue that the report is addressing, as subsequent meetings with the PMU acknowledged.

green stewardship and/or company profiling may also be important – things the Project should target. Taken as a whole, and given the framework in which the Project’s activities are taking place, the institutional sustainability of the Project is considered **Likely**.

75. The outlook for the long-term financial sustainability of the Project is also generally positive. There appear to have been modest increases in the Financial Scorecard indicator; the most recent national budget has made a large increase in the overall funding to the PAN; and new sources of funds have been made available for management activities within the PAN, notably through the Mauritius Ile Durable Fund, and approval by the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of IAS clearance as a legitimate activity to be funded by private companies under the requirements of the Corporate Social Responsibility Law 2009. Moves to enable individual protected areas to manage their own finances and to charge and keep tourist fees have been instigated. Two areas of concern, however, are that the Conservation Fund, derived from fees charged on the collection of introduced monkeys for export for bio-medical research, is declining as those companies involved develop their own closed breeding populations, while the demands upon it continue to increase; and interviews with some companies indicated that they were re-trenching on IAS clearance work because of global economic problems, even though that may mean the efforts of previous years would be wasted. However, forthcoming work by the consultant specialising in protected areas financing should derive a whole new raft of measures and improvements. At the present time, some moderate risks are apparent with this indicator, and hence the financial sustainability is adjudged to be **Moderately Likely**.

76. The socio-economic sustainability is harder to assess. The Project has little interaction with specific social groups, e.g. no towns or villages are closely associated with any of the protected areas; and since the Project has yet to start work on its gap analysis to identify new protected areas, similarly associated human communities (if any) have not yet been identified. At present, the Project has done little work on wider awareness-raising, but the population of the island appears to value their natural heritage to some degree, e.g. the Black River Gorges National Park is heavily used by Mauritians. For the initiative with the private sector, economics is likely to be the key factor in securing the sustainability of any gains made through the establishment of new formal/informal agreements pertaining to protection of private land and/or continuing with IAS clearance activities. These economic gains are largely tied to benefits perceived to be accruing from eco-tourism, although at least in one case, conservation and education activities *per se* are the key driver. Such economic gains are not guaranteed and the MTET believes that moderate risks are attached to these ventures, although some models are fairly sophisticated – operators responding to the different interests of tourists coming from different countries (e.g. Chinese people do not like sunbathing but want to visit cultural sites). The other main model is that of attracting the sun-and-sand tourists inland from the beaches for day trips to the forest, but ideas for adding a couple of nights’ stay to week-long standard packages may fall foul of the fact that most holiday-makers take vacations based around week- or fortnight-long breaks from work – not 9-10 days. Furthermore, current airline schedules do not accommodate such time-spans (e.g. Air Mauritius does not fly daily to/from London). If the private landowners are seeking to develop week/fortnight-long beach and inland nature packages they will have to work closely with a number of other operators to combine logistics and to provide necessary marketing. There may be a nationally-based market for local people to take breaks in the hills surrounded by forest, although even here the competition with the coast will be intense. The Ministry of Tourism reinforces this view by noting that although ecotourism is the fastest-growing sector of the market globally, many ecotourism projects in Mauritius are failing because of low demand. Thus, the socio-economic sustainability is considered to be **Moderately Likely**.

77. The environmental sustainability is closely tied up with the threat posed by invasive alien species and the resources that will remain mobilised to combat this threat. Their removal followed by careful restoration of the native forest will continue to depend upon maintenance activities, hence the Project’s interventions to minimise these costs will prove decisive. Once forest can be achieved with a closed canopy (10+ years) the threat from the IAS plants declines sharply since the lower light levels mean that they cannot regenerate. Maintenance activities beyond this time frame are likely to be very low or may cease. Some forests, however, are dwarf forest where even at climax the canopy never

becomes closed, and here maintenance will have to continue forever (it being extremely unlikely that certain species will ever be eradicated completely from the island). In any case where the maintenance programmes are allowed to slip, re-infestation is a certainty. At present, few activities are being aimed at IAS fauna – resources only stretch to tackle the flora which pose a greater risk and hence are given a higher priority. The environmental sustainability is viewed as being **Moderately Likely**.

Since UNDP-GEF deems each risk dimension of sustainability critical, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest rating, and as such the overall sustainability of the Project is ranked as **Moderately Likely**.

78. The MTET believes that the Project should develop a Sustainability Plan to guide its exit strategy in due course. In Mongolia, the project *Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region* (ATLAS ID 39250 PIMS 1929) produced a Sustainability Plan over its last year to ensure that its exit strategy maximised the chances for the Project's actions to continue. It was structured similarly to a logframe with a column "*Result*" equating to the Outcomes; "*Product*" equating to the Outputs; then a column "*The competency built by the result of the project achievements*" listing defined results, e.g. Eco-club (equating to a sub-output); and finally three columns defining the "*Organizations taking over responsibility*", "*Tasks of stakeholders that will be in charge*", and "*Issues to be focussed on during the project implementation*". This latter column needs to cover the who, what, and where of any activity to be completed by the Project to ensure that capacity and financing of those organisations is in place by the end of the Project, and will be particularly important for the long-term viability of IAS clearance. Although much of this detail may be found in the annual and quarterly work plans, the Sustainability Plan should be a stand-alone document that effectively guides the exit activities to a successful conclusion. The Plan should be updated at least every month to ensure that the activities required are actually completed in time, and that none is overlooked.

The MTET recommend that the PMU develops and updates a Sustainability Plan to cover at least the last year of its operations to guide an exit strategy that maximises the sustainability of its achievements.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Develop a Sustainability Plan as part of the final Annual Work Plan	By January 2016 (assuming project is extended)	Sustainability Plan
PMU	Update Sustainability Plan	Monthly (2016-2017)	Actions maximising sustainability

Catalytic Role and Replication

79. The Project has been so dogged by delays that to date the PMU has had to spend most of its time just trying to get the initial activities underway, let alone be thinking about replicability. Outcomes 1 and 2 also do not readily lend themselves to the concept of replicability, at least on State-owned land, since they will result in an expanded PAN – a binary process; the new protected areas will either be designated or they will not – and the need, or at least the opportunity, for the process to be repeated in some way is unlikely to be available. But there will be opportunities for many of the experiences with privately-owned land to be replicated or even scaled-up to become nationally-recognised procedures, e.g. any designation of Special Reserves together with arrangements and incentives for conservation stewardship and/or co-management. Any innovative means for say operational, logistical, or financial planning or funding that may be tested in individual protected areas may lend themselves to replication for other suitable areas within the PAN.

80. The main thrust for the Project's catalytic role is definitely on the IAS control and ecological restoration. Here, much work has been undertaken and information exchanged between private and public sector operations to reduce the costs associated with clearance and maintenance control of IAS. A working protocol has been developed which is being demonstrated widely on State land and is about to be replicated on private land using Project money provided through the Agreement developed under Output 3.2 (see paragraph 59). There is some indication that this will act as the catalyst for work to be

scaled-up to cover the whole of the Black River Gorges National Park (and perhaps other protected areas) as well as within those privately-owned forests associated with the Project. While the former is dependent upon sufficient funding (and therefore more of an issue of sustainability than of replication), the latter could be encouraged on a national scale through the development of suitable incentives, e.g. building on the recent decision by the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee to allow HSBC to use their CSR funds (provided under the CSR Law 2009) for IAS clearance; by providing landowners with free technical advice; and/or by providing landowners with plants for ecological restoration³¹. Unfortunately, as with so much of this Project, the wider strategic vision has received little formal attention. The germs of some ideas appear to be present but significant attention will need to be paid, and discussion undertaken, as to how the gains made during the project can best be built upon if anything more than tiny islands of IAS-free land are to result.

The Project has been so dogged by delays that to date the PMU has had to spend most of its time just trying to get the initial activities underway, let alone be thinking about replicability. The main thrust for the Project's catalytic role is definitely on the IAS control and ecological restoration work, but much thought and effort will be required to scale this up to satisfactory levels if anything more than tiny islands of IAS-free land are to result, hence the catalytic role of the Project has been evaluated as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

THE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

Country Ownership

81. Political buy-in to the Project by the Government is mixed. The GEF Focal Point based in the Ministry of Finance appears strangely dis-interested in both the Project and more generally, the UNDP-CO reports, at the portfolio level. The MTET notes that the GEF portfolio is underperforming within Mauritius with the country securing grants at the absolute minimum level when significantly more money is available to it. It was also notable that the GEF Focal Point could not meet the MTET. Although the reason provided was that the Ministry was extremely busy with preparations for the annual national budget which was presented on 8th November, the MTET notes that it has shown little engagement throughout. For example, had it been providing proper leadership to the GEF portfolio it would have known that this Project was under-performing at a very early stage and could have brought pressure to bear on the MAIFS to rectify the poor delivery through the programme-based budgeting that the Government now runs.

82. Country ownership often comes down to the political will of individuals involved, irrespective of the policy framework in which the Project is working and, with the MAIFS, this appears to be the case here. The current Deputy Permanent Secretary took up her role as Principal Assistant Secretary and Chair of the NSC in January 2012 and although appears to have taken some time to begin work with the Project, immediately raised its profile within the Ministry, even if activities have remained slow. During interviews with the MTET she repeatedly indicated the importance which the MAIFS attached to the successful outcome of the Project and indicated that it played a central role in the country's conservation strategy. The DPS appears to be prepared to back her words with actions to improve the procurement processes, partake in an Executive Committee, and establish the NSC as a body which can improve oversight of the Project. The Minister of Agro-industry and Food Security who is also the Attorney-General, has presented Cabinet Paper spelling out the Government's commitment to expanding the PAN.

Country ownership has been mixed, with low level of engagement displayed by the GEF Focal Point in the Ministry of Finance, but with high levels of commitment displayed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security, hence country ownership of the Project has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.

³¹ Some companies have developed their own nurseries for rearing native species, but this is seen as expensive by many others. Species-swapping programmes for those with nurseries, or plant donations from State-run schemes such as the National Plant Propagation Centre could act as significant incentives to catalyse replication on a wider scale.

Technical Management

Logframe

83. While the MTET has highlighted that certain weaknesses exist within the logframe, major changes are not sought. However, the removal of seemingly redundant indicators and changes to another could result in improvements. The MTET recommend the following changes:

- Indicator # 5 “*METT scores for different categories of formal protected areas on mainland Mauritius and the islets*”: This contains the category “Forest Reserves” but these do not appear to have been included in the calculations of the PAN in the Project Document, and no baseline METT scores were calculated for them. No assessment has been made subsequently. The MTET believes that this category plays no useful role in regard to indicating success of the Project and since no attention has been given to it at any time, it is best removed from the logframe.
- Indicator #9 “*Reach (estimated number of people) of the communications and awareness programme*”: the number of people reached does not take account of the effectiveness of the messages provided by the Project. Attempts should be made to determine baseline and post-message measurements of issues, e.g. through before-and-after questionnaires on training courses (and perhaps of message retention by questionnaires 3-6 months later); or through retrospective questionnaires on web-sites e.g. “*Before you read this article how would you score your knowledge about X; after reading the article how would you now score your knowledge about X?*”.
- Indicator #11 “*Income from other sources (i.e. non-state budget allocation), as a percentage of the total operational budget of the PAN*”: Because of the vulnerability of this percentage-based indicator to radical changes to the Government’s budget for the PAN, it is recommended that the percentage-based increases are converted to absolute figures using the current indicator’s percentages as a guidance for the conversion; i.e. maintain a similar ratio in absolute terms between the 33% baseline figure and the 54% target of the original indicator.
- Indicator # 17 “*Average cost (US\$/ha) of IAS control and ecosystem restoration*”: The costs of initial clearing and first follow-up have a baseline of US\$ 9,000/ha and a target of US\$ 2,000. Although this target was revised upward from US\$1,500/ha in the original logframe during the Inception Workshop, the MTET agrees with the PMU that this target should be revised upward again. The current costs are calculated at US\$ 3,000/ha which is a significant achievement, but increasing costs of labour, fuel, and herbicides mean that no further costs savings will be likely. Experiments have shown that the current methodology described in paragraph 58 is the most effective, hence there is no room to make savings by diluting the herbicide. Introducing mechanical cutters has been shown not to be cost-effective because of increased fuel costs. Hence, the only way to make further savings is to increase the productivity of the workers (something that is unlikely to be achievable given both the hard physical nature of the work and the care and attention needed in identifying the correct plants to cut and in applying the herbicide) or reducing their wages (something that would seem to run contrary to UNDP principles). Therefore the MTET recommend that the target for this indicator is revised up to US\$3,000/ha and for similar reasons, the target for maintenance is raised to US\$ 700/ha since the Project believes that improvements can still be made to techniques for this activity to reduce the currently reported rate of US\$ 850/ha.
- Indicator # 18 “*% of PAs with no, or poorly, demarcated boundaries*”: The basis for this indicator remains highly contentious (see paragraph 9) with the NPCS and FS continuing to maintain that the boundaries of all PAs in Mauritius are demarcated physically on the ground through marker stones and/or fences. The issue should be clarified, but if the boundaries are all demarcated on the ground, the continued inclusion in the logframe is considered superfluous by the MTET.

The MTET recommend that minor alterations are made to the logframe.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP-GEF RTA	Agree changes to clarify indicators	By 1 Jan 2014	Written approval for revised logframe

Back-ups

84. The MTET finds that the Project has no written policy on computer back-up procedures. The NPM and IAS Coordinator operate individual laptop computers with a large external hard-drive in the main Project office in Curepipe and individual smaller external hard-drives that they each carry with them. Files are backed up to the main drive about every three months and to the smaller drives perhaps monthly. Both officers indicated that they send key files to each other as e-mails which then automatically become stored on remote internet servers and also use a cloud provider (Dropbox) to store files “centrally”. Some level of regular back-up was being undertaken by the Project Assistant, but this has lapsed pending a replacement. All Project computers have anti-virus software installed and operative. Clearly the rudiments of IT safety are in place, but this needs to be placed on a more formal basis, especially in light of the increased number of people about to start work on the Project and the increased amount of data that will result. In particular, written policies and protocols should be produced and adopted by all Project staff so that all files are backed up at least once per week. If cloud storage is to become the main means of saving and accessing files, then formal purchase of sufficient capacity should be made rather than remaining reliant on small amounts of free storage provided to individuals.

The MTET recommend that appropriate policy and protocols are developed and acted upon by the Project to place IT security on a more formal footing.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU	Purchase adequate space from an internet cloud provider to enable all project files and the website to be archived securely.	End Dec 2013	Server-host space
PMU	Develop IT policy and protocols	End Dec 2013	
PMU	Ensure all files are backed up weekly	From Jan 2014	Archived files
PMU	Develop and implement policy for regular and frequent back-up of files, or set up system for automatic back-up	Immediately	Policy or automatic system

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of critical recommendations need to be met by 31st January 2014 in order for a decision to be made about granting a two-year extension to the Project (see paragraph 66). Since the MTET deems each task to be critical to enabling the Project to succeed, **failure to achieve any one should result in the extension not being granted.** These are:

- no further delays in procurement by the MAIFS – assurance made; see paragraph 71 and Annex VI
- all new staff (CTA and Project Assistant) and technical consultancy team be in contract, in-country, and working – see paragraph 66.
- a new CTA be recruited to provide increased strategic direction to the Project over the remainder of its lifetime – see paragraph 67.
- the National Steering Committee meets at least twice a year, once in January and once in July to fulfil its key functions of approving the Annual Work Plan and the PIR – see paragraph 68.
- an Executive Committee is established which meets monthly to provide a mechanism to resolve rapidly problems that are beyond the scope of the PMU to influence – see paragraph 69.

Additional recommendations include:

- a Chair be elected of the *IAS Technical Working Group* and this be made the main liaison role between private-sector interests and the Project including being given a seat on the National Steering Committee – see paragraph 70.
- the Financial Scorecard and METT scores are recalculated by the new CTA or a member of the technical consultancy team, and that those versions are used as the mid-term scores – see paragraph 43.
- the brief of the Communications and Marketing Consultants be reviewed with respect to both content and timing in order to better align its messages with the requirements of the Project and provide better coordination with the new CTA – see paragraph 73.
- that minor alterations are made to the logframe – see paragraph 83.
- the PMU increases its efforts in tracking the expenditure of partner-managed co-funding resulting in better financial reporting – see paragraph 29.
- the NPCS should look to integrate the Project more fully into its own activities to develop greater strategic and financial synergies – see paragraph 21.
- the PMU produces a Procurement Plan as an integral part of its Annual Work Plan – see paragraph 72.
- that application of the Project's risk assessment be improved – see paragraph 36.
- the Project develops adequate quantitative means of measuring the impacts of all activities – see paragraph 38.
- appropriate policy and protocols are developed and acted upon by the Project to place IT security on a more formal footing – see paragraph 84.
- the PMU develops and updates a Sustainability Plan to cover at least the last year of its operations to guide an exit strategy that maximises the sustainability of its achievements – see paragraph 78.

ANNEX I : MID-TERM EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Mauritius, like most oceanic islands, has high levels of floral and faunal endemism and has suffered high extinction rates caused by a growing human population, habitat destruction and degradation. In order to safeguard the remaining biodiversity, the Government of Mauritius have established a terrestrial protected area network on the mainland, and associated offshore islets, comprising 20 formal state protected areas (8027ha). This is supplemented by a number of different types of less secure conservation areas (7,168ha), under varying levels of protection. Under current conditions, the terrestrial protected area network (PAN) is however not effectively safeguarding the country's unique terrestrial biodiversity because: (i) a number of natural ecosystem processes, habitats and species are not adequately represented in the existing PAN; (ii) the capacity of the institutions responsible for the planning and management of the protected areas is generally weak; and (iii) the technical knowledge to cost-effectively contain the threats to biodiversity within the PAN is under-developed.

This project seeks to strengthen the systemic, institutional and operational capacity to: (i) identify, prioritize and target gaps in representation that can be filled through protected area expansion, and complementary conservation, efforts on private and state-owned land; (ii) develop regulatory drivers and an incentives framework to support PA expansion, and complementary conservation, efforts on private and state-owned land; (iii) establish and administer a conservation stewardship program to implement PA expansion initiatives on privately owned or managed land; (iv) effectively plan, resource and manage an expanded PAN comprising both private and state protected areas; (v) cost-effectively mitigate the threats to, and pressures on, the unique biodiversity contained within the expanded PAN (notably the spread of invasive alien species); (vi) ensure better integration of the PAN into the country's socio-economic development priorities, in particular development of the tourism industry, to ensure its long-term financial sustainability; and (vi) respond effectively to the needs of, and meaningfully involve, different stakeholder groups in the ongoing planning and operational management of the expanded PAN.

Outcome 1: Systemic framework for PA expansion improved

Outputs:

- 1.1: Enabling national policy for a representative system of protected areas is formulated
- 1.2: Legislative and regulatory framework for the PAN is updated and reformed
- 1.3: Rationale for PA expansion in place, and conservation stewardship strategy and tools established to guide implementation
- 1.4: Business-oriented financial and business plan prepared for PAN
- 1.5: Awareness of the need to conserve native biodiversity is improved

Outcome 2: PA institutional framework strengthened

Outputs

- 2.1: Management and governance options for the PAN reviewed.
- 2.2: Strategic planning for PA institutions completed
- 2.3: Financial sustainability of PA institutions improved
- 2.4: Conservation stewardship unit established and pilot programme implemented
- 2.5: Skills and competencies of PA staff improved

Outcome 3: Operational know-how in place to contain threats

Outputs

- 3.1: Integrated management plan prepared for Black River Gorges National Park
- 3.2: Cost-effective IAS control measures, and ecosystem restoration techniques, developed and tested
- 3.3: Enforcement and compliance capability improved
- 3.4: Information management system for recording, exchanging and disseminating information in place

The global environmental benefits of the project are represented by: (i) adding 6,893 ha of terrestrial landscapes under formal protection; (ii) increasing management effectiveness at the PA level (from a METT baseline of <37% -65% to a METT target of all PAs scoring >55% and IUCN category II PAs >70%); (iii) improving the overall PA institutional capacity (from baseline of 56% in the Capacity Assessment Scorecard to >65%); and (iv) increasing the financial sustainability of the PAN (from a financial sustainability baseline score of 17% to >45%).

1. Introduction

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Procedures the mid-term evaluation is recommended for all the projects with a long term of implementation or those at critical stage of implementation. This Mid Term Evaluation is initiated by UNDP Mauritius as the Implementing Agency for this project and it aims to provide managers with strategy and policy options for more effectively and efficiently achieving the project's expected results and for replicating the results. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

2. Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The objective of the MTE is to gain an independent deep view of the progress attained. It is intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objective, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects) and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project implementation.

Such evaluation is expected to serve a tool to recognize or bridge the gaps in the primary assessment of relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency as gained from the monitoring exercise. The mid-term evaluation enables to assess the primary signs of the project success or failure and identify the necessary changes to be made.

The mid-term evaluation shall be performed by an independent expert unrelated to the project development or implementation.

The evaluation will play a critical role in the future implementation of the project by providing advice on:

- (i) how to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring function of the project;
- (ii) how to ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective;
- (iii) how to enhance organizational and development learning; and
- (iv) how to enable informed decision-making.

The evaluation will have to provide to the GEF Secretariat complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings. The consultant should prepare specific ratings of the project, as described in Annex 4. Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving the objective and outcomes in the established timeframe, taking into consideration the speed at which the project is proceeding.

2.1 Tasks:

- (i) To evaluate the overall project activities in relation to the objectives and expected outcomes as stated in the project document and the other related documents;
- (ii) To evaluate the project effectiveness and cost-efficiency;
- (iii) To critically analyze the arrangements of project management and implementation;
- (iv) To evaluate the progress attained so far in relation to the project outcomes;
- (v) To investigate the strategies and plans intended for the timely achievement of the overall project goal;
- (vi) To list and document the first lessons learned in respect of the project design, its implementation and management;
- (vii) To assess the sustainability of project interventions;
- (viii) To assess the relevance in relation to the national priorities;
- (ix) To rate all aspects of the project as per Annex 4;
- (x) To complete the Mid-term Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool and Financial Sustainability scorecards (Annex 6);
- (xi) To complete the annex to the 2013 Project Implementation Report (Annex 7);
- (xii) To provide the recommendations for the future project activities and, where necessary, for the project implementation and management arrangements.

The project performance will be measured based on the indicators of the project's logical framework (see Annex 5). Many of these indicators relate to the impact/implementation that will be applied in the impact assessment. The success and failure will partially be determined through the monitoring of the relative changes within the baseline conditions developed within one year of the project implementation. Where possible, the indicator species, sensitive to the changes of habitat and pressure increase, will need to be identified and monitored. In case of an identified shrinkage of the population of rare and endangered species the measures will be undertaken to identify the causes of such shrinkage and the alternative strategies will be developed to ensure the long-term welfare of the populations that will further be incorporated in the overall project site management.

3. Duties and Responsibilities and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation exercise will embrace the project elements as follows:

Project concept and design: The evaluator will assess the project concept and design. He/she should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The evaluator will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation: The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the project team's use of adaptive management in project implementation. The evaluation exercise will measure the level of achievement of the project's objective. It will also identify which interim results have been achieved and how they have contributed to meeting the ultimate project outcomes. This section will be focused on the priority areas as follows:

- **Project outputs, outcomes and impact:** The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the outcomes and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the

implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

- **Project Management and Administration:** The evaluation should collect, document and assess the relevant elements and processes including: (i) Administrative procedures related to the project; (ii) Key decisions and interim results; and (iii) The main project implementation documents specifying how useful have the documents and reports been.
- **Project Execution:** The evaluation should assess the quality of services provided by UNDP acting as the Implementing Agency and PMU (project management cost-efficiency including the achievement of interim results in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness; and the monitoring system).

The Mid-term Evaluation will also cover the following aspects:

3.1. Progress towards Results

Changes in development conditions

Address the following questions:

- (i) Do the results achieved by the project lead to improvement of PA representation and coverage?
- (ii) Do the project achievements contribute to the adequate institutional and individual capacity for the management of the PAN?
- (iii) How the project results and current activities support the overall effort to establish Sumbar National Park?

Measurement of change: Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention.

Project strategy: how and why outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results. Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.

Sustainability: to which extent the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the national policy, etc.

3.2. Adaptive management framework of the project

Management arrangements

- a) Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the project document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- b) Review the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.
- c) Review the quality of support provided by UNDP (both Country Office and Regional Bureau) and recommend areas for improvement:
 - Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider: field visits; Steering Committee; TOR follow-up and analysis; PIR preparation and follow-up; GEF guidance;
 - Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide, especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework;
 - Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance to the project management.

Monitoring Systems

- a) Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
 - Do they provide the necessary information?
 - Do they involve key partners?
 - Are they efficient?
 - Are additional tools required?
- b) Reconstruct baseline data if necessary. Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise;
- c) Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements. Apply SMART indicators as necessary;
- d) Apply the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with the baseline values.

Risk Management

- a) Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted;
- b) Assess the project's risk identification and management systems:
 - Is the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
 - How can the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

Work Planning

- a) Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it:
 - Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP/GEF requirements in terms of format and content;
 - What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
- b) Assess the use of routinely updated work plans;
- c) Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities;
- d) Is work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning;
- e) Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

Reporting

- a) Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management;
- b) Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

3.3. Underlying Factors

- a) Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors;
- b) Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
- c) Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project.

3.4. Partnership Strategy

- a) Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
 - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance;

- Using already existing data and statistics;
- Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- b) Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships;
- c) Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;
- d) Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms;
- e) Assess collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- f) Assess collaboration between implementation units of other related projects;
- g) Assess local partnerships;
- h) Assess transfer of capacity to the national institutions.

3.5. Project Finance

- a) Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions, taking into account the project activity timeframe;
- b) Review the effectiveness of financial coordinating mechanisms.
- c) Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- d) Complete the co-financing monitoring table (see Annex 3).

4. Deliverables/Products expected from the evaluation

The key product expected from this mid-term evaluation is: **The Mid-term Evaluation Report.**

The mid-term evaluation report, of 40 pages maximum excluding annexes, will include:

- The facts and conclusions identified in respect of the issues to be reviewed in accordance with 'The Scope of Evaluation' section.
- Evaluation of project impact on:
 - The institution assisted and its staff
 - The final beneficiaries including specific groups
- Project sustainability on the basis of:
 - The commitments of the governmental agencies in relation to the project objectives
 - Involvement of local organizations (participatory process)
 - Management and organizational factors
 - Financing
 - Staff development
- Recommendations for the future implementation of the project activities
- Lessons learned

It is expected to start the MTR and complete it in a maximum of **25 working days**, including 3 weeks in the field.

The draft and final report will be prepared in the format as provided in Annex 1 hereto. The draft report will be presented to UNDP/GEF not later than **15 November 2013**. The final report will be prepared on the basis of the comments to be obtained from the parties related. The deadline for the final report is **18 December 2013**.

The report will be presented electronically and in hard copy, in English.

5. Evaluation Approach

The Mid-Term Evaluation will be done through a combination of processes including a desk study, site visits, questionnaires and interviews, with involvement of all the parties related including but not limited to: Ministry of Agro-industry - National Parks and Conservation Services, UNDP, representatives of the governmental agencies of various levels, local authorities, NGOs, Private Sector, communities, etc.

The evaluation team will be governed by the materials that available at <http://web.undp.org/gef/> as follows:

- (i) UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results
- (ii) UNDP/GEF M&E Resource Kit
- (iii) Measuring Results of the GEF Land Management Program

The evaluation methodology is assumed to cover the aspects as follows:

- (i) Desk study of all project documentation (see Annex2)
- (ii) Consultations with MoAI - NPCS and UNDP
- (iii) Field visits
- (iv) Interviews with related parties
 - MoAI
 - NPCS
 - Forestry Services
 - UNDP
 - Local authorities
 - Local communities
 - Private partners
 - NGOs
 - University of Mauritius; etc.

6. Evaluation team

The Mid-term Evaluation will be carried out by one international consultant and one local consultant. UNDP will provide guidance, documentation and support to evaluation team.

As team leader, the international consultant is responsible for the successful completion of the evaluation and finalizing the Mid-term Evaluation report. The consultant is expected to be familiar with the region and have excellent knowledge of the project focal area.

6.1 International Evaluator's Required Competencies, Skills and Experience:

- At least a Masters Degree in Biodiversity, Conservation, Natural Resources management or related field. PhD is considered an asset;
- 10 years relevant experience in Protected Areas Network expansion, Invasive Alien Species removal, land use planning and management, PAN financial sustainability, PAN management effectiveness, institutional framework for biodiversity conservation and/or other relevant fields;
- At least 5 years experience in Project Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resources management projects;
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies, especially GEF funded project evaluations. Past experience as evaluator of GEF projects and knowledge of GEF M&E guidelines and tools (PIR, METT, Financial Score Card, etc.) is a strong asset;
- Experience with internationally funded Biodiversity related projects. Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;

- Experience working in SIDS and Indian Ocean;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Excellent English communication skills, French would be an advantage;
- Fully computer literate with strong editing skills.

6.2 International Evaluator's Qualities:

- Well-developed organizational and inter-personal skills;
- Excellent drafting and synthesis skills;
- Ability to deliver on time.

6.3 Specifically, the international expert will perform the following tasks:

- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
- Collect data through project documents review, interviews and field visits;
- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
- Draft the evaluation report; and
- Finalize the whole evaluation report, incorporating stakeholders' feedbacks.

6.4 The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities
- Credibility
- Utility

The evaluator must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluators who have had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to evaluators who are associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in the protected areas project policy-making process and/or its implementation. Any previous association with the project, MoAI and its affiliates in the project sites, UNDP Mauritius or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms submitting proposals as it does to individual evaluators.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products.

ANNEX II : ITINERARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION MISSION

Date		Activities
Tues	15 th Oct	am: 1. Skype meeting with UNDP Programme Officer (Ms. Marion Fortune). 2. Document review. pm: Document review.
Wed	16 th Oct	am: 1. Document review. 2. Skype meeting with UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (Ms. Fabiana Issler). pm: 1. Document review.
Sun	20 th Oct	Lead Evaluator arrives in Mauritius.
Mon	21 st Oct	am: 1. Meeting with UNDP Programme Officer (Ms. Marion Fourtune). pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun).
Tue	22 nd Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Director of National Parks and Conservation Service and National Project Director (Mr. Mannikchand Puttoo). 2. Document review. pm: 1. Meeting with Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security and Chair, Project Steering Committee (Mrs. Chandanee Jhowry), Assistant Permanent Secretary, MAIFS (Mr. Abdul Nizam Jurawon) and Manager, Financial Operations, MAIFS (Mr. Hassam Karreeman).
Wed	23 rd Oct	am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun) to work on Project indicators. pm: 1. Document review. 2. Meeting with Conservator of Forests, Forestry Service (Mr. Vishnu Tezoo).
Thu	24 th Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Deputy Chief Town and Country Planning Office, Ministry of Housing and Land (Ms. Sareeta Issur-Suntah) and Acting Principal Town and Country Planning Office (Ms. Ratna Bumma). 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun). pm: 1. Document review and initial work on verifying METT scores.
Fri	25 th Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Land Use Planning Executive, Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr. Rubishwer Hemoo). pm: 1. Meeting with Senior Tourism Planner, Ministry of Tourism (Mr. Poorushotam Gujadhur). 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun) to work on Financial Scorecard, including Skype meeting with UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (Ms. Fabiana Issler).
Sat	26 th Oct	Free day
Sun	27 th Oct	All day: Report writing.
Mon	28 th Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Analyst, Ministry of Finance (Ms. Nunkoo Geerisha). 2. Skype meeting with Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP Mauritius (Mr. Roland Alcindor). pm: 1. Working meeting on Financial Scorecard. 2. Document review.
Tue	29 th Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Invasive Alien Species Coordinator (Mr. Parmananda Ragen). 2. Field visit to Black River Gorges National Park. pm: 1. Field visit to Native Plant Propagation Centre, Curepipe. 2. Data collation and report writing.
Wed	30 th Oct	am: 1. Meeting with Development and Liaison Manager, Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd. (Mr. Nada Padayatchy). 2. Field visit to Ebony Forest, Chamarel. pm: 1. Travel to Port Louis (2 hours). 2. Meeting with Operations Manager, UNDP-CO (Mr. Keswar Leelah).
Thu	31 st Oct	am: 1. Round table meeting with MAIFS, PMU, UNDP-CO, and Min Finance to determine improvements to procurement processes (see Annex VI for minutes). 2. Meeting with former Project Assistant (Ms. Cindy Armance). pm: 1. Report writing.

Date		Activities
Fri	1 st Nov	All day: National holiday – report writing.
Sat	2 nd Nov	All day: Report writing.
Sun	3 rd Nov	Free day
Mon	4 th Nov	am: 1. Travel to Bel Ombre (1½ hours). 2. Meeting with Leisure Manager, Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre Ltd. (Mr. François Baudot) and Livestock Officer (Mr. Yohann Rouillard). 3. Travel to Vallée de Ferney (1 hour). pm: 1. Meeting with General Manager, La Vallée de Ferney Forest and Wildlife Reserve (Mr. Arnaud Berthelot). 2. Travel to Reduit (2 hours). 3. Meeting with Invasive Alien Species Coordinator (Mr. Parmananda Ragen).
Tue	5 th Nov	am: 1. MTET meeting. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun) and Invasive Alien Species Coordinator (Mr. Parmananda Ragen) to work on METT scores. 3. Travel to Isle aux Aigrettes (1 hour). pm: 1. Meeting with Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (Dr. Vikash Tatayah). 2. Travel to Reduit (1 hour). 3. Report writing.
Wed	6 th Nov	am: 1. Free morning. pm: 1. Meeting with Managing Director, Cread & Co. Ltd. (Mr. Vino Sookloll), Executive Director (Mr. Amaresh Ramlugan), and Account Executive (Mr. Yanis Sookloll). 2. Meeting with Corporate Sustainability Manager, HSBC (Mr. Yan Hokoomsing).
Thu	7 th Nov	am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun) and Invasive Alien Species Coordinator (Mr. Parmananda Ragen) to work on METT scores. 2. Meeting with Director of National Parks and Conservation Service and National Project Director (Mr. Mannikchand Puttoo), Conservator of Forests, Forestry Service (Mr. Vishnu Tezoo), National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun), and Invasive Alien Species Coordinator (Mr. Parmananda Ragen) to work on indicators. pm: 1. Continuation of work on indicators and METT scores.
Fri	8 th Nov	am: 1. De-briefing meeting. 2. National Evaluator departs Mauritius ³² . pm: 1. De-briefing of UNDP Resident Representative. 2. Final meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Arvind Dookhun).
Sat	9 th Nov	am: 1. Lead Evaluator departs Mauritius

³² KV is on contract to a university in the Seychelles.

ANNEX III : PERSONS INTERVIEWED

(S) = Skype interview. Alphabetic order.

UNDP / GEF

Fabiana Issler	UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser (S)
Keswar Leelah	Operations Manager, UNDP-Mauritius
Marion Fourtune	UNDP Programme Officer, UNDP-Mauritius
Roland Alcindor	Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP Mauritius
Simon Springett	Resident Representative, UNDP-Mauritius

Project Management Unit

Arvind Dookhun	National Project Manager
Cindy Armance	Former Project Assistant
Mannikchand Puttoo	Director of National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security and National Project Director
Parmananda Ragen	Invasive Alien Species Coordinator

Project Consultants

Amaresh Ramlugan	Executive Director, Cread & Co. Ltd
Vino Sookloll	Managing Director, Cread & Co. Ltd.
Yanis Sookloll	Account Executive, Cread & Co. Ltd

Ministry for Agro-industry and Food Security

Abdul Nizam Jurawon	Assistant Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security
Chandane Jhowry	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security and Chair, Project Steering Committee
Hassam Karreeman	Manager, Financial Operations, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security
Vishnu Tezoo	Conservator of Forests, Forestry Service, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security

Government Stakeholders

Nunkoo Geerisha	Analyst, Ministry of Finance
Poorushotam Gujadhur	Meeting with Senior Tourism Planner, Ministry of Tourism
Ratna Bumma	Acting Principal Town and Country Planning Office, Ministry of Housing and Land
Rubishwer Hemoo	Land Use Planning Executive, Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands
Sareeta Issur-Suntah	Deputy Chief Town and Country Planning Office, Ministry of Housing and Land

Private-sector Stakeholders

Arnaud Berthelot	General Manager, La Vallée de Ferney Forest and Wildlife Reserve
François Baudot	Leisure Manager, Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre Ltd.
Nada Padayatchy	Development and Liaison Manager, Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd.
Yohann Rouillard	Livestock Officer, Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre Ltd.

Others

Vikash Tatayah	Conservation Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation
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Yan Hokoomsing	Corporate Sustainability Manager, HSBC
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ANNEX IV : SUMMARY EVALUATION OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS BY OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The logframe in the Project Document received minor revisions to the end of project targets during the Inception Workshop. Subsequently, the 2011 PIR adopted a changed version of indicator #5 (METT scores) since there were a number of illogical discrepancies in the original. Key amongst these was the scores for two national parks (when only one was designated) and the fact that the score for the national park actually comprised only a number of small Conservation Management Areas within the Black River Gorges National Park, and not a score for the entire Park. Indicator #5 was therefore broken down into four sub-indicators. This secondary change was signed off by the RTA. The present evaluation matrix has adopted these changes. The delivery status herein is taken from the most recent information provided in the 2013 PIR, augmented by comments provided by the NPM.

KEY:

GREEN = Indicators show achievement already successful or full expectation of achievement by end of Project.

YELLOW = Indicators show some progress – achievement expected by end of Project with increased effort.

ORANGE = Indicators show poor progress – possibly unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

RED = Indicators show poor or no progress – unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

HATCHED COLOUR = estimate; situation either unclear to make a firm assessment against, or external factors largely responsible for assessment rather than Project's performance.

Project Goal: To conserve the globally significant native forest biodiversity of Mauritius.







#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
1	Objective: To expand, and ensure effective management of, the	Coverage (ha) of the terrestrial formal protected area network of mainland Mauritius and the islets:										

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
	protected area network to safeguard threatened biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State protected areas 	8,027 ha	11,700 ha	8,052.2 ha Bars D'Eau Nat Pk (497.2ha) declared in Dec 2011. Net gain = 25.2 ha ³³ .	Pointe D'Esny (25.4 ha) was declared a Ramsar Site in Feb 2012. Despite being protected as a mangrove forest under the Fisheries Act, it was not included in the baseline. This together with the fact that there is no evidence that the Project played any substantive part in its designation as a Ramsar site means that it cannot be counted as a contribution towards this indicator.						
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private protected areas 	0 ha	3,220 ha	0 ha	Pan responsible for including new category of Voluntary Special Reserves within new Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Bill						
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total 	8,027 ha	14,920 ha	8052.2 ha							
2		Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management	~US\$ 2.3m	>US\$ 4.1m	US\$ 8,968,567	Total Operational Budget (Including HR and Capital Budget for PAs) announced in National Budget, 8 th Nov 2013.						
3		Financial sustainability score (%) for national systems of protected areas	18%	30-40%	31%	Increase achieved, but apparently not as a result of Project activities.						





³³ This includes 452 ha of land formerly designated as the Bras d'Eau Forest Reserve and 20ha formerly designated as Mare Sarcelles Forest Reserve.

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
4		Capacity development indicator score (%) for protected area system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic • Institutional • Individual 	50% 56% 62%	65% 60% 75%	50% 56% 62%	The 2013 PIR states: <i>"The project [is] seeing how it can apply the Capacity Development Scorecard in an analytical manner and involving key institutions (Forestry, Parks and Environment). This should be done in a workshop format and should be planned some time soon. Then the scores should be vetted independently by the MTR."</i> No such workshop has taken place, and no scores were available to the MTET. The MTET understands that some PA Supervisors (Rangers) and existing labourers have been trained in the identification of IAS and their removal but that this is mostly informal on-the-job training. With an intake of a substantial cadre of new labourers imminent, a more formal training programme is being planned.						


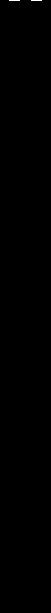
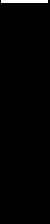
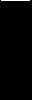
#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
5		METT scores for different categories of formal protected areas on mainland Mauritius and the islets:			Using the METT exercise undertaken in February 2013 and reported in the 2013 PIR, the MTET has checked the data provided and the PMU has made corrections.	The value of this indicator has been significantly compromised by either a poor baseline or a non-independent mid-term scoring. The Project has done little or no work except IAS clearance which could result in such increases. MTET recommend they are re-done – see final bullet point of paragraph 43.						
		• Conservation Management Areas within the Black River Gorges National Park (BRGNP)	Brise Fer 62.8%	All > 70%	90.5%							
			Fixon (Bel Ombre) 64.1%		90.5%							
			Florin 62.8%		90.5%							
			Le Pétrin 62.8%		90.5%							
			Macchabé 62.8%		90.5%							
			Mare Longue 62.8%		90.5%							
			Montagne Cocotte 61.5%		88.5%							
			Morne Sèche 50.6%		86.2%							
		• Bras d'Eau National Park	51.2%		73.0%	At the time of the baseline this was a Nature Reserve. As a result of its elevation to National Park, the MTET has increased the target in line with areas within the BRGNP as per the original logframe						
		• Bird Sanctuary	Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary 57%	> 65%	76.0%							
		• Mountain Reserves and Nature Reserves	Mountain Reserves 37%	All > 60%	71.6%	The METT scores for the “Mountain Reserves” are a combination of Le Morne, Corps de Garde, and Le Pouce (totalling just 196.3 of the total 3,800 ha).						
			Bois Sec 37.3%		64.1%							
			Cabinet 46.7%		69.2%							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
			Gouly Père 38.7%		70.5%	Poor baseline – uncertain of legal status, boundaries, management plan, working plan, and research						
			Les Mares 38.7%		67.9%							
			Perrier 65.3%		70.5%							
		• Forest Reserves	Not yet assessed. Assumed ~37% or less To be defined in 2012	Probably to be set ~55% To be defined in 2012.	No assessment made in 2013. Neither baseline nor target yet set.	The MTET has recommended removal of this part of the indicator – see paragraph 83.						
6	Outcome 1: Systemic framework for PA expansion improved	Number of 'Land Types' included in the PAN	8 of 16	12 of 16	8 of 16	Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will undertake gap analysis and develop the Protected Area Expansion strategy.						
7		Ecological corridors and marine-terrestrial linkages incorporated into the PAN	None	2 (1 in South; 1 in North)	None	Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will develop the Protected Area Expansion strategy.						
8		Number of rare and threatened plant species (of 231 with a known distribution) having at least 1 wild population represented in the PAN. • Previously considered extinct • Extirpated in the wild • Critically endangered	2 1 44	6 2 70	5 2 98	<i>Crinum mauritianum</i> & <i>Cylindrocline lorencei</i> Includes new species to science: <i>Eugenia allestiana</i>						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endangered Vulnerable 	25 62	33 71	41 88							
9		<p>Reach (estimated number of people) of the communications and awareness programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad-based communications (estimated number of audience receiving different media message) Outreach programmes (number of people attending) Experiential learning programmes (number of people attending) Lobbying of key decision-makers (number of people and institutions) 	n/a n/a n/a n/a	100,000 500 300 10 people of 4 institutions	Presently unknown None None None	<p>No communication strategy is in place yet since the Marketing and Communication consultant was recruited only in Oct. 2013. Several newspaper and national TV reports on the Project are evident, especially on the private sector involvement and IAS removal and ecosystem restoration activities, but the target audience has not been quantified, probably as a result of insufficient technical know-how to date.</p>						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
10	Outcome 2: PA institutional framework strengthened	Number of strategic plans prepared for PA institutions that are linked to the MTEF	1	3	Still just one – Black River Gorges National Park Strategic Plan. According to the Inception Report, the target includes revision of BRGNP, and development of plans for Bras D'Eau National park and Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary.	The Ministry of Finance now requires preparation of Programme-based Budgets (PBB) which are more results-oriented than Medium-term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF). Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will lead development of plans.						
11		Income from other sources (i.e. non-state budget allocation), as a percentage of the total operational budget of the PAN	33%	54%	26.6%	The decrease is the result of large increases in Govt. funding decreasing the proportion of the private sector.						
12		Number of tourism concessions awarded	2	3	Still just 2.	Ile aux Aigrettes to MWF; and Ilôt Gabriel to Ocean Blue Island Co. Ltd. Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will lead development of process						
13		Number of private landowners concluding stewardship agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal, non-binding, agreements	0	>6	0	Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will lead development of legal instruments.						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal, legally binding, agreements 	0	>2	0	Agreements will then need to be concluded with individual landowners. The MTET is concerned that both the scale of this task and the length of time required to establish the legal process and then to negotiate the individual legal agreements (with their inherent difficulties) is likely to place this indicator out of reach of the Project.						
14		Number of planning support and operational PA staff completing specialised training and/or skills development programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short course training Mentoring programme Train-the-trainers programme IAS and ecosystem restoration skills development 	0 0 0 0	>40 5 5 50	70 labourers 26 Parks Rangers ,Assistant Park Rangers, Forest Enforcement and Conservation Officer 16 Park Rangers and Assistant Park Rangers 70 manual workers, 4 Park Rangers 12 Assistant Parks Rangers,10 Forest Officers	The results all relate to IAS clearance training. The MTET believes that the Project is double-counting, e.g. the 70 labourers trained in IAS clearance should not be counted under the short-course training programme, since although technically they were trained on short-courses, this was not the intent of the indicator. Similarly the mentoring programme, train the						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering agreements with counterpart institutions 	0	4	2 (with Forestry Service and Ireland Blyth Ltd.)	trainers, etc. The MTET has reported the results as per the PIR but has assessed the result against this intent rather than bare numbers – hence most are not considered complete.						
15	Outcome 3: Operational know-how in place to contain threats	Number of protected areas with updated and approved management plans	1	>3	1	Awaiting recruitment of technical consultants who will develop plans for Black River Gorges National Park and Bras D'Eau National Park. Parallel funding has been obtained from the Agence Francaise de Development to prepare management plans for all Nature Reserves under the authority of the Forestry Service. The management of Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary will be effected in collaboration with the Mauritius Port Authority Masterplan.						
16		Extent of area (ha) under active IAS management and ecosystem restoration	89	500	194 ha	39% of target in 18 months' work (30% of project lifespan). While the task remains large, the process is running smoothly and is likely to achieve the target.						
17		Average cost (US\$/ha) of IAS control and ecosystem restoration:				MTET recommend that this target is reviewed downward. Significant						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	Delivery Status at Mid-term evaluation	Comments	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial clearing and first follow-up 	US\$9,000	US\$2,000	US\$ 3,000 ha	cost reductions have been made but with inflation affecting labour costs, herbicide, and fuel for transport no further savings would appear possible. Mechanisation of weeding does not appear to pay for itself. A 67% reduction is commendable.						
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsequent follow-ups 	US\$1,000	US\$500	US\$ 850 ha	Again, significant savings have been achieved, but target needs to be reviewed for same reasons.						
18		% of PAs with no, or poorly, demarcated boundaries	95%	<50%	0%. The NPCS and FS continue to maintain that the boundaries of all PAs in Mauritius are demarcated physically on the ground through marker stones and/or fences. The 2011PIR notes that this was a matter of intense discussion during the Inception Workshop although the Inception Report does not mention this. The MTET cannot understand why the designers would continue to maintain otherwise.	In addition to physical boundary markers, FS Surveyors are defining digital boundaries by providing GPS coordinates for all boundary markers using the world geodetic survey protocol WGS84.						

ANNEX V: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT DE-BRIEFING MEETING

De-briefing held on 8th November 2013

Alphabetic order

Arvind Dookhun	National Project Manager
Chandanee Jhowry	Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security and Chair, Project Steering Committee
Kris Valaydon	National Consultant, Mid-term Evaluation Team
Mannikchand Puttoo	Director of National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agro-industry and Food Security and National Project Director
Marion Fournet	UNDP Programme Officer, UNDP-Mauritius
Parmananda Ragen	Invasive Alien Species Coordinator
Phillip Edwards	International Consultant, Mid-term Evaluation Team

In addition, Mr. Simon Springett, Resident Representative, UNDP-Mauritius, was debriefed separately in the afternoon.

ANNEX VI: NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON PROCUREMENT MATTERS FOR PAN PROJECT

Held on Thursday 31 October 2013 at 9.30 hours in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, 9th floor, R. Seeneevassen bldg, Port Louis

Were Present

Mrs C. Jhowry	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro- Industry and Food Security (Chairperson)
Mr A.N. Jurawon	Assistant Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agro- Industry and Food Security
Mr M. Puttoo	Director, National Parks and Conservation Service
Mr B. Seetul	Manager, Procurement and Supply, Ministry of Agro- Industry and Agro Industry
Mr A. Dookhun	Project Manager, PAN Project
Mr P. Goburdhun	Adviser, Procurement Policy Office
Mr S. Springett	Resident Representative, UNDP
Dr P. Edwards	International Evaluator, UNDP-GEF
Mrs M. Fournune	Environment Programme Officer, UNDP
Mr S. Ramchurn	Environment Programme Officer, UNDP
Mrs W. Mauderbacus	Office Management Assistant, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Secretary)

1.0 Welcome Address

The Chairperson welcomed the members present and opened the meeting.

2.0 Purpose of Meeting

The Chairperson stated that the meeting was held mainly to discuss procurement matters with regard to the PAN Project and identify the weaknesses and means to improve the systems and processes in order to minimize delays in the procurement of various items for the project.

3.0 The PAN Project

The Chairperson gave a brief overview of the PAN Project highlighting the main goals and objectives and the funding by UNDP/GEF. She added that the project was approved in March 2010 and the duration is five years. A mid-term review is presently being undertaken by a team of independent consultants appointed by the UNDP.

She also informed that a first meeting was held the previous week with the consultants and serious concerns were raised on the delay in the implementation of the project.

4.0 Issues Raised and Discussed

The Project Manager also briefed the Committee on the implementation of the project. He pointed out that he was himself recruited in April 2011 that is, 13 months after the project was approved. He added it took about 6 to 8 months for the procurement of IT equipment for the project.

The Director NPCS stressed on the strong collaboration from the Procurement Unit and the Manager Procurement and Supply personally. However, he proposed that the procurement for the PAN Project should be dealt with separately from Ministry's bulk procurements and on a fast track basis.

The Manager Procurement and Supply explained the procurement procedures involved and informed that for some items with standard specifications, bulk purchases were made whereas for other specific items separate tenders were launched as and when required, which is the case for IT equipment. He added that at times tenders exercises were delayed due to specifications not being worked out according to user needs and requirements and tenders have to be launched afresh. For some tenders no quotes are received. Bid evaluation was also a lengthy process and at times evaluators were taken up with more pressing work.

Mrs Fournet stressed on clear commitment by all concerned to move faster and added that the mid-term review is the key stage in the project to assess the shortcomings and to re-orientate.

Dr Edwards pointed out that only 11% of the budget has been spent in the last 44 months this clearly indicates a very low project implementation rate is considered as unacceptable. He emphasized that unless clear demonstrations of commitment to accelerate and complete the project were shown, it would be very difficult for GEF to accept any proposed extension of the project.

Mr Goburdhun, of the Procurement Policy Office was of the view that all procurement delays were more of an administrative nature and could be addressed through appropriate systems and processes by the Ministry which could set time frames for all stages in the procurement exercises. He also shared some general advice on good practices for simple procurements, including recommendations on setting up Bid Evaluation Committees more flexibly and efficiently with members that will actually be available.

Regarding the issue of recruitment of additional labourers, the final decision to recruit 45 labourers is awaited and the recruitment is expected immediately after approval. As regards future recruitment exercises it may take about 2 to 3 months if new lists are requested from the Employment Division and fresh interviews are carried out.

The Committee was informed that the closing date for tenders for the recruitment of the team of consultants was on Wednesday 6 November 2013.

Mrs Fournet proposed that for future recruitment of consultants the UNDP could provide shortlists and could even advertise on its website to avoid lengthy EOI procedures.

The Committee agreed that the responsibility for the delays in the project must be shared by both the Ministry and the UNDP. The late start of the project due to the late recruitment and appointment of the CTA and the Project Manager led to delays in other areas.

5.0 DECISIONS TAKEN

Mrs Jhowry, as Chairperson of the National Steering Committee and Schedule Officer for the biodiversity conservation sector, undertook to personally monitor all procurement matters in respect of the PAN project with all the units and officers concerned. She will ensure that appropriate measures are taken to expedite all remaining and future procurements for the project.

The procurement of IT equipment and other equipment for laborers will also be undertaken separately from bulk purchases of the Ministry, following advice from the PPO.

The recruitment of new laborers is expected to be carried out faster where short lists already exist. In other cases it should not take more than 3 months.

The recruitment of the team of consultants should be finalized as a matter of urgency and at latest by 15 January 2014 they should be in post. This exercise will be used as a test case for the GEF to consider any extension of the project.

UNDP committed to expedite recruitment of the Project Assistant and procurement of the Chief Technical Advisor services from its side.

6.0 END OF MEETING

The Chairperson thanked all those present and closed the meeting at 10.45 hrs.

MINISTRY OF AGRO INDUSTRY AND FOOD SECURITY

7 NOVEMBER 2013