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GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

UNDP/GEF Project on
ñSafeguarding and rest
woodland resourcesò (PIMS 337

TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Philip Tortell, *Consultant*

December 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the tremendous assistance I received from many individuals and organizations in carrying out this evaluation.

Firstly, I would like to thank the staff of the Project Management Unit headed by the Project Manager Mr Garo Haroutunian, who received me warmly, provided me with documentation and other information, helped me with logistics and accompanied me to my field visits and appointments.

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A number of partners have been associated with the project and I was fortunate to meet with some of these from the areas around Mount Lebanon. To them and to other non-governmental organizations, I wish to express my deepest gratitude for meeting with me, describing their relationship with the project, sharing their views and concerns and advising me of their aspirations from the project.

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To all the above as well as to those who provided me with written comments on the draft report, I am sincerely grateful.

Thank you

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFDC	Association for Forests, Development and Conservation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CO	Country Office (of UNDP)
EA	Executing Agency (of the GEF)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ha	Hectare
IA	Implementing Agency (of the GEF)
LARI	Lebanon Agricultural Research Institute
LD	Land Degradation
LogFrame	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NRP	National Reforestation Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFP	Operational Focal Point (for the GEF)
PB	Project Board
PIF	Project Implementation Framework
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Attributable, Relevant, Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

PROJECT AND EVALUATION DESCRIPTOR

PROJECT TITLE: Safeguarding and restoring Lebanonôs					
GEF Project ID	3028	**PROJECT FINANCING (in US Dollars)**			
UNDP Project ID	3371		**At Endorsement**	**At Completion**	
Country	Lebanon	**GEF Trust Fund**	**980,000**	**980,000**	
		IA/EA own	0	0	
Region	Middle East (Arab States)	**Government**	1,275,000	1,327,387	
GEF Focal Area	Land Degradation	**Others :**	0	12,107,500	
GEF Operational Programme	LD-SP2				
Executing Agency	Ministry of Environment (MoE)	**Total co-financing**	**1,275,000**	**13,434,887**	
Other partners		**Total project cost**	**2,255,000**	**14,414,887**	

PROJECT TIMEFRAME	**CEO Endorsement date** December 2008	**ProDoc signature date** 16 December 2008	**Original closing date** 31 December 2012	**Revised closing date** December 2014

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME	**Assignment start** 11 Sep 2014	**Inception Report** 24 Sep 2014	**Preliminary Findings** 10 Oct 2014	**Draft Report** 25 Oct 2014	**Final Report** 01 Dec 2014

EVALUATION TEAM	Philip Tortell, International Evaluator, with the Project Management Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

This is the independent Terminal Evaluation of the project on *"Safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources"* executed by the Ministry of Environment and for which, UNDP served as the GEF Implementing Agency. The Project was designed to complement on-the-ground investments carried out through the NRP by creating an enabling environment and by building capacity for sustainable land management as a contribution to greater ecosystem stability, enhanced food security and improved rural livelihoods. The Project was intended to remove the institutional, economic and technical barriers to SLM so as to enable the NRP to meet its targets and up-scale forestry SLM models and approaches over a 20-year period at the national scale.

The project Objective was - *A strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources developed and under implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices*. It was implemented over a 6-year period with a budget of USD2.255 million of which, USD0.98 million was from the GEF Trust Fund and USD1.275 million was from co-financing at commencement. In fact, the actual co-financing was USD13,434,887.

The Evaluation

The Terminal Evaluation has been carried out according to the guidance and principles of UNDP, the GEF and UNEG which require such an evaluation in the closing stages of a project for the benefit of the key stakeholders including the GEF as the main source of funding, UNDP as the Implementing Agency and the Government as the prime beneficiaries. It aimed to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and critically assess achievements, administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints. The methodology employed in this evaluation was planned and described in the Inception Report presented in the early stages of the mission.

Two basic tools were used in the search for primary data and information ï firstly documents review, secondly face-to-face consultations. Face-to-face meetings were the preferred method of consultation and were carried out with a wide catchment of stakeholders.

Following the gathering of data and information, the evaluation focused on analysis, discussion and drafting and a draft version of the report was delivered to UNDP and the Government to be released for comments. The draft was refined to reflect comments received, and the final report produced.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Project relevance and design

The Project addressed issues of inappropriate land uses, specifically deforestation and forest degradation and as such, it has been highly relevant to the needs of Lebanon. Project design targeted a strategic approach comprising three outcomes of which, the first may have been beyond the direct influence of the project and the third was not logical. In the face of these problems with project design, project implementation has tended to focus on the technical solutions through Outcome 2 as its immediate targets and this focus on the major threats of deforestation and inadequate management was a correct emphasis by the project implementers.

Project implementation efficiency

Project implementation efficiency may have been hindered by the lack of clarity in the respective mandates of MoE and MoA regarding reforestation and the forests sector overall. This was evidenced by a dysfunctional PSC and a National Project Director who was not supportive of the technical solutions offered by the project. In spite of these challenges, project implementation was carried out efficiently, risks were well managed and mitigated, budget management especially co-

financing was well done, and an excellent rapport was established between project implementers and stakeholders/partners in the field.

Monitoring and evaluation
Overall planning for Monitoring and Evaluation at entry level was adequate. However, the key reference point for monitoring, namely the LogFrame, had very weak Indicators and neither of the two prime tools for monitoring ï PSC meetings and PIRs ï were used effectively. The project had a good monitoring plan with budget and a reasonable identification of responsibilities, and some monitoring has been carried out. However, its use to guide project implementation is uncertain and there is not much evidence of adaptive management.

Project results and effectiveness
The Project Objective sought ï a *strategy*, developed and implemented; through *capacity building*, and the appropriate SLM *policies* and *practices*, and by and large, these have been achieved. However, when examined at the Outcomes level, the results have been mixed and this anomaly is an illustration of the weak project design. Outcome 1 has only been partly achieved and only one of the five Outputs can be claimed to have been achieved by the project. Most of the Outputs under Outcome 2 have been achieved outright and the project has delivered. Outcome 3 was not an Outcome however, through the Outputs, the project delivered some useful activities even if it could not achieve the Outcome and the Project Objective was fulfilled in part.
The PMU efforts overcame faulty project design.

Sustainability
The institutional basis for forests management and reforestation in Lebanon is confused and as a result, the products of the project are in jeopardy, at least at central government level. The overlapping mandates of MoE and MoA in terms of forests are also likely to affect financial sustainability. Environmental sustainability is also at risk because there has been little or no consideration of forests as ecosystems. Without further research and analysis and without active management and monitoring, the resulting woodland may turn out to be a less resilient and robust ecosystem and maybe less valuable (from the human perspective) than the one it has replaced.

Summary of assessments and ratings

CRITERION	SUMMARY COMMENTS	RATING
PROJECT FORMULATION		
Project concept and design	Six years is far too long for a MSP with a budget less than US$1 million, even if activities are only at a pilot scale - Project Objective ambitious. The first and second outcomes are logically linked, however, the third Outcome is not logical, its wording is unclear and it requires interpretation; it is not an Outcome and, as designed, it may not have been possible to achieve.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**
Relevance	The project has been highly relevant to the needs of Lebanon as well as to the GEF global objectives	**Relevant**
Stakeholder participation in formulation	There is no record of stakeholder participation in project formulation	**Unsatisfactory (U)**
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Project Governance	Governance was weak as evidenced by a dysfunctional PSC which met only twice in six years and served more as a Technical Advisory Group, and a National Project Director who was not supportive of the technical solutions offered by the project.	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
Project Administration and Management	Management style was low key and democratic, consultative, effective, with good leadership. Staff are clear about their respective roles. Excellent rapport with stakeholders.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Implementation Approach		
Stakeholder participation in implementation	The project had a number of true partners who were fully involved in the implementation of this project.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Risk management	In general, risks were identified well and mitigation measures proved to be successful.	**Satisfactory (S)**

CRITERION	SUMMARY COMMENTS	RATING
Project finances		
Financial planning and management	Planned expenditure and actual expenditure at end of project were not significantly different which indicates a fairly accurate project design or effective budget management, or both.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Monitoring and Evaluation		
M&E Design, Plan and Budget	M&E are reasonably well covered from PIF to CEO Endorsement Request to ProDoc, and overall planning for Monitoring and Evaluation at entry level are good.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Use of LogFrame and Adaptive Management	The project had a functional original LogFrame which was made less useful through changes and there are few if any signs of adaptive management	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
Role and performance of IA and EA		
UNDP as the GEF IA	The modality of implementation was Support to NIM and this puts more load on the CO team in terms of guiding project management since accountability is shared.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Ministry of Environment as EA	MoE provided appropriate experts, and facilitated interaction among relevant public organisations, research institutions and private organisations. It also housed the function of GEF OFP, and was able to ensure coordination among relevant GEF funded projects and activities.	**Satisfactory (S)**
PROJECT RESULTS		
Attainment of Overall and Regional Objective and Outcomes		
Objective: *A strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources developed and under implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices*	A Strategy has been developed and according to the PMU is being implemented by the Government. The project has carried out capacity building satisfactorily at various levels. Appropriate SLM policies have been partly developed and SLM practices have been piloted by the project. In spite of the weak and unhelpful indicators, the Objective has been largely achieved.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Outcome 1: An appropriate management framework and management capacities for the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas	This Outcome sought a management framework and management capacities and in the situation that has prevailed in Lebanon for some time with the split responsibility for forest management between MoE and MoA, this was a weakness in project design. The Outcome has only been partly achieved and only one of the five Outputs can be claimed to have been achieved by the project.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**
Outcome 2: A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the rehabilitation of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, has been designed and validated in pilot areas	The Outcome was focussed on innovative technical solutions to the problems faced by Lebanon in its reforestation efforts and by and large, the project has delivered. Most of the Outputs have been achieved outright.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Outcome 3: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management	This pseudo-Outcome sought monitoring and learning and adaptive feedback and management ï a collection of disparate actions rather than a result. Through the Outputs, the project delivered some useful activities but it could not achieve the Outcome. Its efforts in trying to work cross-sectorally were laudable but only partially successful; the publication of its technical achievements will come somewhat late but it is a valuable legacy; and its efforts to raise awareness were significant, even if the actual increase in awareness was not measured. The PMU efforts overcame faulty project design.	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
OVERALL PROJECT RATING	This is a project that in spite of flawed design, weak governance and difficult institutional circumstances, has been able to focus on achievable and very valuable reforestation techniques for Lebanon. It has explored successfully innovative reforestation methodologies which have very good potential in terms of seedling survival rates and reduced costs of planting and subsequent care. It has managed its modest budget well, attracted an impressive level of co-financing and established excellent	**Satisfactory (S)**

CRITERION	SUMMARY COMMENTS	RATING
	rapport with its stakeholder partners. Its impacts have been mainly intermediate with some foundational achievements. Its true impact will arise out of the upscaling and replication of its successful products by the organizations in government mandated by their legal authority, and by the private and NGO sectors who complement the forestry work of government ï hence the need for a strong sustainability plan / exit strategy.	

Recommendations[1]

8.1 Sustainability of project benefits

The recommendation made verbally to the PMU is repeated here ï the PMU, with the endorsement of both MoE and UNDP, should organize a Sustainability/Exit Workshop inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest in services and other benefits. At the Workshop, the PMU will outline the gains made by the project and seek an expression of interest from specific stakeholders for taking over and sustaining each gain. Ideally, this should be followed by an official exchange of letters handing over, and accepting, the responsibility.

8.2 Information management

It is recommended that the PMU should identify an organization that is to inherit its data, information and knowledge. This cache must be well organized and handed over together with the associated hardware and software. An undertaking must be obtained that the cache will be made accessible to all who require it for the better management of reforestation activities and forest ecosystems in general.

8.3 More research required to ensure environmental sustainability

It is recommended that the Ministry of Environment, with the support of UNDP, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and relevant NGOs, collaborate to formulate a joint proposal for a project which will research and monitor the comparative ecological benefits of various land use practices. The investigations should also cover the comparative effectiveness of planted forests and those allowed to regenerate naturally through effective protection. UNDP could advise on an appropriate source of funding support.

[1] The same numbering for recommendations as in the full report has been retained so as to avoid confusion.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation[2]

This is the independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the United Nations Development Programme/Global Environment Facility (UNDP/GEF) Project on "**Safeguarding and Lebanon's woodland (PIMS 3371) resources**"

The TE is carried out according to the policies of both UNDP and the GEF which require such an evaluation in the closing stages of a project. It is carried out for the benefit of the key stakeholders including the GEF as the main source of funding, UNDP as the Implementing Agency and the Government as the prime beneficiary.

The Terminal Evaluation is intended to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and serves as an opportunity to critically assess administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints. The evaluation set about attempting to provide answers to the following questions:

- Did the project identify and respond to a real need in Lebanon? Did it respond to the objectives of the GEF? (= relevance and design)
- Did it do it well? (= efficiency)
- Did it achieve the targeted results? (= effectiveness)
- Are the results sustainable? (= sustainability)

The TE was expected to establish whether the Project had achieved its goal, objective and outcomes. Specifically, according to the ToRs (Annex 1), the objective of the Terminal Evaluation was:

> *Assess the achievement of project results, and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.*

1.2 Scope and methodology

1.2.1 The GEF monitoring and evaluation principles

In accordance with the monitoring and evaluation policy of the GEF[3], this evaluation is guided by, and has applied, the following principles:

Independence The Evaluator is independent and has not been engaged in the Project activities, nor was he responsible in the past for the design, implementation or supervision of the project.

Impartiality The Evaluator endeavoured to provide a comprehensive and balanced presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project. The evaluation process has been impartial in all stages and taken into account all the views received from stakeholders.

Transparency The Evaluator conveyed in as open a manner as possible the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of the findings. This evaluation report aims to provide transparent information on its sources, methodologies and approach.

Disclosure This report serves as a mechanism through which the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation are disseminated to policymakers, operational staff, beneficiaries, the general public and other stakeholders.

[2] Taken from the evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex 1)
[3] Global Environment Facility (2006) *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*.

Ethical The Evaluator has respected the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and the sources of specific information and opinions in this report are not disclosed except where necessary and then only after confirmation with the consultee.

Competencies and Capacities The credentials of the Evaluator in terms of his expertise, seniority and experience as required by the Terms of Reference are provided in Annex 2; and the methodology for the assessment of results and performance is described below (section 1.3).

Credibility This evaluation has been based on data and observations which are considered reliable and dependable with reference to the quality of instruments and procedures and analysis used to collect and interpret information.

Utility The Evaluator strived to be as well-informed as possible and this ensuing report is considered as relevant, timely and as concise as possible. In an attempt to be of maximum benefit to stakeholders, the report presents in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings and issues, conclusions and recommendations.

Furthermore, the rights and confidentiality of informants have been protected to the extent possible as required by the UNEG Guidelines[4].

1.2.2 Evaluation dimensions

The evaluation exercise commenced in mid-September 2015 and a consultation visit to Lebanon started on 05 October 2015. Following the presentation of Preliminary Findings, the mission ended on 11 October 2014. After a period of about two weeks, the evaluator delivered his draft report with an invitation for comments from stakeholders, and the Final Evaluation Report was delivered on 12 November 2014.

A detailed schedule and time line for the entire evaluation assignment is in Annex 3.

1.2.3 Evaluation criteria, performance standards and questions

The evaluation assessed project performance against the following criteria and standards and sought answers to the questions[5] in the following table:

Table 1. Evaluation scope and dimensions

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTORS	QUESTIONS
Relevance	Project design as a tool to address identified threats and barriers	• Does the project reflect the needs of Lebanon?
	Alignment of project with GEF global priorities	• Is the project in line with the relevant GEF Operational Programme and strategic priorities?
Efficiency	Managerial efficiency (execution)	• Has the project been implemented within deadlines, costs estimates? • Have UNDP and other partners taken prompt actions to solve implementation issues? • Did the project implementation place an undue burden on some partners?

[4] United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) (2007) *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators*.
[5] Taken from the Evaluation Matrix which is in Annex 4 and which was prepared at the commencement of the contract and delivered as part of the TE Inception Report.

		• Have the Risks been avoided or mitigated?
	Programmatic efficiency (implementation)	• Were the project resources focused on the set of activities that were expected to produce significant results? • Was monitoring and backstopping by UNDP adequate?
	Issues at implementation and corrective action	• What issues emerged during implementation? • What were the corrective measures that were adopted?
Effectiveness and Impact	Progress towards the project Objective and Outcomes	• Did the project implementation across all its activities contribute to progress toward the stated Outcomes and Objective?
Sustainability	Design for sustainability	• Were interventions designed to have sustainable results given the identifiable risks and did they include an exit strategy?
	Sustainability strategy	• Have the heirs to the project been identified and prepared?
	Up-scaling of pilot initiatives and replication	• Was a plan for up-scaling and replicating of pilot initiatives, if successful, prepared?

According to GEF guidance[6], when rating the project on *relevance* and *effectiveness* outcomes were considered as critical criteria ï satisfactory performance on relevance and effectiveness was essential to satisfactory performance overall. This means that the overall project rating could not be higher than the lowest rating on relevance and effectiveness.

1.3 Approach and methodology

1.3.1 The basis for evaluation

The basis for a terminal evaluation is the ProDoc which is the signed contract for delivery of certain agreed results, products and services. Signatories bind themselves through the ProDoc and are accountable on that basis. *The results framework included in the project appraisal document submitted to the GEF for approval/endorsement by the CEO establishes project outcome expectations. At the time of project completion, these ex-ante expectations generally form a yard stick for assessment of outcome achievements*.[7] In particular, the Logical Framework Matrix (LogFrame) or Strategic Results Framework captures the essence of the ProDoc and the project.

The LogFrame for this project is discussed in section 3.3 below.

1.3.2 The approach adopted

The evaluation process comprised three phases. The first phase was one of data and information gathering. It started with a review of relevant documents made available electronically by the Project Management Unit. In addition, relevant websites were also visited and studied. Soon after my arrival in-country, I received extensive briefings and additional documentation. Following this, I embarked on a programme of consultations with key stakeholders including at the local level around representative project locations. The aim was to capture as broad a catchment of views and opinions as possible within the time available.

The second phase focused on analysis, discussion and drafting. This phase started with the presentation of Preliminary Findings to key stakeholders as available. Following the end of the

[6] Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office (2008) *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. Evaluation Document No.3.
[7] GEF Evaluation Office (2009) *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

mission, the work continued from home base and this phase concluded with the production of a draft version of the report which was forwarded to UNDP and the PMU to be released for comments. It was distributed to key stakeholders) and four submissions/comments were received.

The third and final phase refined the draft in the light of the comments received, and produced this final report. Information provided in the comments received was used substantially in revising the draft and where there was a difference of opinion between the comment and the original text, this has been acknowledged in a footnote.

Guidance provided by GEF and UNDP, was adhered to in undertaking this terminal evaluation. As noted in the Acknowledgements, the evaluator benefited greatly from the wide spectrum of views, opinions and advice that he received during the course of his work.

1.3.3 Data collection

Two basic tools were used in the search for primary data and information ï firstly documents review, and secondly face-to-face consultations. Face-to-face meetings were the preferred method of consultation and were carried out with a wide catchment of stakeholders. Triangulation was used to ensure that empirical evidence collected from one source, for example documentation such as reports, was validated from other sources, for example through interviews. If the information was not available in document form but only from consultations, the evaluator sought to corroborate opinions expressed and information given, by posing the same questions to more than one consultee. Anecdotal evidence was taken into account only if in the judgment of the evaluator the information was important and the source was considered reliable. In such cases, the possible limitations of this information have been noted.

The Terms of Reference provided the initial list of documents for review, and the response to the evaluatorôs additional documents from the PMU was swift. References to documentation are noted in this report, in most cases in footnotes. The full list of documents reviewed and/or consulted is in Annex 5 which also contains a short list of the websites that were visited and reviewed.

Some 20 persons were met and consulted in all ranging from UNDP and project management personnel, Central Government, Local Government, and various beneficiaries and implementation partners.

Interview protocols were described in the Evaluation Inception Report and most meetings followed the same pattern, namely, a brief introduction on the purpose of the mission followed by an identification of the relationship that the consultee had with the project, if any, and his/her views on the project. Particular emphasis was placed on whether the consultee felt that the project had achieved its Objectives, whether it had done this effectively and as required, and whether the project outcomes and benefits were likely to be sustainable (= the basic evaluation questions). The evaluator gave an undertaking that the sources of information will not be disclosed unless this was important for the report and in such cases, only with the agreement of the source.

The approach adopted did not rely on sampling and all who could be interviewed within the available time and were available to be interviewed were interviewed. The methodology was confirmed as culturally sensitive and appropriate by PMU personnel and the reliability of the information received is not in question. The spread of interviewees, across genders and circumstances, served to enhance the validity of the information obtained.

A full list of persons met and consulted by the evaluator is to be found in Annex 6.

1.3.4 Stakeholdersô engagement in the evaluation

The approach adopted was participatory and inclusive and it was based on an effective dialogue with stakeholders particularly those implementing the project and those benefiting from the project. Templates designed specifically by the evaluator were provided to the Project Manager with guidance on how they were to be completed. They covered aspects such as budgets and financial management, monitoring and adaptive management, implementation of responses to MTE recommendations, and self-assessment of progress towards the project Outcomes and targets.

Furthermore, the Project Manager and other members of the implementation unit were invited to accompany the evaluator in all his consultation meetings. In doing so, they were advised that they needed to use their judgement and decide when they needed to remove themselves if they felt that their presence was hampering the responses from stakeholders.

The above and other efforts aimed to make this a shared exercise rather than one imposed from outside the project. However, while the data gathering was carried out in a participatory manner, the analysis and the conclusions reached and the recommendations made, represent the independent views of the evaluator alone.

1.3.5 Evaluation boundaries and limitations

In addition to the usual constraints of time and money, the evaluation had to cope with the security situation in Lebanon. However, while posing challenges, these difficulties were overcome with the help of UNDP and the PMU and did not constitute limitations on the evaluation.

1.3.6 Data analysis

The information and data obtained was first recorded as it arose and then collated according to the major divisions of this report which reflect the evaluation questions. The discussion which followed encompassed the range of opinion obtained and the consensus recorded, if any. Conclusions were then drawn on factual evidence and/or the balance of opinion in the search for answers to the evaluation questions. Often, preliminary assessments were shared with stakeholders in an attempt to confirm the accuracy of data and the results. This was particularly so in the presentation of Preliminary Findings at the end of the mission.

The draft report was distributed with an invitation for comments. All the comments were analysed and this final report was produced taking into account all the comments received.

It should be noted that while some challenges were noted above, the evaluator is confident that these did not influence in any significant way the ultimate information that was obtained, the analysis carried out and the findings obtained.

1.3.7 The rating system

GEF guidance requires certain project aspects to be addressed by a terminal evaluation and a commentary, analysis and rating is required for each of:

- Project concept and design
- Stakeholder participation in project formulation
- Implementation approach
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Stakeholder participation
- Attainment of Outcomes and achievement of Objective

These aspects, which form the framework of the core sections of this report, are augmented as considered necessary to also address issues that arose during the evaluation.

Each of the aspects has been rated separately with brief justifications based on findings. In addition, various other project elements have also been rated, as has the project as a whole.

The standard GEF rating system was applied, namely:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency
Satisfactory (S): The project has minor shortcomings
Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project has moderate shortcomings
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project has significant shortcomings
Unsatisfactory (U): The project has major shortcomings
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has severe shortcomings

The rating of various elements of the project is necessarily subjective but it is carried out according to GEF guidance and ethics, and based on the experience of the evaluator. A score of Highly Satisfactory is not common (around 4%)[8] since it can only be applied in situations which are exceptional and where no improvement is possible. At the other end of the scale, a score of Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) is also not common (1%) and the greater part of projects and project elements are rated in the Satisfactory (S) to Moderately Satisfactory (MU) quartile (76%).

1.4 Structure of this report

The evaluator made an effort to keep this report brief, to the point and easy to understand. It is made up of four substantive parts guided by the structure and scope in the ToRs (Annex 1) which reflect GEF generic guidance[9] and is according to the standards established by UNEG[10].

Following the executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, the first part provides the introduction and the background to the assignment. It starts with the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used. This is followed by a brief section describing the project and its context.

The next part is the main substantive part of this report and comprises four inter-related sections. It presents the findings of the evaluation exercise in terms of the basic project concept and design, its implementation, administration and management, its achievements, results and impacts, and the potential for sustainability of the products and services that it produced. The findings are based on factual evidence obtained by the evaluator through document reviews and consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The third part is the conclusions section which gathers together a summary of the ratings given and conclusions that had been reached throughout the rest of the report and augments them to create a cohesive ending arising from the investigation. This section in turn leads to the final section comprising the recommendations.

A number of annexes provide supplementary information.

[8] GEF Evaluation Office (2009) *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009
[9] Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office (2008) *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. Evaluation Document No.3.
[10] UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2005) *Standards for Evaluation in the UN System*.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 The project that is being evaluated

The UNDP/GEF Project on *ñSafeguarding and restoring Leòbanon* comprises three Outcomes and project execution was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment (MoE). In accordance with UNDP operational and financial guidelines and procedures, MoE was accountable to UNDP for the delivery of agreed outputs as per agreed project work plans, for financial management, and for ensuring cost-effectiveness. The project was executed in the Support to NIM modality using the direct payment approach, in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the UNDP and the Government and according to the letter of agreement signed with the project.

At the policy and strategic level the project was guided by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC met approximately annually to monitor progress in project implementation, provide strategic and policy guidance, and review and approve work plans and budgets. The PSC is discussed further in section 4.1.

A Project Management Unit (PMU), headed by the Project Manager (PM), was responsible for day-to-day management of the implementation of the project. Project administration and management are discussed in section 4.2 below.

Funding for the project as described in the Project Document reached a total of US$2,255,000 of which US$980,000 was provided by the GEF. It commenced early in 2009 and was planned to run for five years. However, there were delays and an extension was sought and granted.

2.2 Socio-economic context

In its Situation Analysis, the ProDoc provides a comprehensive account of the forest resources in Lebanon and their social, institutional and economic setting.

Forests cover 139,376 ha or 13.2% of the country, while other wooded lands extend over 108,378 ha. The total area covered by forest and other woodland represent about 23% of Lebanon's land surface[11].

The ProDoc states that only some 2,000 ha of forest plantations exist in Lebanon - mostly small stands distributed widely and although small amounts of plywood and paper are produced, there is no national forestry industry and the demand for saw wood, plywood and paper is met mainly through imports. The contribution of the forestry sector to the GDP is very low. Precise figures for wood production do not exist as timber harvesting is illegal and wood quality is very low. However, herders benefit from forests as they use them for grazing goats and goat meat is part of traditional Lebanese cuisine. However, forests sustainability and natural regeneration are strongly impeded by over-grazing. Another forest product is charcoal which had being banned until recently because of its destructive effect on. In the acceptance that it is difficult to control, efforts were being made to establish a legalised system which requires permitting.

Non-timber forest products are important both locally and commercially. Some 900 tonnes of pine nuts from stone pines (*Pinus pinea*) are produced annually worth US$13.5 million. Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) production is also encouraged since carob pods are used to make molasses and carob seeds are exported. Other forest products such as oregano (*Origanum* spp.), bay leaves (*Laurus nobilis*), crab apples (Malus trilobata) and several wild leafy vegetables form part of the Lebanese diet. There are 236 species of wild and cultivated medicinal plants in Lebanon with 16 of

[11] Dalsgaard, Soren (2005) *National Forest and Tree Assessment and Inventory – Final Report*. Lebanon Ministry of Agriculture and Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)

them being either rare or restricted to certain regions, and 29 are in danger of extinction. The claimed aphrodisiac and curative powers of *Ferrula hermonis* root, which grows on Mt Mekmel in the subalpine zone, has led to its overexploitation, and its harvest is now prohibited. Although ecotourism is on the increase in Lebanon, it does not, as yet contribute any significant returns for forest communities.

2.3 Problems that the project sought to address in response

The ProDoc provided a useful threats matrix in an annex and identified two major groups of threats to the forest and woodland resources of Lebanon. These are : the conversion of forests, woodlands and maquis to other land uses; and, inadequate forest management effort resulting in illegal logging, overgrazing, encroachment by agriculture (forest clearance, agrochemicals), forest fires (little prevention measures), uncontrolled charcoal production, and forest pests.

The ProDoc also identified a long list of barriers including: Economic barriers, Social barriers, Environmental barriers, and Institutional/Policy barriers. In response, the ProDoc detailed a list of alternative strategies and mitigating measures with the National Reforestation Plan as an entry point. The project aimed to focus on developing and strengthening an appropriate management framework and management capacities for the sustainable management of forest land, and the development of innovative technologies and instruments for the restoration of forests and woodland ecosystems. Innovative approaches were to comprise economic incentives for woodland rehabilitation and management, participatory approaches, strengthening local stewardship through shifting responsibility for woodlands from central to communal level, and strengthening the role of the private sector as provider of services and goods. In addition, the project sought international expertise to identify most suitable technologies in the area of propagation (at the nurseries level), soil preparation, water harvesting, and tree management which ensure survival of seedlings, promote faster tree growth and reduce establishment costs.

2.4 Expected results

The results expected from the project are best illustrated by the original wording of the Objective and Outcomes as in the following table which is taken from the ProDoc.

Table 2. Project results expected according to the original LogFrame

OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Objective: A strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources developed and under implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices	Strategy developed Strategy being implemented Strategy arising through capacity building Strategy resulting from SLM policies and practice
Outcome 1: An appropriate management framework and management capacities for the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas	A management framework and capacities developed The framework is leading to the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest
Outcome 2: A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the rehabilitation of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, has been designed and validated in pilot areas	Technologies and instruments designed Technologies and instruments piloted Results assessed and technologies and instruments validated
Outcome 3: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management	Monitoring carried out Learning achieved Adaptive feedback achieved

	Management achieved

The LogFrame (= Strategic Results Framework) is assessed as part of project design in section 3.3 below. The assumptions inherent in these expected results together with the risks involved are discussed below in section 3.5.

2.5 Baseline ï departure points

Traditionally, reforestation in Lebanon had been part of the mandate of the MoA. However, in 2001 the Government decided to share responsibilities for reforestation between the MoA and the MoE by allocating a budget of USD3.3 million a year to the latter. The MoE rose to the challenge and developed the National Reforestation Programme (NRP) and Action Plan which was designed as part of this Project with co-funding from the EU. In the event, this Project experienced delays and MoE went ahead with the preparation of the Plan and this turned out to the advantage of this Project which could now build on the information which became available during the comprehensive assessment carried out towards the Action Plan. The Action Plan, for the first time, showed the prerequisites for large-scale afforestation in institutional, legal and technical terms and assessed the financial implications. It quantified the human and institutional capacities required for conducting large-scale measures and set priorities for restoration of land. It also identified the SLM principles and practices that should be mainstreamed into the implementation of the NRP business and action plan. But, in spite of all this, at the time of signature of the ProDoc at the end of 2008, the focus on Lebanonôs forests still on biodiversity and not on broader landscape-wide issues[12]. And, this was the departure point for this Project.

According to the PIF, the Project was to complement the on-the ground investments undertaken through the National Reforestation Programme through the creation of an enabling environment and by building capacity for sustainable land management as a contribution to greater ecosystem stability, enhanced food security and improved rural livelihoods. While the NRP was focused on investment and on the ground rehabilitation of forests, the Project was to ensure that considerations such as ecosystem integrity, species selection, ecosystemic cohesion and integration in the broader landscape are mainstreamed into the thinking and implementation of the NRP. In addition, the Project components on community participation, legal and policy frameworks as well as innovative financing mechanisms were expected to ensure the long term sustainability of the NRP.

3 FINDINGS: PROJECT DESIGN ï RELEVANCE

3.1 Project concept and design

As noted in the ProDoc, the Project was designed to complement on-the-ground investments carried out through the NRP by creating an enabling environment and by building capacity for sustainable land management as a contribution to greater ecosystem stability, enhanced food security and improved rural livelihoods. The Project was intended to remove the institutional, economic and technical barriers to SLM so as to enable the NRP to meet its targets and up-scale forestry SLM models and approaches over a 20-year period at the national scale. While this concept is laudable, it is not a realistic target for a Medium-Sized Project with its limited resources. Six years is far too long for a MSP with a budget less than US$1 million, even if activities are only at

[12] For example the UNEP/GEF/MoE project which aimed to control the spread of the cedar pest *Cephalcia tannourinensis* from the Tannourine-Hadath el-Jebbeh Cedars Forest to other countries in the region.

a pilot scale. As a result, objective (to develop a strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources and assist its implementation) is seen as over-ambitious.

The LogFrame in the ProDoc has three Outcomes; that in the Inception Report has four with the fourth targeting project management and UNDP explained that this was a requirement of GEF at the time. However, by the time of the first PIR-2012, there were only three Outcomes again and this was the case also in PIR-2013 and PIR-2014. This evaluator does not see project management as an outcome, but as a means through which outcomes are achieved.

The first Outcome has a focus on institutional aspects of reforestation, however, the two results it sought were beyond the direct influence of the project ; the second Outcome targets technical and practical aspects of reforestation; the third Outcome wording is unclear, it seems to be *Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management*. In terms of project design, the first and second outcomes are logically linked, however, the third Outcome is not logical, its wording is unclear and it requires interpretation. In fact it is not an Outcome and, as designed, it may not have been possible to achieve.

Project design is complicated and in effect, project implementation has tended to focus on technical solutions as its immediate targets. The focus on the major threats of deforestation and inadequate management was a correct emphasis by the project implementers, however, it served to highlight the weaknesses in project design.

Project design is considered as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).**

3.2 Relevance to Lebanon

Relevance, according to the OECD[13] is a measure of the extent to which the objective and outcomes of a project are consistent with *beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies*. In other words, does the project address threats and barriers?

The Project identified a number of barriers: Economic, Social, Environmental, Knowledge/Technical and Institutional/Policy, and according to the ProDoc, *a detailed list of alternative strategies and mitigating measures has been developed (see Appendices 5 and 6)*[14]. It is known that the Project has focussed on the Knowledge/Technical barrier primarily and as such, it has been consistent with the requirements of Lebanon, even if on its own it will not lead to solution of the overall problems.

As noted in the PIF, the Project directly addresses issues of inappropriate land uses, specifically deforestation and forest degradation. As per the guidance of the SFM Programme Framework, the Project adopts a multi-sectoral, landscape approach, combining the involvement of the private sector, the regulatory bodies and local communities in a mix of conservation/rehabilitation activities generating both environmental and socio-economic benefits. The project is in line with the SFM and LD Strategic Objectives.

It can be concluded that the project has been highly relevant to the needs of Lebanon as well as to the GEF global objectives, and relevance is rated as highly **Relevant.**

[13] DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris.
[14] The appendices were not available in the version of the ProDoc made available to the evaluator.

3.3 The LogFrame/Strategic Results Framework

A project is a planned and strategic attempt to progress from the existing situation (the baseline) to the targets (outcomes) as a contribution towards the Objective. This is done through an orderly deployment of Inputs (skills and know-how, finances and time) which carry out Activities and obtain Outputs. The Outputs are not the targets; it is the Outcomes that are the targets. In order for the project to be successful a number of pre-conditions and Assumptions must be fulfilled and the possibility that they may not be fulfilled constitutes a Risk. While it is easy to know when Outputs have been obtained (Outputs are tangible results), in the majority of cases, it is difficult to know whether Outcomes have been achieved and Indicators may be necessary.

All these elements ï Baseline, Inputs, Outputs, Targets, Outcomes, Assumptions, Risks, and Indicators ï are essential in an effective Logical Framework Matrix (or Strategic Results Framework). The original LogFrame for this project, as shown in the ProDoc, was complete with all the elements. However, the revised LogFrame provided in the Inception Workshop Report without any comment, had the following shortcomings:

- It used a different terminology (it refers to Outcomes as Activities, which they are not)
- It added a fourth Outcome/Activity (Project Management) which is not an Outcome but a means through which Outcomes are achieved
- It did not show the Outputs, it leaves out the Risks and Assumptions column, and it misses out the Means of Verification column
- It added two new columns headed Activity purpose and Activity description which are more appropriate in the Annual Work Plan

The revised LogFrame as shown in the Inception Workshop Report is deficient, and is certainly no improvement on the original LogFrame as in the ProDoc. However, according to the PMU and UNDP, the Inception Workshop version of the LogFrame was not meant to stand alone and should be read in conjunction with that in the ProDoc. This evaluator finds this as confusing and notes that a revised LogFrame should be assumed to replace rather than complement earlier versions. It must also be noted that it is usual for changes to the LogFrame to be discussed and approved by the PSC or the Project Board and reflected in the PIR, and there is no record of such approval[15]. This Terminal Evaluation has tended to focus on the original LogFrame as in the ProDoc.

Apart from being a graphic and visual summary of the project, the LogFrame should also be an effective tool for project managers and those monitoring and evaluating its progress. Changes and refinements to the LogFrame are seen as a manifestation of active and adaptive management. A weak or incomplete LogFrame needs to be rectified but even a fully functional LogFrame needs to remain as a ñlivingò document to change with changing circumstances and the passage of time. An evolving LogFrame provides the foundation for adaptive management. However, as noted above, changes to the LogFrame must be justified and approved, usually by the PSC, and recorded in the PIR. Since no such refinements (apart from the futile attempt at the Inception Phase) are known to have taken place, and if they have, there is no record of their approval, the conclusion drawn is that while this project had a functional original LogFrame it was made less useful through changes and there are few if any signs of adaptive management ï the rating is **Moderately Satisfactory (MS).**

3.4 Stakeholder participation in project formulation

Neither the ProDoc nor the Inception Workshop Report has any consideration of stakeholders and there is certainly nothing like a Stakeholder Involvement Plan or Strategy. On the other hand, the MTE Report does have a table with stakeholders identified however, this is in relation to project

[15] The Inception Workshop took place in June 2009. The first Project Board Meeting was in August 2011 and the first Project Steering Committee meeting did not take place until October 2012, more than three years later. The first PIR received by the evaluator was also in 2012.

implementation and not project formulation[16]. As there is no record of stakeholder participation in project formulation the rating can only be **Unsatisfactory (U).**

3.5 Assumptions and Risks

The ProDoc identified six risks in a table which also rated their probability and severity. In addition, the table also outlined the countermeasures and responses envisaged by the project. The same table was annexed to the Inception Report but without any comment or discussion. PIR-2012 shows the Overall Risk Rating to have gone from Moderate to Substantial but does not discuss it. PIR-2014 does not mention risks, while PIR-2013 considers risks under two clusters ï environmental and political. The original list of six risks from the ProDoc is shown in the following table which also includes an update by the PMU on whether the risk materialized and comments are added by the evaluator.

Table 3. Risks and abatement measures as identified in the ProDoc and updates as reported by the PMU with comments by the evaluator

RISK (TAKEN FROM THE PRODOC)	PMU COMMENTS ON MITIGATION, WHETHER THE RISK EVENTUATED, AND WHAT ACTION THE PROJECT TOOK	EVALUATORô S COMMENTS
1 Local populations are not interested in the realisation of community activities and global development objectives	Prior to the initiation of the SRLWR project, the MOE had launched 2 phases of reforestation through contracting third parties (private institutions such as nurseries or agricultural companies) for implementation of reforestation activities on municipal lands. This approach was in fact not found interesting by the municipalities and the local communities. Based on the lessons learnt from the first two phases of reforestation, the project suggested a new modality of implementation which was adopted by the MoE. This modality was based on issuing direct contracts to municipalities and providing them the necessary technical and financial tools needed for the implementation of new reforestation activities by themselves. This approach provided further incentives to the municipalities involved, and provided additional income to the local communities. In addition, it further involved the key stakeholders (representatives of the municipalities) in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the afforestation process and thus increased the interest of local populations towards reforestation and improved the relationship between them and the MOE. Following the adoption of this new modality by the MOE, a huge number of applications was received by the municipalities requesting contracts from the MOE.	The update from the PMU indicates a successful mitigation strategy employed by the project to neutralize this risk.
2 The expectations of local stakeholders from the project and the state are too high, and communities are therefore not ready to make significant contributions	The local stakeholders appreciated the new contracting modality proposed by the project and adopted by the MOE, due to the fact that it provides both short-term and long-term additional income to the local communities.	As with Risk 1 above, the project was successful in avoiding this risk.
3 Heavy administrative procedures, mainly related to expenditures modalities and processing	These procedures were facilitated by the project, through the preparation of new ñf i l l i n t h e b l a n k s ò a p p l i c a t i o n f o r m a Furthermore, new contract models were developed (by project/MOE experts) for this purpose and sent to the Ministry of Finance for pre-approval. 48 contracts were issued to municipalities following the approval of the Ministry of Finance of the contract model developed.	Once again, a successful avoidance of the risk
4 Forest fires undo project achievements and progress under the NRP	While the selection of the pilot sites during the previous years, the project management has paid attention to several critical factors, such as security and accessibility of the site, the attitude and degree of cooperativeness of the implementing partner, as well as the fire risk factor. Fortunately, at the end of the project the site selection modality has been mostly proven effective in terms of risk mitigation and prevention of major disasters at the trial sites. Generally, forest fires occurring during the reporting period were minor both in terms of occurrences and areas devastated. Most importantly, none of the project trial sites was subjected to any fire. Therefore, the fire risk as described in the previous years did not constitute a major issue on the national level. O u t o f t h e 7 p r o j e c t ô s p i l o t s i t e s , o r after the germination of the sown seeds, despite of all precautions taken by the project and the implementing partner (Jouzour Loubnan). Not even the fence erected all around the pilot site prevented the disaster. It turned out that local	The risk of fire did not eventuate for the project, however, it would seem that luckily, fires during the life of the project were minor. It would be interesting to analyse this further. The second part of the PMU response refers to a different risk which had not been identified by the ProDoc or the Inception Workshop. It would seem that while it was of high severity its likelihood

[16] UNDP advised that this may not have been a requirement at the time. Stakeholder involvement in project implementation is considered below in section 4.3

	shepherds had some issues with Jouzour Loubnan regarding their rights in the lands in question. This issue was sorted out but only after the destruction of our trials. The project management in coordination with the local forestry expert decided to discontinue the trials at this specific site. The level of the damage can be considered as relatively minor, since the project was trying the same methods in another site (Bnabil), which was completed successfully and somehow compensated for this loss.	was low.
5 Political instability may focus the public interest to areas other than environmental issues	Due to the political instability and the absence of a government for around 10 months, no official budget was approved since the year 2009. Therefore, the MOE could not launch any new phases of reforestation. However, the project could follow all planned operations at its pilot sites from planting to data collection till the end of the seasons. This is due to the good initial planning of the project management while the selection of the locations of the pilot sites in relatively accessible and less hazardous regions of the country.	The PMU response does not address the risk as identified in the ProDoc.
6 Political instability may not be in favour to passing the amendment to establish a forest management and rehabilitation authority	The Ministry of Agriculture was not much influenced by the political instability and continued planning the launching of the 40 million trees project. Through its participation in the steering committee of the 40 million trees project of the MOA, the project has been keen to structure this project in such a way to ensure the involvement and active participation of the MOE as well as the most prominent parties concerned with reforestation in the implementation of the project. This body which includes representatives of both ministries, NGOs, universities and research centres will stay supervising and managing the activities of the 40 million trees project throughout its lifetime. In the opinion of all involved, this steering committee will act as the sole official national management authority for the safeguarding and restoration of Lebanese forests. By this, yet another major target of the project can be considered as fulfilled adequately.	It would seem that the risk did eventuate and the Forest Management and Rehabilitation Authority was not established. However, the function of the authority has been carried out by a steering committee in which the project participated.

In general, risks were identified well and mitigation measures proved to be successful. Risk management overall is rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

3.6 Linkages between the project and other interventions

According to the PIF, both the MoE as Executing Agency and the UNDP Country Office as the Implementing Agency, were fully connected to the different environmental initiatives happening in the country, including those that affected the forestry sector, local development and civil society engagement in development and environment initiatives. This also included donor related activities ï notably through UNDP's Task Force. This has facilitated the identification of synergies and complementarities and it facilitated donor alignment.

At the time of project commencement, there were a number of regional projects aimed at conserving biodiversity[17] and this project tended to work with many of them. Most of the projects were overseen by the MoE Nature Conservation Department who was responsible for ensuring coordination and synergies. In particular, this Project was seen as complementing the UNEP efforts by combining management with restoration and by broadening the approach to forest problems benefiting from adequate management.

One project in particular which was close to this project was the GEF/UNEP funded Integrated Management of Cedar Forests in Lebanon in Cooper The aim of this project was to develop an action plan for integrated sustainable management of the Tannourine cedar forest. The Plan was intended to address the serious threat of invasive insects arising in Tannourine-Haddath El-Jebbeh forest, affecting 70% of one of the 12 surviving stands of Cedar forests in Lebanon.

[17] See http://biodiversity.moe.gov.lb/LebanonContributionToCBD/Pages/Partnering_role_and_cooperation.aspx

4 FINDINGS: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ï EFFICIENCY

4.1 Project governance

The Project Executive Board, is recognized as the highest governance level for a project and must have the necessary authority and power. It plays a key role in setting policy for the project, monitoring project performance, providing guidance and directions to the PM and other project stakeholders, and supports UNDP which, as the GEF IA, has the ultimate accountability for delivery of project products and the administration of project funds.

This project is recorded as having started in December 2008 with an Inception Workshop in June 2009. Two years later, in August 2011 there was a meeting of the Project Executive Board, labelled as the *Annual Project Board Meeting for Year 2010*. There were 16 persons present, 14 of them from the Ministry of the Environment or related projects. The meeting was not very different from what would be expected of a PSC meeting, serving mainly as a venue for the PM to report on progress and answer questions from those present. From the minutes of the meeting it would seem that at the end of business, the meeting closed and reconvened as the Tripartite Project Review (TPR) meeting, but no minutes are available.

The first Project Steering Committee meeting took place in October 2012, three years after project initiation. There were 13 persons present which, in addition to those from MoE, included representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, LARI, Municipalities and NGOs. There was also a second meeting of the PSC in February 2014 with similar numbers in attendance and similar scope of representation. A last meeting is planned for later this year before project closure. The two PSC meetings for which minutes are available appear to have functioned very much like a Technical Advisory Group, providing little õsteeringö Furthermore, three PSC meetings over a period of six years is not very impressive. The PM advised the evaluator that support and advice were sought from the most appropriate sources as required, and that regular meetings were held with the office of H.E. the Minister of Environment and with UNDP E&E Programme. According to the PM, these meetings have been more useful and beneficial to the PM and PMU than the PSC meetings which did not come up with any recommendations or useful suggestions. The evaluator believes thyat while this may have resolved immediate issues, it deprived the PMU of the enhanced benefit that can arise from the cross-fertilization of ideas and broad discussion as in a meeting with cross-sectoral representation. It also deprived the stakeholders of having a role in guiding the implementation of their project.

Project governance is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

4.2 Management arrangements

The Project Management Unit (PMU) was housed in adequate office facilities in the Ministry of Environment in Beirut. A vehicle was provided by the UNDP Country Office for travel to field locations which were widespread. Adequate signage was noticed at both the office and field localities. The main functions of the PMU were:

- project coordination and leadership
- leadership on macro level interventions
- development of annual and quarterly work plans and reports
- management of implementing agencies and service providers including development of terms of reference and tender processes
- donor liaison
- communication
- stakeholder liaison including establishment of protocols and processes for the contracts between MoE and Municipalities

- financial management, administration and reporting

In order to satisfy this brief, the PMU had a staff complement of three full-time positions ï the Project Manager, a Project Field Assistant, and a Project Administration and Finance Assistant. In addition, the project engaged a Project Forestry Consultant, and a field Planting Foreman at each key field location (those at Arz-Bcharre and Wadi el Karm were met by the evaluator). These three positions were not full time but long term.

The PM position has been very stable with the incumbent in position for the whole duration of the project. Management style was reasonably low key and democratic, consultative, effective, with good leadership. Staff are clear about their respective roles and feel they have the support and guidance to carry it out.

The PMU engaged adequate expertise as to provide advice and guidance as required. Fourteen consultants were contracted in all, of which three were international (including the MTE evaluator and this terminal evaluator), for a cost of just over USD82,000.

The evaluator also noted the excellent rapport that project staff have with stakeholders, especially implementing partners.

Project management and administration are rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.3 Stakeholder involvement in project implementation

A c c o r d i n g t o *Effective public involvement is critical to the success of GEF-financed projects. When done appropriately, public involvement improves the performance and impact of projects*ò[18] but the ProDoc does not seem to address stakeholders and neither does the Inception Report. There is no Stakeholder Involvement Plan. The MTE Report has a table with stakeholders identified but it is not considered accurate by this evaluator.

The table below is based on a template provided to the PMU with a request to identify stakeholders and record actual Stakeholder involvement in project implementation related to specific Outcome/s.

Table 4. Involvement of stakeholders in project implementation according to the PMU

STAKEHOLDERS	EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT
Other MoE programs or projects related	SE-MOE Project: Excellent involvement related to Outcome 4 of the project: Insurance of smooth coordination between the project and the office of the Minister
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)	Adequate involvement: participation of MOA in the project steering committee meetings
Lebanon Agricultural Research Institute (LARI)	Adequate involvement: participation of LARI in the project steering committee meetings
Universities	Excellent involvement related to outcomes 2 & 3 of the project: Establishment of the first reforestation major at the Lebanese University through the coordination of the project with the Spanish IDAF
Municipalities	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project, through the active involvements of the municipalities in the implementation of project trials and the Large-scale reforestation applications
Other reforestation/forest and SLM projects	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project: Coordination of the project with different partners in the design of new reforestation projects
NGOs / CBOs involved	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project: Sharing of experiences and participation in project steering committee meetings
Private and NGOs nurseries	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project

[18] See http://www.thegef.org/gef/gef/node/2024

Private land owners (convents)	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project: Readiness to provide lands needed for project trials and large scale applications. Readiness to replicate project activities.
Local communities	Excellent involvement related to Outcome 2 of the project. Close collaboration with project. Creation of short & long term additional incomes

To a certain extent, this table and report from the PMU serve to overcome the lack of consideration of stakeholders in the ProDoc. The evaluator can also vouch for the effective stakeholder involvement noted during field visits to project locations.

The project had a number of true partners in the implementation of this project. They were fully involved in the search for the same goals and objectives as UNDP and the GEF; they shared responsibility for achieving the project outcomes through their personnel, especially at the technical level; they shared accountability for delivering the project products; and in the main, they have satisfied their obligations to the project particularly through the availability of personnel to work on various aspects of the project.

Stakeholder participation in project implementation, ownership and partnership arrangements are rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.4 Project finance

4.4.1 Budget planning, management and efficiency

This is not a financial audit and the focus of this evaluation is on the planning and management of financial resources made available by the GEF. The departure point for such an assessment is the ProDoc and the focus is financial planning, management and efficiency. The Inception Workshop Report did not discuss the budget, neither did the two PSC meetings. PIR-2012 shows that around 50% of the GEF budget had been spent at the time; PIR-2013 updated this to around 60-70%; while PIR-2014 does not mention budgets. As can be seen from the summary table below, the differences between planned expenditure and actual expenditure at Outcome level are not considered significant which indicates a fairly accurate project design or effective budget management, or both.

Table 5. Original budget, expenditure and remaining funds

OUTCOME	ORIGINAL BUDGET (from ProDoc)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE[19]	APPARENT BALANCE REMAINING
Outcome 1: An appropriate management framework and management capacities for safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas is in place	315,000	220,998	+94,002
Outcome 2: A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the restoration of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, which has been designed and validated in pilot areas	425,000	358,025	+66,975
Outcome 3: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management	150,000	188,123	-38,123
Project Administration and Management	90,000	107,486	-17,486
TOTALS	**980,000**	**874,632**	**+105,368**

The PMU has advised that the apparent positive remaining credit for Outcomes 1 and 2 will be used to balance the apparent overexpenditure for Outcome 3 and Project Management. Funds remaining after this adjustment are committed for salaries, consultancy contracts, the Final (exit) Workshop,

[19] Provided by PMU based on expenditure reports retrieved from ATLAS on 13 October 2014

printing of the technical report and the distribution of materials and supplies to local nurseries. The final balance is targeted to be zero.

Financial planning and management are rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.4.2 Co-financing

As required by the ToRs, this evaluation was to assess the situation regarding co-financing for the project and the evaluator sought the basic information first from the ProDoc. Unfortunately, co-financing is only mentioned once in the ProDoc, as one of the assumptions in the LogFrame. PIR-2012 refers to the erroneous calculation of co-financing in the MTE. PIR-2013 refers to the problems encountered with co-financing from the government, and PIR-2014 does not address co-financing. The evaluator provided a template to the PMU and the result is in the following table.

Table 6. Co-financing pledged and delivered according to the PMU

CO-FINANCING PARTNER	TYPE	AMOUNT PLEDGED AS IN PRODOC	AMOUNT REALIZED TO DATE	OUTCOME/S CONTRIBUTED TO
Ministry of Environment	Government	1,275,000	1,327,387	Total amount of the 48 contracts issued by the Ministry of Environment through the assistance of the SRLWR project to the municipalities for the reforestation of 191.45 ha of degraded lands through phase 3 (Outcome 2)
USAID (Lebanon Reforestation Initiative Project)	International agency	0	12,000,000	Preparation and launching of a new USAID funded project on reforestation, through the provision of advisory services to the Ministry of Environment and following up with the US Forest Service by the SRLWR project (Outcome 2)
Hanns Seidel Foundation	International agency	0	20,000	Follow up training for Municipalities having signed Contracts with MOE
Turkish Ministry of Forests & Waters	Bi-lateral aid agency	0	15,000	Organization of a training for 8 Lebanese nursery experts in Mersin, Turkey (Project covered air travel, while Turkish MoFW covered accommodation and all other expenses related to the training)
Tom Jopson	Independent nursery expert	0	25,000	10 consecutive visits to Lebanon for training Lebanese nursery experts on modern techniques of seedling production (entirely covered by Mr. Jopson)
Montaraz, Spain	International agency	0	3,000	Hosting 2 Lebanese experts and training them on modern reforestation concepts (Project covered air travel & accommodation, while Montaraz covered all other expenses related to the training)
GIZ	International agency	0	42,000	Inviting a total of 12 Lebanese experts to participate in the 2nd & 3rd Mediterranean Forest Weeks (GIZ fully covered all expenses related to air travel, accommodation and participation costs)
Bob Rynearson	Independent expert	0	2,500	1 visit to Lebanon for training Lebanese experts on weed control
TOTALS		**1,275,000**	**13,434,887**	

The above additional co-financing attracted by the project during implementation is laudable and it is surprising that it does not get a mention in the PIRs.

The original co-financing pledged was at a ratio of 1:1.3 and this is below the usual GEF requirement. However, the actual co-financing delivered was at a massive ratio of 1:13.7. While lacking in obvious management, co-financing for this project was highly satisfactory.

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation

4.5.1 Monitoring plans at entry level

The GEF requires that all projects must include *"a concrete and fully budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan by the time of Work Programme entry for full-sized projects"*. [20] The M&E Plan required by GEF is expected to comprise a number of minimum requirements as in the following table. The table was provided by the evaluator as part of the self-assessment approach and comprises the Project Managerôs perspective on thes requ summary comments on the way that the project is seen as having satisfied these elements.

Table 7. GEF M&E minimum requirements

GEF M&E REQUIREMENTS	PMU RESPONSE	EVALUATORôS OBSERVATIONS
SMART indicators for project implementation, or, if no indicators are identified, an alternative plan for monitoring that will deliver reliable and valid information to management	SMART indicators identified in the project document	The Indicators identified in the ProDoc are not entirely SMART
SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators	Available in the project document	The Indicators identified in the ProDoc are not entirely SMART
A project baseline or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation	Project baseline available in the project document	The discussion of the baseline situation in the ProDoc is adequate, but the baselines provided in the LogFrame are somewhat simplistic, with many indicating a nil departure
An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities	Available in the project document and the inception report. Refer to section VI (Monitoring Framework and Evaluation) of the project document	The M&E Plan in the ProDoc is good
An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation	Available in the project document.	The ProDoc provides a good provision for M&E

Although this is not a full-sized project, M&E are reasonably well covered from PIF to CEO Endorsement Request to ProDoc, and overall planning for Monitoring and Evaluation at entry level was **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.5.2 Monitoring tools

A range of tools was employed by the project to monitor project progress and achievement.

The Project Steering Committee meetings are a prime monitoring tool. The meetings were meant to be at regular intervals, and the PM should report on project progress. As noted in section 4.1, the PSC met twice so far and is scheduled to meet one more time before project closure. In addition there was a meeting of the Project Board. With a mere four meetings over the project lifetime of six years, the PSC/PB cannot be seen as an effective monitoring tool.

The basis for the PMôs reporting to the PSC was the Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) which through its regularity and format, should serve as another effective tool for monitoring project progress. However, the PB and PSC did not meet often enough to perform this function and the QPRs cannot be seen as an effective monitoring tool.

[20] See - http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/meptstandards.html

UNDP satisfies its accountability to the GEF through the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR). The PIR exercise, which is coordinated by the RTA, is usually contributed to by the PMU and the Country Office and the participation of the government side is very desirable. Five PIRs were provided to the evaluator, from 2010 to 2014.

4.5.3 Comprehensive assessment of M&E

A more specific indication of a project's compliance is the instrument of assessment used by the GEF itself which states that – *a project needs to be in compliance with all the critical parameters and needs to perform sufficiently well on all the parameters together. To be classified as compliant, projects are required to score at least a 2 (on a scale of 1 to 3, with 3 being the highest) on each of the critical parameters and to have an aggregate score of 26 out of a maximum of 39.*[21]

Table 8. Instrument for assessment of M&E Plans for the project

PARAMETERS	RAW RESPONSE AND POSSIBILITIES		PROJECT SCORE
1 Is there at least one specific indicator in the LogFrame for each of the project objectives and outcomes?	Yes No	3 1	3
2 Are the indicators in the LogFrame relevant to the chosen objectives and outcomes?	Yes Yes, but only some are relevant No	3 2 1	2
3 Are the indicators in the LogFrame sufficient to assess achievement of the objectives and outcomes?	Sufficient Largely Sufficient Some important indicators are missing	3 2 1	1
4 Are the indicators for project Objective and Outcomes quantifiable?	Yes Some of them are No, or else it has not been shown how the indicators could be quantified	3 2 1	2
5 Has the complete and relevant baseline information been provided?	Yes, complete baseline info provided Partial info but baseline survey in 1st year No info but baseline survey in 1st year Only partial baseline information No info provided	3 2.5 2 1.5 1	3
6 Has the methodology for determining the Baseline been explained?	Yes No	3 1	1
7 Has a separate budget been allocated to M&E activities?	Yes No	3 1	3
8 Have the responsibilities been clearly specified for the M&E activities?	Yes, and clearly specified Yes, broadly specified No	3 2 1	2
9 Have the time frames been specified for the M&E activities?	Yes, for all the activities Yes, but only for major activities No	3 2 1	2
10 Have the performance standards (targets) been specified in the log frame for the project outputs?	Yes, for all the outputs Yes, but only for major outputs No	3 2 1	3
11 Have the targets been specified for the indicators for project objectives and outcomes in the log frame?	Yes, for most Yes, but only for some indicators No	3 2 1	3
12 Are the specified targets for indicators of project objective and outcomes based on initial conditions?	Yes, for most Yes, but only for some of the indicators No	3 2 1	3
13 Does the project document mention having made a Provision for mid term and terminal evaluation?	Yes, both mid term and terminal evaluation Only terminal evaluation Only mid term evaluation No information provided	3 2.5 1.5 1	3
TOTAL			**31**

The aggregate score of 31 points is above the minimum aggregate score of 26 points and the GEF M&E requirements are satisfied.

[21] GEF Evaluation Office (2009) *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

The evaluator concludes that the project did have an M&E plan and did carry out some monitoring activities, and the design and planning of M&E is confirmed as **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.5.4 The Mid-Term Evaluation

A Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out in November 2011 and PIR-2012 summed up the general findings as ï ñ*The themes focused by the Project are complex. They tackle the institutional, social and technical aspects of SLM in forest landscape. They encourage actions at the local and the national level, promoting the formulation of policies and the amendment of the forest law, based on lessons learnt from the field. They also support a cross-sectoral vision – with emphasis on public involvement – and an extensive use of participatory techniques with communities and institutions. The project focuses mainly on an innovative methodological approach, plus the technical one for testing new methods for the upscale of reforestation and restoration of woodland resources activities.*ò

The PMU advised this evaluator that of the numerous recommendations made in the MTE Report, only very few were found to be constructive. These had been accepted and were properly followed up by project management in coordination with the UNDP CO. The PMU felt that in general, the MTE recommended activities which had already been advised as planned or which were in fact already under implementation by the project a n d t*despite all* ñ*clarifications provided by project management, the evaluator did not seem to understand the limitations of the project in the decision making processes at the Ministry of Environment and kept assuming that the project has unrestrained authority over the MOE in deciding how, when and how many municipalities to subcontract*.ò It is universal that the Minister has the authority to act on or reject project recommendations, but according to the PMU, this point was not appreciated by the MTE.

This evaluator found the recommendations of the MTE difficult to extract from a very wordy recommendations section of the report. However, key recommendations were extracted and presented to the PMU in a template which is shown in the following table together with the management response as well as the PMU update.

Table 9. Mid-Term Evaluation recommendations and response

MTE RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (WITH TIMESCALE)	ACTUAL MEASURES TAKEN ACCORDING TO THE PMU	E V A L U A T O COMMENTS
Establishment of a steering committee	The project will establish a steering committee by October 2012	Steering committee established in 2012. 2 meetings held (18/102012 & 21/2/2014). A third meeting will be held prior to the printing and dissemination of the final report (expected in November 2014)	Accepted and acted upon. The PSC has been the subject of discussion of this TE as well
Prepare a training system articulated in different modules, covering the complexity of SLM activities and related to field experiences	Project will prepare a training system and training material covering different modalities by 2013	Training system (already articulated prior to the suggestion of the MT evaluator) followed up. 10 consecutive sessions presented by international experts were delivered; 21 local nursery experts trained; 1 regional training session was organized by the project and held in Mersin, Turkey in coordination with the Turkish General Directory of Forests	Accepted and acted upon fully
to ensure the sustainability of the reforestation trials, it is recommended to implement the trials with a cooperative and participatory approach and to evaluate the opportunity to also	By 2012, the project will look at participatory approaches available for trial implementation including the following: - Engaging the municipality to follow-up on the implementation of the	Through the close collaboration of the project with 15 different municipalities and convents, 7 trial pilot sites were implemented and 8 large scale restoration activities finalized. The sustainability of these sites in general and project findings and recommendations is highly expected due to the trainings provided to the project partners and their active involvement in the replication of project adopted cheap and successful methods	Accepted and implemented fully

involve the public sector. Also that the trials should be a high priority in the coming phase of the project	work, data collection and site supervision - Sustainability of the reforested site will also be ensured through the participation of the municipality		
It is suggested to collaborate with different actors in the reforestation activities, including UNDP projects	The project will collaborate with different actors in reforestation including: other UNDP projects, FAO, private sector (by 2012)	The project collaborated with different actors in reforestation, such as nursery owners, NGOs, universities, research stations, the Ministry of Agriculture and other UNDP projects. Many of these partners have adopted the new methods tested and recommended by the project and implemented their own reforestation projects accordingly	Accepted and implemented fully and ascertained by this TE
It is suggested to implement a large-scale plot in the next winter	The project will reforest one large scale plot of 10 hectares by 2012	The project implemented 8 large scale reforestation activities, thus restoring a total area of 25 hectares of degraded lands through the best practices found successful and cost effective through project implemented trials. This activity was completed in fall 2013 (not 2012), since the results of the set 3 trials were not final by end 2012	Accepted and acted upon
It is recommended to assist the National Reforestation Programme to identify the best planting stock, the most suitable conservation measures and other elements to ensure positive results. In addition to discussing with the MoE the most suitable solution for the follow-up of the NRP sites	Once the different trial results related to planting techniques and other technical elements are collected and analyzed, reports and trainings will be done for MoE staff working on the NRP (2012 - 2013)	The project presented the outcomes of the trials consistently to the MOE through the meetings with H.E. the Minister in the presence of all MOE colleagues involved in reforestation. The Minister and MOE reforestation experts have considered the project findings as very interesting and useful, expressing their readiness to include the project recommendations on several successful and cost effective methods in future reforestation contracts that will be issued by the MOE. Furthermore, the project always included representatives of the MOE in all training sessions organized/coordinated. Additionally, all MOE reforestation experts have been provided the opportunity to participate in different regional and international trainings and workshops (Spain, Turkey, USA, Algeria, etc.)	Accepted and acted upon fully
Increase in the communication and awareness raising campaigns	Development of communication and awareness raising strategy for reforestation (2012)and 2) implementation of the strategy (2013)	The project issued 10 illustrated booklets in Arabic and English languages on the most important native trees of Lebanon. The Minister of the Environment and the UNDP Resident Representative distributed these publications to related government officials and bodies on the occasion of the World Environment Day. Additionally, the Minister of the Environment issued a press release on the new findings and recommendations of the project regarding modern low cost and no irrigation reforestation possibilities. The project has also been referred to as a success story in many publications, such as the Status of Biodiversity in West Asia 4th edition and in the Global Biodiversity Outlook. Finally, the project held many interviews on the importance of the conservation of the forests and the adoption of new reforestation techniques in many local and regional newspapers and magazines, as well as on several TV and radio stations.	Accepted and acted upon fully

As the table above demonstrates, all key recommendations were accepted and acted upon.

However, in PIR-2012, the UNDP/GEF RTA had this to say regarding the MTE -
The MTE process seemed to be a very difficult process for the Country Office, the Project Manager, the parent Ministry and the Evaluator. By the time this RTA took over the project, the consultant has been paid fully, the Project Management made comments that have not been addressed and there was an overall feeling that the evaluator did not give the project a fair evaluation. The evaluator was also not prepared to work any further on the document having taken up a full-time position and not

doing consultancy work any longer. The project therefore had to accept a substandard document. The overall discussions in the MTE report are largely negative and the findings are not well substantiated. The project therefore took from the report what was useful and focused on improving in those areas. It should be noted that the project was rated highly satisfactory by the RTA in the previous reporting period. The Country Office is encouraged in future to more closely work with the Regional Bureau on the selection of consultants and involve at earlier stages the RTA in the evaluation process. References should also be obtained on consultants if they are not experienced in evaluations.

4.6 UNDP as Implementing Agency

In the role of GEF Implementing Agency for this project, UNDP provided technical support to the PMU. It also recruited the project personnel and evaluated staff performance, approved the project inception report, reviewed budget revisions prior to signature, followed up closely on implementation progress, assured the eligibility of project interventions in light of GEF policy guidance and approved project design, in coordination with the national focal point/executing agency. The CO provided technical support for all the procurement of consultants and later provided oversight on the outputs delivered and managed their payments. The UNDP Country Office also represented UNDP/GEF on the PSC, and approved annual PIRs, including performance ratings, for submission to GEF.

As Implementing Agency, UNDP was responsible to the GEF for the timely and cost-effective delivery of the agreed project outcomes. It achieved this through its understandings with the Government. UNDP had an obligation to ensure accountability, and its efforts in this respect for this project were spearheaded by the UNDP/GEF RTA and the Environment and Energy Section of the Country Office in Beirut. As IA, UNDP was responsible for monitoring progress and reporting back to the GEF. This responsibility was shared with the Executing Agency and was exercised through full participation in PSC meetings, consideration of AWP and Budgets, regular meetings with the focal point, visits to project sites (including by senior management) and the annual PIR.

The modality of implementation was Support to NIM and this modality puts more load on the CO Environment and Energy team in terms of guiding project management since accountability is shared.

UNDP performance as Implementing Agency for this project is rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

4.7 Executing Agency performance

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) was selected as the Executing Agency for the project and as such it was accountable to UNDP for the government's participation in the project. According to the ProDoc its role was to facilitate project implementation and ensure that internal monitoring and review systems were in place. MoE was responsible for the timely release of and reporting on co-financing committed to the project, and ensure the integration of this project's outcomes into the NRP.

MoE also provided staff or appropriate experts as needed in accordance with UNDP guidelines, and facilitated the interaction among relevant public organisations, research institutions and private organisations. The MoE also housed the function of GEF OFP, and as such, was able to ensure coordination among relevant GEF funded projects and activities.

In its representations to the evaluator, MoE highlighted some needs which will help underpin reforestation activities. These included : a comprehensive map and analytical report of all reforestation activities; a gap analysis and overlap functional responsibility matrix of reforestation responsibilities; detailing procedures of operation (identification of sites in need of reforestation,

selection of species, terms of reference, execution, O&M, cost, etc.) intra and inter-agency; the integration of schools, universities and youth groups in reforestation activities; review and amendment of legislation. These are all seen as valid proposals by the evaluator.

The performance of MoE for this project is rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

5 FINDINGS: RESULTS ACHIEVED ï EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 Achievement of the project Objective

The original project Objective from the ProDoc, confirmed at the Inception Workshop, was ï

A strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources developed and under implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices

The Project Objective is therefore targeting ï a ***strategy***, developed and implemented; and that this will be done through ***capacity building***, and the appropriate SLM ***policies*** and ***practices***. And, it is these targets that should inform project design on what Indicators to select to assess progress towards the Objective.

The ProDoc selected four Indicators to help assess progress towards the Objective and these were confirmed, unchanged, at the Inception Workshop. The four Indicators are critiqued below and used to assess progress.

Table 10. Indicators selected for the Objective and progress achieved

RESULTS SOUGHT	INDICATORS ADOPTED	CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS BY THE EVALUATOR	PROGRESS ACHIEVED ACCORDING TO THE PMU	E V A L U A T O R S C O M M E N T S
a ***strategy***, developed and implemented through ***capacity building*** the appropriate SLM ***policies*** and ***practices***	Successful pilot projects which can serve as models for large-scale land rehabilitation Acceptance of the institutional setting necessary for sustainable forestry and efficient large-scale afforestation Strategy adopted by the government Degraded land in pilot sites restored by the project according SLM principles	These are not Indicators but the precise results sought by the Objective. Useful Indicators would have focussed on how to determine that a strategy was being implemented; or that capacity had been built; or that policies and practices were appropriate.	New strategy developed. A new modality of issuing direct contracts to municipalities was suggested by the project and adopted by the MOE. This modality was used in the implementation of phase 3 of the National Reforestation Plan and is still being followed till date. This is the result of capacity building aimed at by the project at the level of the MOE experts and the local communities. This is also partly the results of the adoption of new SLM practices.	A Strategy has been developed and according to the PMU is being implemented by the Government. The project has carried out capacity building satisfactorily at various levels[22], but it is not known if capacity has indeed been built. Appropriate SLM policies have been partly developed and SLM practices have been piloted by the project.

In spite of the weak and unhelpful indicators, the Objective has been largely achieved and the effort merits a rating of **Satisfactory (S)**.

[22] Over 1,100 individuals have benefited from workshops, training sessions and other capacity building (see Annex 7).

5.2 Project Outcomes

As noted elsewhere, the project targeted three Outcomes[23]. In their first half, the following tables show a comprehensive assessment of progress made towards achieving each of the three Outcomes starting with an identification of the results logically targeted, a critique of the Indicators selected, followed by self-assessment and comments from the PMU and rounded off by the evaluator. The second half of the table is focussed on the Outputs showing assessment and comments of the evaluator. It is not usual for a TE to go down to Outputs level but the weak Indicators made this necessary.

Table 11. Analysis of the activities, targets and indicators for Outcome 1 and progress achieved

OUTCOME 1: **An appropriate management framework and management capacities for the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas**				
RESULTS LOGICALLY TARGETED	**INDICATORS (verbatim) AS IN PRODOC**	**CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE OUTCOME**	**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMM**
Management framework Management capacities	Forest management and rehabilitation authority	This is not an Indicator but a result ï it is merely repeating the Outcome wording.	Framework developed by the MOA, which is by law the sole national authority responsible for reforestation. As such, the MOA has developed a huge reforestation project (the 40 million trees project). The SRLWR project is part of the steering committee of the 40 million trees project. Once the project is initiated, this steering committee will act as the sole official national management authority for the safeguarding and restoration of Lebanese forests and the capacities developed by the Reforestation project will be integrated into the national framework. This will lead to the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forests of the country.	The Outcome sought two clear results which unfortunately were beyond the direct influence of the project and this should have been foreseen by project design. The management framework referred to by the PMU cannot be attributed to the project ï it merely participated in an initiative of the MoA. There is only indirect reference to the ñappropriate manaò capacitiesò soughò This Outcome has only been partly achieved and the main barrier may have been project design.
	Number of full-time forest engineers knowledgeable of and working for the restoration of degraded forestlands	This could be a SMART Indicator with the Target to raise the number from 5 to 10, but there is no measure of ñknowleò		
	Amended forest law	This is a good Indicator for an ñappropriaò management frameworkò		
OUTPUTS			**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMM**
Output 1.1 Amendments to legal instruments are elaborated			Amendment of the previous contracting modality of the MOE developed. New contract model and related documents established for the issuance of direct contracts to municipalities. Issue of need for modification/updating of the existing forest law was raised on several occasions (including the project steering committee) by the project with all concerned parties. All stakeholders found that such an	The PMU response seems to indicate that the Output has not been achieved

[23] As noted elsewhere, the project LogFrame showed four Outcomes with the fourth targeting project administration and management. This had been a transient GEF requirement at the time and it was discontinued.

	exercise would be unnecessary given that the law, despite being old, still serves its purpose however it is its implementation modality that is outdated. The implementation modality is outside the scope of the law.	
Output 1.2 Design of the institutional structure of a government organisation which reflects the cross-sectoral nature of land degradation, refined and agreed upon	New institutional structure of organisation reflecting the cross-sectoral nature of land degradation (the steering committee of the 40 million trees project) developed by the MOA designed by the MOA through the active participation of the project. It is agreed by al partners that the steering committee of this project which consists of representatives of the MOA, MOE as well as the most prominent parties concerned with reforestation in the country will act as the national cross sectoral institutional body responsible of the entire reforestation portfolio.	The PMU response indicates that this is not attributable to the project. In fact, it is a design flaw since the project could not operate in the jurisdiction of the MoA
Output 1.3 Human capacities for the design, implementation and monitoring of forest restoration measures strengthened	Local expertise and capacities raised through training of representatives of 63 municipalities on the implementation, maintenance and monitoring of newly planted forests. Positive results obtained at almost all sites in terms of the insurance of the success and viability of the newly planted seedlings and seeds, as well as the readiness of partners involved in replicating project methods are good evidence of the benefits of these trainings.	The PMU provides good reference to the ñstrengthe through its training initiatives
Output 1.4 Cross-sectoral integrated land use planning in the field of land degradation in woodland areas strengthened (mainstreaming)	Land use planning in degraded woodland areas was strengthened through enabling 15 municipalities having contracted by the MOE and/or having cooperated with the project to replicate best practices suggested by the project by themselves.	What is described is not integrated land use planning ï the Output has not been achieved
Output 1.5 Funding strategy for NRP developed and in place	Funding strategy developed and necessary funds for the launching of the 3rd phase of the NRP secured. Additionally, and despite of the fact that no co-financing strategy was mentioned in the project document, the project secured 12,082,500 USD for the implementation of several related activities. The best example of the co-financing achieved is the USAID funded LRI project. The project guided and advised US Forest Service for the launching of the USAID funded project on reforestation, the Lebanon Reforestation Initiative (LRI), which had a value of $12million (restored 475 Ha of degraded lands in several regions of the country during the past 5 years). The project ensured that the work was aligned with the NRP.	The PMU response describes a significant achievement of the project ï its influential involvement in the USAID LRI. However, while this is a significant achievement, it is not a funding strategy.
Overall conclusions on Outcome 1: This Outcome sought a management framework and management capacities and in the situation that has prevailed in Lebanon for some time with the split responsibility for forest management between MoE and MoA, this was a weakness in project design. The Outcome has only been partly achieved and only one of the five Outputs can be claimed to have been achieved by the project. The rating for Outcome 1 is **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.		

Table 12. Analysis of the activities, targets and indicators for Outcome 2 and progress achieved

OUTCOME 2: **A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the rehabilitation of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, has been designed and validated in pilot areas**				
RESULTS LOGICALLY TARGETED	**INDICATORS (verbatim) AS IN PRODOC**	**CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE OUTCOME**	**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMMENTS AND RATING**
Innovative technologies and instruments designed and tested at a pilot scale	Innovative technologies	This is not an Indicator but a repetition of the Outcome wording. A good Indicator would have focussed on ñinnovativeò	3 sets of set of innovative technologies and instruments for the rehabilitation of forests and woodlands implemented. 18 technologies which have not ever been tested in Lebanon. Some of these techniques (such as the rechargeable and non-rechargeable solid waters, direct sowing of seeds, etc.) were first introduced to the country by the project. The general objective of these trials was to reduce reforestation costs in Lebanon, which are very high (estimated at 7,000 USD/Ha) as compared to the developed countries and those of the region. 6 out the 7 sites initiated were piloted and completed successfully. The project	The Outcome sought new technologies and approaches and instruments for forest rehabilitation and management, designed, tested and validated and made available for replication. In spite of the totally unhelpful Indicators, the project has focussed effectively on the Outcome and successfully tested a number of
	Participatory approach	This is not an Indicator and is not relevant to the Outcome		

			continued gathering data from the 6 sites consistently during the past 5 years. Out of the 18 different low-cost and promising methods were tested, 9 were proven successful and less expensive than the current costs. The cost of the less expensive successful and no irrigation method was 1,387 USD/Ha.	innovative technologies. However, it did not address t sustainable manag by the Outcome. This Outcome has been essentially achieved.
OUTPUTS			**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMM**
Output 2.1 Economic incentives to conduct woodland rehabilitation and management created for local communities and for private persons			Economic incentives to conduct woodland rehabilitation and management created for local communities and persons through the implementation of the new contracting modality, which provided both short-term and long-term economic incentives to the local communities. This created additional interest and involvement among the local communities towards reforestation in general and project activities in specific. Furthermore, a specific study conducted by a local expert recruited by the project confirmed the effectiveness and advantages of this approach, which is still being implemented. The trials and large scale applications implemented by the project also provided such incentives.	This Output has been achieved in full
Output 2.2 Afforestation and ecosystem restoration measures on public land implemented through participatory approaches			Afforestation measures were implemented on public lands through participatory approaches with the local communities. Thus, 191.45 hectares of degraded lands were restored in degraded areas through 48 contracts issued by the MOE to different municipalities. All these lands are public with no exception. All pilot and large scale sites implemented by the project were also public, with the exception of 2 sites belonging to monasteries. All sites mentioned above have been executed through participatory approach, providing our MOE and project partners with the possibility of decision making and follow up operations.	This Output has been achieved
Output 2.3 Responsibilities and duties for forests delegated to communal level, thus strengthening local stewardship			All responsibilities and duties related to the planting of new forests through the 48 contracts issued by the MOE were delegated to the local communities, which have actively participated in the reforestation activities launched by the MOE/project. Project decision on training and hiring local expertise has been highly appreciated by these local communities as well.	This Output has been achieved
Output 2.4 Role of the private sector as provider of services and goods strengthened			Role of the private sector nurseries (as providers of seedlings with modern standards) and private sector agricultural companies (as providers of goods and nursery materials) was strengthened. 10 training modules were coordinated by the project and implemented by international experts in nursery production and sustainable land management techniques. 21 local experts (private sector) were trained, in addition to 9 experts from the Ministry of Agriculture. 4 MOE colleagues were delegated to participate in international and regional workshops and training sessions abroad. All this has resulted into the production of a new generation of seedlings having international standards. The last generation of these seedlings was used in the large scale applications implemented by the project. 1 year after transplantation the survival rate of these seedlings reached 100% without any irrigation. This has been described by the international expert as an unprecedented success in Lebanon.	The PMU response is more about training and capacity building and on innovative seedling production than on strengthening of the private sector role as targeted by the Output.
Output 2.5 Local community based monitoring of the enforcement of the regulation on the protection of forests			Enforcement of regulations regarding protection of forests has been monitored at the local level by the municipalities contracted, as per the contract terms which state that the final payments to the municipality will be released according to the success rate of the seedlings planted.	Output achieved
Output 2.6 Good practice for woodland areas integrated in NRP			Methods found efficient and cost effective for the establishment of new forests will be integrated in NRP as per the statements of all partners, including those of the MOA, upon the finalization of the project ôs tec This report will include all results obtained through the trials, along with recommendations on the best practices to adopt by official related institutions such as the MOE and the MOA. Representatives of both ministries have already expressed their interest in these recommendations and expressed their readiness to adopt the suggested approaches.	The Output cannot be achieved by the project ï all it can do is offer good practice for incorporation into the NRP, and it has doine this
Overall conclusions on Outcome 2: The Outcome was focussed on innovative technical solutions to the problems faced by Lebanon in its reforestation efforts and by and large, the project has delivered. Most of the Outputs have been achieved outright. The rating for Outcome 2 is **Satisfactory (S)**.				

Table 13. Analysis of the activities, targets and indicators for Outcome 3 and progress achieved

OUTCOME 3:				
RESULTS LOGICALLY TARGETED	**INDICATORS (verbatim) AS IN PRODOC**	**CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE OUTCOME**	**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMMENTS AND RATING**
Monitoring and learning have taken place Adaptive feedback has been achieved Management has taken place	Public awareness for forest SLM	This could be a good Indicator but it is not relevant to the Outcome or any of its targets	Public awareness raised on the necessity of conservation of forest and increase of the green cover of the country from 13 to 20% (measure adopted by the Government).	This is a strange Outcome, in fact it is not an Outcome. The two Indicators are not specific or relevant to the Outcome and the PMU response says nothing about monitoring or learning, or adaptive feedback (whatever that is), or management. This pseudo-Outcome has not been achieved; but as designed, it may not have been possible to achieve it anyway.
	Replication of innovative practices developed and tested by the project into the NRP	This Indicator may be referring to having taken place but it is weak and not incisive		
OUTPUTS			**RESULTS AS REPORTED BY THE PMU**	**EVALUATORôS COMM**
Output 3.1 Project understood by the government as national cross-sectoral effort			The project is well understood by the government (mostly by ministries of Environment and Agriculture, but also by the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities) as a national cross-sectoral effort, due to the close collaboration of the project with all related official bodies. Despite of the decision of the Government in the year 2001 regarding mandating the MOE part of the reforestation portfolio, the Ministry of Agriculture remains by law the official entity responsible for reforestation in Lebanon. Currently both ministries tackle this matter and the project coordinates with all initiatives related to reforestation in Lebanon. The steering committee addressed this issue and found that the project should continue coordinating with all parties.	This is a good Output in principle but in practice the evaluator has found a dichotomy between MoE and MoA in the forests area. And, in spite of the PMUôs assertion t government understands, there are few if any signs of collaboration and cooperation.
Output 3.2 Assessment of the baseline situation of LD			Assessment of the baseline situation of LD carried out through partner. The Land Degradation Assessment report prepared by the FAO (Antonio Youssef) in 2011 is still considered as recent and accurate.	It would seem that the Output has been achieved by someone else and cannot be attributed to the project
Output 3.3 The project's performance is monitored and evaluated			The project's performance was monitored and evaluated systematically by: UNDP E&E Programme (through quarterly meetings) MOE (through quarterly meetings with the Minister) Project Steering Committee meetings (held twice, the third is planned for end November 2014) Annual PIR reports (presented to GEF yearly through UNDP, in a timely manner) Project mid-term evaluation (achieved in 2012)	This is not an Output but a function of project management.
Output 3.4 Project results and lessons learnt disseminated for replication			Project technical report expected to be printed and disseminated through a final (exit) workshop during the first half of December 2014 to all concerned parties	This is a laudable Output, but it is only associated to the Outcome peripherally. The impressive and valuable technical results achieved by this project (see for example Annex 7) needed a more specific and better vehicle for dissemination

		than the last minute technical report.
Output 3.5 Awareness of decision makers and the concerned communities for the importance of forest ecosystems for sustainable livelihood increased	Remarkable increase of awareness of decision makers and the concerned communities on the importance of forest ecosystems for sustainable livelihood was achieved through several initiatives: Awareness raising among stakeholders on the best practices and technologies found low cost, successful and suitable to Lebanese conditions, through the trials implemented by the project. Presentations and lectures in 3 secondary schools and 2 universities. Publication of 10 booklets on the most important native trees of Lebanon. Exhibitions, fairs, facilitation of visits of students to forests and nature reserves. Increased interest of the local media and press towards reforestation and the proliferation of various articles, news and forums as compared to the past years.	The Output sought increased awareness and the PMU claims a ñremarkable increand lists the activities it carried out towards this. However, awareness-raising activities are not a measure of awareness and it is not known if the Output has been achieved.
Overall conclusions on Outcome 3: This pseudo-Outcome sought monitoring and learning and adaptive feedback and management ï a collection of disparate actions rather than a result. Through the Outputs, the project delivered some useful activities but it could not achieve the Outcome. Its efforts in trying to work cross-sectorally were laudable but only partially successful; the publication of its technical achievements will come somewhat late but it is a valuable legacy; and its efforts to raise awareness were significant, even if the actual increase in awareness was not measured. The PMU efforts which overcame faulty project design, are recognized with a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.		

5.3 Mainstreaming of UNDP corporate goals

ñ M a i n s t r i s a t r a n s f o r m a t i o n a l p r o c e s s r a t h e r t h a n s o m e t h i n g that you achieve; it is a process through which something that would otherwise be marginal is brought into the core business and main decision-making process of an organization. UNDP has adopted a number of corporate goals, mostly reflecting the Millennium Declaration, and there is a commitment that these should become mainstreamed into all its functions and interventions. The most relevant for a project such as this are gender equality, alleviation of poverty and safeguarding human rights and there is a commitment that these become an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects of the organization. It is therefore incumbent on an evaluator of a UNDP project to assess the extent to which the project took on board these UNDP goals.

The project did not have an overt **gender** perspective and PIR-2012 stated t h a t *The p r o j e c t has limited impact on women, since most of the work being carried out at the reforestation and trials sites are being performed by men. However, in some regions where female hand labour is available (such as in Bkassin), women are recruited by the project for the execution of some light field work, thus providing some additional income to local families*ò PIR-2013 and PIR-2014 repeated the same paragraph and it is not clear whether there was any effort to consider the different implications of the project for women and men; no disaggregated data on a gender basis; no strategy to address the different needs of women and men. The evaluator did not come across any effort to address gender differences in any planned action.

The project did not recognize the level of **poverty** prevalent in the contexts where it operated. The ProDoc only mentions poverty twice, once as a result of war, and another time as a result of overgrazing. This is surprising in a country where, according to UNDP, poverty afflicts just over 28% of the population.

Human rights are not mentioned at all in the ProDoc, and this is a patent shortcoming. As UNDP says[24] ñ*UNDP supports 'human rights for development' in more than 100 countries and connects partners in a global network. This work is about expanding choices and protecting rights and freedoms*. ôThe project cannot be seen as having mainstreamed human rights in its operations and implementation.

UNDP corporate goals also include **improved governance** and the **prevention and recovery from natural disasters**. The project was not germane to the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, however, it could have led to improved governance.

In the event, the project was able to build institutional capacity working through existing administrative structures. But the governance of forests management and reforestation activities in Lebanon is confused and the project could not overcome this barrier.

5.4 Impacts

The achievements of Outputs which lead to Outcomes are assessed by LogFrame analysis which is mainly carried out by the Project M&E System, and confirmed by the TE with reliance on good Indicators. The conversion of Outcomes to Impacts often requires an Intermediate stage and this is assessed mainly by TE methodology. It is predicated by Assumptions, and is dependent on Impact Drivers which include Relevance, Sustainability and Catalytic effects.

[24] http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democraticgovernance/focus_areas/focus_human_rights/

5.4.1 Impacts at the national level

The project achieved the majority of its technical Outputs under Outcome 2, and the results achieved have led to a number of Intermediate Impacts as planned ï namely, stronger capacity, heightened awareness, demonstrations, tools and methods for reforestation and some of these products are listed in Annex 7. As a result, national impacts have already taken place, albeit on a restricted local scale. The next step to achieve truly national level impacts is dependent on the extent of replication and upscaling of the project benefits, products and services. This will depend on a number of external assumptions being realized.

5.4.2 Global environmental impacts

The project addressed the GEF Land Degradation Strategic Programme 2: Supporting Sustainable Forest Management in Production Landscapes (LD-SP2). This GEF programme supported landscape approaches to the management of woodlands and humid forest margins and reducing forest fragmentation. It targeted in particular enabling policy and an institutional environment for managing forest and woodland resources in the wider production landscape; strategies to avoid the degradation of woodlands and forest margins and further forest fragmentation; and the replication of successful practices for SFM in the wider landscape to restore the integrity of forest ecosystems.

The project has delivered a strategic approach to reforestation in Lebanon. It has piloted and demonstrated successfully various techniques for the propagation, seeding, planting and managing native forest species in pursuit of reforestation and while the geographical scope of this work is limited (this was a MSP), it has global significance.

5.4.3 Other impacts and catalytic effects

An extremely important impact arising from the project was its securing of over USD12 million from USAID for several reforestation activities under the LRI (Lebanon Reforestation Initiative). The project guided and advised the US Forest Service in the restoration of 475 ha of degraded lands in several parts of the country. The project also ensured that the work was aligned with the National Reforestation Plan.

6 Findings: Sustainability

The ProDoc does not make many references to sustainability, and even fewer to replication. On the other hand, the PIRs do address sustainability and replication in the discussion of activities carried out. In particular, PIR2014 reports that replication has been facilitated by the project and that it has indeed been carried out. This is a very important assertion for a project which produced mainly pilots and demonstrations which rely on upscaling and replication for the significant results to be obtained.

The project has laid a strong foundation for replication and upscaling, and s o m e ñ h e i r s ò h a v identified. The following discussions explore the extent to which this has been developed in the Exit Strategy and the risks that might influence the likelihood of sustainability.

6.1 The exit strategy / sustainability plan

Although the Project Terminal Report by the PMU was not available at the time of the TE, the PMU shared exit strategy plans with the evaluator, which included plans for a Terminal/Exit Workshop.

Other elements included the finalization of the Project Technical Report on the trials, discussion of the report with stakeholders, and printing of the report.

The above are all important elements of an exit strategy, however, an effective exit strategy will need to include:

- a managed handing-over of the various functions of the project (such as policy and legislation drafting initiatives, survey work, technical results, etc)
- a rational handing-over of the archives, office templates, software and similar assets
- a rational allocation of physical assets, office as well as field, with recognition and receipts from the recipient entity
- an exchange of appreciation and commitment letters, especially from organizations beyond the Ministry of Environment (such as the Ministry of Agriculture)
- more attention to financial sustainability
- an assessment of individual staff performance leading to an acknowledgement and reference which they can take with them in their next career move
- an effective knowledge management system, including the capacity and capability for its management and application

A Terminal or Exit Workshop is planned by the PMU and a budgetary allocation has been set aside. Such an event needs to serve to -

- Bring together project personnel, organizations and individuals identified to continue the work of the project ï key central government ministries/departments, municipalities, NGOs, the private sector
- Project team members (including key consultants) outline the work accomplished in their area of responsibility, and the outstanding work that still needs to be done
- I d e n t i f y t h e p r o d u c t s / b e n e f i t s / r e s u l t s a c h i e v e
their own, or require a champion
- Consensus on who is taking over the responsibility for unfinished work and for products and b e n e f i t s t h a t n e e d s u s t a i n e d b y s o m e o n e e l s e p r o d ò
- It is most important to identify funding support, to the extent possible, to ensure financial sustainability

6.2 Socio-political sustainability

The social and political situation in Lebanon is somewhat fraught internally and through the broader unstable situation in the region. Society is preoccupied with the Syrian refugee crisis which is resulting in severe pressure on land and natural resources as well as on infrastructure and social support systems. The critical mass of stakeholders is subject to change and awareness and ownership of project results may become insufficient to ensure sustainability.

Political instability, expressed as constant changes in government, is a serious threat for sustainability. Changes in national government result in changes at the local government level where c o m m i t m e n t s m a d e t o t h e p r o j e c t ô s o b j e c t i v e s i

There are significant social and political risks affecting socio-political sustainability and it is considered as **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**.

6.3 Institutional sustainability

The project has strived to build institutional capacity and in general it has been successful. Wherever possible it has worked through existing administrative structures and this has created a strong sense of ownership. It has involved central government organizations and NGOs at the technical level in an active and supportive role throughout project execution. The project worked through existing government and non-governmental institutions to ensure ownership and the

integration of project activities into the mainstream of district development plans, community plans and aspirations.

Unfortunately, the institutional basis for forests management and reforestation in Lebanon is confused. While the legal mandate for forests lies with the MoA, and it has the technical expertise, it does not have the financial resources. On the other hand, a government decision (without the necessary legal basis) gave responsibility for reforestation to the MoE which does not have the technical expertise or the human capacity. The MoE, however, does have the financial resources. The obvious solution to this impasse is cooperation in the short-term and clarification by Cabinet for the longer term. Unfortunately, neither seems imminent and the products of the project are in jeopardy, at least at central government level.

The MoE has proposed that MoA should take the lead role for reforestation activities, with a steering/ advisory committee comprising all actors (such as MoE, MoIM, MoND, MoYouth & Sports, LARI, key NGOs such as AFDC and Jouzour Loubnan, etc). This committee, which will be established by the Council of Ministers, would facilitate coordination between the different parties, and with time, clarify the role of each party. Funding support for reforestation activities can continue to be pursued by each institution and the allocation of any funds from central government would continue to respect the mandate of each institution. However, the work can be jointly planned and coordinated, benefiting from each organizationôs

If such a collaborative approach was to come into being, the institutional sustainability of project products and achievements would be Highly Likely (HL), however, in the present circumstances, institutional sustainability is seen as **Moderately Likely (ML).**

6.4 Financial sustainability

Many of the plans, arrangements and other assumptions for handing over project components to inheriting institutions and their upscaling and replicating of project results, requires the availability of financial resources. In principle, these should be available through the baseline project, however, in practice and due to the current political situation in Lebanon, this might prove to be somewhat difficult, at least at central level, where support for the techniques and methods espoused by the project are not universally supported.

Without continuing external aid funding, financial sustainability is considered as only **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**.

6.5 Environmental sustainability

This was an environmental project and the security of environmental sustainability should be a foregone conclusion. However, more research and analytical work is required before this can be assured. As far as can be determined, there has been no consideration of the forests that are being planted, as ecosystems. Seedlings have been planted on land which may or may not have been forested in the past, without any recognition of any existing ecosystem services, species at risk, or other ecological values. Neither has there been any effort to record the arrival, colonisation and subsequent succession of species (flora and fauna) influenced by the plantation. Without further research and analysis and without active management and monitoring, the resulting woodland may turn out to be a less resilient and robust ecosystem and maybe less valuable (from the human perspective) than the one it has replaced. This is especially important in the face of a changing climate.

Without a fair degree of further research, investigation and analysis, environmental sustainability is seen as **Moderately Unlikely (MU).**

7 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY RATINGS

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 Project relevance and design

The Project addressed issues of inappropriate land uses, specifically deforestation and forest degradation and as such, it has been highly relevant to the needs of Lebanon, even if on its own it will not lead to solution of the overall problems.

The project is also in line with the GEF SFM and LD Strategic Objectives and it observes the guidance of the SFM Programme Framework by adopting a multi-sectoral, landscape approach, combining the involvement of the private sector, the regulatory bodies and local communities in a mix of conservation/rehabilitation activities generating both environmental and socio-economic benefits.

More specifically, in response to the identified needs, project design targeted a strategic approach comprising three outcomes. The first Outcome had a focus on institutional aspects of reforestation which may have been beyond the direct influence of the project; the second Outcome targeted technical and practical aspects of reforestation; the third Outcome was not logical, its wording was unclear and it required interpretation. In fact it was not an Outcome and, as designed, it may not have been possible to achieve.

In the face of these problems with project design, project implementation has tended to focus on the technical solutions through Outcome 2 as its immediate targets. This focus on the major threats of deforestation and inadequate management was a correct emphasis by the project implementers, however, it served to highlight the weaknesses in project design.

7.1.2 Project implementation efficiency

Project implementation efficiency may have been hindered by the lack of clarity in the respective mandates of MoE and MoA regarding reforestation and the forests sector overall. This was evidenced by a dysfunctional PSC which met only twice in six years and served more as a Technical Advisory Group, and a National Project Director who was not supportive of the technical solutions offered by the project.

In spite of these challenges, project implementation was carried out efficiently, risks were well managed and mitigated, budget management especially co-financing was well done, and an excellent rapport was established between project implementers and stakeholders/partners in the field.

7.1.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is the repeated, regular measurement or observation of a pre-determined parameter in a strictly consistent manner. It records departures from the baseline as well as trends towards established targets. Analysis of the data obtained from monitoring can be used to predict and forecast outcomes and corrective action can be implemented before impacts become irreversible.

Overall planning for Monitoring and Evaluation at entry level was adequate. However, the key reference point for monitoring, namely the LogFrame, had very weak Indicators. Neither of the two prime tools for monitoring ï PSC meetings and PIRs ï were used effectively. As noted above, the PSC was not very useful. The use of other monitoring tools is not indicative of a good monitoring

approach. One site visit was reported as having been carried out by UNDP, but a Back-to-Office Report was not available. It is concluded that the project had a good monitoring plan with budget and a reasonable identification of responsibilities, and some monitoring has been carried out. However, its use to guide project implementation is uncertain and there is not much evidence of adaptive management.

7.1.4 Project results and effectiveness

The Project Objective sought ï a *strategy*, developed and implemented; through *capacity building*, and the appropriate SLM *policies* and *practices*, and by and large, these have been achieved. However, when examined at the Outcomes level, the results have been mixed and this anomaly is an illustration of the weak project design.

Outcome 1 sought two clear results which unfortunately were beyond the direct influence of the project and this should have been foreseen by project design. The management framework referred to by the PMU cannot be attributed to the project. This was an initiative of the MoA and in the situation that has prevailed in Lebanon for some time with the split responsibility for forest management between MoE and MoA, targeting this result was a weakness in project design. There is only indirect reference to the other result which was the ma sought by the Outcome. The Outcome has only been partly achieved and only one of the five Outputs can be claimed to have been achieved by the project.

Outcome 2 sought new technologies, approaches and instruments for forest rehabilitation and management. The project was expected to design them, test them, validate them and make them available for replication. In spite of the totally unhelpful Indicators, the project has focussed effectively on the Outcome and successfully tested a number of innovative technical solutions to the problems faced by Lebanon in its reforestation efforts. Although it did not address fully the ò subsequent sustaòn ab l e s o mg h a g e, mo st of the Outputs have been achieved outright and the project has delivered.

Outcome 3 was, in fact, not an Outcome ï it sought monitoring and learning and adaptive feedback and management ï a collection of disparate actions rather than a result/s. However, through the Outputs, the project delivered some useful activities even if it could not achieve the Outcome. The P M U ôs efforts in trying to work cross-sectorally were laudable but only partially successful; the publication of its technical achievements will come somewhat late but it is a valuable legacy; and its efforts to raise awareness were significant, even if the actual increase in awareness was not measured. The PMU efforts which overcame faulty project design, need to be recognized.

7.1.5 Sustainability

The exit strategy plan which was shared by the PMU with the evaluator, included plans for a Terminal/Exit Workshop and a foundation for replication and ups identified. Other elements included the finalization of the Project Technical Report on the trials, discussion of the report with stakeholders, and printing of the report. However, there are a number of other elements that make up an effective exit strategy and these have been advised to the PMU.

There are significant social and political risks to the sustainability of the project results. These are brought about by the Syrian refugee crisis and the unstable national government. Both of these influences on sustainability are beyond the mandate and capacity of the project.

The institutional basis for forests management and reforestation in Lebanon is confused and as a result, the products of the project are in jeopardy, at least at central government level. The

overlapping mandates of MoE and MoA in terms of forests are also likely to affect financial sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is also at risk because there has been little or no consideration of forests as ecosystems. Seedlings have been planted on land which may or may not have been forested in the past, without any recognition of any existing ecosystem services, species at risk, or other ecological values. Neither has there been any effort to record the arrival, colonisation and subsequent succession of species (flora and fauna) influenced by the plantation. Without further research and analysis and without active management and monitoring, the resulting woodland may turn out to be a less resilient and robust ecosystem and maybe less valuable (from the human perspective) than the one it has replaced. This is especially important in the face of a changing climate.

7.2 Summary of assessments made and ratings awarded

The following summary focuses on the key elements of the project, including all those that were required to be rated. They arise from the analyses made of the data and information obtained according to the evaluation matrix in Annex 4.

CRITERION	SUMMARY COMMENTS	RATING
PROJECT FORMULATION		
Project concept and design	Six years is far too long for a MSP with a budget less than US$1 million, even if activities are only at a pilot scale - Project objectives are ambitious. The first and second outcomes are logically linked, however, the third Outcome is not logical, its wording is unclear and it requires interpretation; it is not an Outcome and, as designed, it may not have been possible to achieve.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**
Relevance	The project has been highly relevant to the needs of Lebanon as well as to the GEF global objectives	**Relevant**
Stakeholder participation in formulation	There is no record of stakeholder participation in project formulation	**Unsatisfactory (U)**
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Project Governance	Governance was weak as evidenced by a dysfunctional PSC which met only twice in six years and served more as a Technical Advisory Group, and a National Project Director who was not supportive of the technical solutions offered by the project.	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
Project Administration and Management	Management style was low key and democratic, consultative, effective, with good leadership. Staff are clear about their respective roles. Excellent rapport with stakeholders.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Implementation Approach		
Stakeholder participation in implementation	The project had a number of true partners who were fully involved in the implementation of this project.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Risk management	In general, risks were identified well and mitigation measures proved to be successful.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Project finances		
Financial planning and management	Planned expenditure and actual expenditure at end of project were not significantly different which indicates a fairly accurate project design or effective budget management, or both.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Monitoring and Evaluation		
M&E Design, Plan and Budget	M&E are reasonably well covered from PIF to CEO Endorsement Request to ProDoc, and overall planning for Monitoring and Evaluation at entry level are good.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Use of LogFrame and Adaptive Management	The project had a functional original LogFrame which was made less useful through changes and there are few if any signs of adaptive management	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
Role and performance of IA and EA		

CRITERION	SUMMARY COMMENTS	RATING
UNDP as the GEF IA	The modality of implementation was Support to NIM and this puts more load on the CO team in terms of guiding project management since accountability is shared.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Ministry of Environment as EA	MoE provided appropriate experts, and facilitated interaction among relevant public organisations, research institutions and private organisations. It also housed the function of GEF OFP, and was able to ensure coordination among relevant GEF funded projects and activities.	**Satisfactory (S)**
PROJECT RESULTS		
Attainment of Overall and Regional Objective and Outcomes		
Objective: *A strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources developed and under implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices*	A Strategy has been developed and according to the PMU is being implemented by the Government. The project has carried out capacity building satisfactorily at various levels. Appropriate SLM policies have been partly developed and SLM practices have been piloted by the project. In spite of the weak and unhelpful indicators, the Objective has been largely achieved.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Outcome 1: An appropriate management framework and management capacities for the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas	This Outcome sought a management framework and management capacities and in the situation that has prevailed in Lebanon for some time with the split responsibility for forest management between MoE and MoA, this was a weakness in project design. The Outcome has only been partly achieved and only one of the five Outputs can be claimed to have been achieved by the project.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**
Outcome 2: A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the rehabilitation of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, has been designed and validated in pilot areas	The Outcome was focussed on innovative technical solutions to the problems faced by Lebanon in its reforestation efforts and by and large, the project has delivered. Most of the Outputs have been achieved outright.	**Satisfactory (S)**
Outcome 3: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management	This pseudo-Outcome sought monitoring and learning and adaptive feedback and management ï a collection of disparate actions rather than a result. Through the Outputs, the project delivered some useful activities but it could not achieve the Outcome. Its efforts in trying to work cross-sectorally were laudable but only partially successful; the publication of its technical achievements will come somewhat late but it is a valuable legacy; and its efforts to raise awareness were significant, even if the actual increase in awareness was not measured. The PMU efforts overcame faulty project design.	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**
OVERALL PROJECT RATING	This is a project that in spite of flawed design, weak governance and difficult institutional circumstances, has been able to focus on achievable and very valuable reforestation techniques for Lebanon. It has explored successfully innovative reforestation methodologies which have very good potential in terms of seedling survival rates and reduced costs of planting and subsequent care. It has managed its modest budget well, attracted an impressive level of co-financing and established excellent rapport with its stakeholder partners. Its impacts have been mainly intermediate with some foundational achievements. Its true impact will arise out of the upscaling and replication of its successful products by the organizations in government mandated by their legal authority, and by the private and NGO sectors who complement the forestry work of government ï hence the need for a strong sustainability plan / exit strategy.	**Satisfactory (S)**

7.3 Key lessons emerging

In many ways, Lebanonôs set of circumstances are could be seen as having direct potential for use by other similar projects. Following are those that have emerged.

7.3.1 Issue: Best timing for a Terminal Evaluation

This evaluation took place some three months before project closure and this meant that while the project was winding down, there was a fully functional PMU and stakeholders and partners were still engaged.

Lesson: The best time for a Terminal Evaluation to take place is between four and two months before project closure, preferably when the Project Terminal Report is available and the PMU is still functioning. The TE should be timed to allow the evaluator to present Preliminary Findings at the end of the mission to the last meeting of the PSC.

7.3.2 Issue: Project design

The design of this project was flawed and the only way this could have been corrected was by refining the Outcomes. There is a strong dictat among UNDP project developers and the GEF that after the project scope has been accepted through the PIF, the wording of the Objective and the Outcomes must not change and this negates the chance of the formulation phase (the PPG) to improve project design.

Lesson: A project which, through flawed design, has unattainable outcomes, must be allowed adequate flexibility during the formulation phase (PPG) to strengthen or replace outcomes.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Issue: Sustainability of project benefits

The project operated at a pilot scale and it relies on its impact on upscaling and replication. This makes an effective Sustainability Plan / Exit Strategy absolutely essential. At the time of writing, it only had a partial Sustainability Plan or Exit Strategy and its gains may be in jeopardy unless this is rectified.

Recommendation:

The recommendation made verbally to the PMU is repeated here ï the PMU, with the endorsement of both MoE and UNDP, should organize a Sustainability/Exit Workshop inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest benefits. At the Workshop, the PMU will outline the gains made by the project and seek an expression of interest from specific stakeholders for taking over and sustaining each gain. Ideally, this should be followed by an official exchange of letters handing over, and accepting, the responsibility.

8.2 Issue: Information management

The project has generated a good amount of data, information and knowledge some of which has been or will be put out in publications, however, a lot is only found in electronic format and not readily accessible. The managed availability of this valuable information is a critical component of the projectôs Sustainability Plan without which u

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the PMU should identify an organization that is to inherit its data, information and knowledge. This cache must be well organized and handed over together with the associated hardware and software. An undertaking must be obtained from the project that this cache will be made accessible to all who require it for the better management of reforestation activities and forest ecosystems in general.

8.3 Issue: More research required to ensure environmental sustainability

A number of issues surround reforestation and these were beyond the project to address. For example: What are the criteria for site selection for forest planting? Should the plantings be monocultures or multicultures? What are the ecosystem values before forest planting? What ecosystems are bring created as a result of forest planting? In addition, without further research and analysis and without active management and monitoring, afforested areas may be less valuable ecologically than the previous situation.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Ministry of Environment, with the support of UNDP, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and relevant NGOs, collaborate to formulate a joint proposal for a project which will research and monitor the comparative ecological benefits of various land use practices. The investigations should also cover the comparative effectiveness of planted forests and those allowed to regenerate naturally through effective protection. UNDP could advise on an appropriate source of funding support.

ANNEX 1 EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

United Nations Development Programme
برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي

Annex I – Terms of Reference

TERMINAL EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the **Safeguarding and Restoring Lebanon's Woodland Resources Project (PIMS 3371).**

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Safeguarding and Restoring Lebanon's Woodland Resources Project			
GEF Project ID:	61783		*at endorsement (Million US$)*	*at completion (Million US$)*
UNDP Project ID:	PIMS 3371	GEF financing:	980,000	980,000
Country:	Lebanon	MOE Cash and In-kind:	1,275,000	1,275,000
Region:	Lebanon	UNDP IN KIND :	.....	.....
Focal Area:	Land Degradation	UNDP cash:	.....	.....
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	Ecosystem and Biodiversity	Total co-financing:	1,275,000	1,275,000
Executing Agency:	UNDP	Total Project Cost:	2,255,000	2,255,000
Other Partners involved:	Ministry of Environment	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		January 1 2009
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: December 31 2013	Actual: December 31 2014

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OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to complement the on-the ground investments undertaken by the Ministry of Environment through the National Reforestation Program, aiming at the creation of an enabling environment and building capacity for sustainable land management as a contribution to greater ecosystem stability, enhanced food security and improved rural livelihoods. The rationale was to remove the institutional, economic, technical barriers to Sustainable Land Management in this sector in order to enable National Reforestation Plan to meet its targets and up-scale forestry Sustainable Land Management models and approaches over 20 years at the national scale. The immediate objective is to develop a strategy for safeguarding and restoring Lebanon's woodland resources and assist its implementation through capacity building and execution of appropriate SLM policies and practices. To this end, the project has three main outcomes:

Outcome 1: An appropriate management framework and management capacities for the safeguarding and restoration of degraded forest areas.

Outcome 2: A set of innovative technologies and instruments for the restoration of forests and woodlands, and their subsequent sustainable management, has been designed and validated in pilot areas.

Outcome 3: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and management

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects (available at http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method[1] for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact,** as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR (Annex C) The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

[1] For additional information on methods, see the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, Chapter 7, pg. 163

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Lebanon (5 days), including the following project sites: Kefraya (West Bekaa) or Bkassin (South Lebanon), Wadi El-Karm (Mount Lebanon) or Cedars (North Lebanon) or Anjar (Central Bekaa). During this mission, the evaluator will also meet with representative(s) from the Ministry of Environment (National Reforestation Programme), Mr. Michel Khouzami (national consultant), Jouzour Loubnan (NGO), representative(s) from the Ministry of Agriculture and representative(s) from the cooperative of tree seedling production nurseries.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex B of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see Annex A), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.** Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in Annex D.

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US$)		Government (mill. US$)		Partner Agency (mill. US$)		Total (mill. US$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.[1]

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions**, **recommendations** and **lessons**.

[1] A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROTI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: ROTI Handbook 2009

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Lebanon. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of the Contract (per diems and travel arrangements (air ticket) to Lebanon are the responsibility of the evaluator and to be included in the offer). The UNDP CO and Project Team will ensure the travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 20 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	3 days	*5 September 2014*
Evaluation Mission	5 days	*12 September 2014*
Draft Evaluation Report	10 days	*26 September 2014*
Final Report	2 days	*3 October 2014*

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

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TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will be composed of *1 international evaluator*. The consultant shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team member must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience
- A minimum of a Master degree in land management, reforestation, forest management or other related field
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s) especially in the field of land degradation;
- Recognized expertise in dealing with sustainable land management;
- Experience in reforestation is a plus
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Recent knowledge of and experience with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of and experience with UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to reforestation or land management projects;
- Familiarity with nature management and conservation policies;
- Familiarity with agriculture and green economy aspects will be considered an asset;
- Experience with nature management and conservation policies in Arab States region will be considered an asset;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Excellent, proven management and communication skills;
- Excellent English communication skills.

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'.