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**ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND**

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)**

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

**UNDP/GEF Project on**

**“Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area System” (PIMS 3825)**

**MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT**

**Philip Tortell and Walaitat Worakul *Consultants***

 **July 2015**

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***We would also like to record our thanks to the UNDP Country Office for initiating us into and updating us on the intricacies of the project, providing answers to our incessant questions and other requests and providing us with background documentation and briefings.***

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***Thank you***

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Final Clearance

**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AWP Annual Work Plan

CATSPA Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Areas System Project

CEO Chief Executive Officer

CEO ER CEO Endorsement Request

CO Country Office (of UNDP)

DMCR Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

DNP Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation

EFCOM Eastern Forests Complex

GEF Global Environment Facility

IUCN International Union for the Conservation of Nature

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

METT Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool

MoNRE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

MTR Mid-Term Review

NESDB National Economic and Social Development Board

NGO Non-Government Organization

NIM National Implementation Modality

OECD Organization for European Cooperation and Development

OFP Operational Focal Point

PA Protected Area

PAC Protected Area Committee

PEB Project Executive Board

PES Payment for Ecosystem Services

PIR Project Implementation Review

PM Project Manager

PMU Project Management Unit

ProDoc Project Document

PSC or PB Project Steering Committee or Project Board

RTA Regional Technical Advisory (of UNDP/GEF)

SRF Strategic Results Framework (also known as the LogFrame)

TAG Technical Advisory Group

TAO Tambon Administrative Organization

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WCS Wildlife Conservation Society

WEFCOM Western Forests Complex

WWF World Wildlife Fund (also known as Worldwide Fund for Nature)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Project Information Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Title** | **Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area System** |
| UNDP Project ID (PIMS #): | 3825 | PIF Approval Date: | ???????? |
| GEF Project ID (PMIS #): | 3517 | CEO Endorsement Date: | September 2009 |
| ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID: | 00059058 | Project Document Signature Date (date project began): | 27 September 2010 |
| Country: | Thailand | Date project manager hired: | ???????? to May 2013New PM started August 2014 |
| Region: | Asia-Pacific | Inception Workshop date: | January 2012 |
| Focal Area: | Biodiversity | Midterm Review completion date: |  |
| GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective: | SO 1, SP 1 | Planned closing date: | 01 September 2013 |
| Trust Fund: | GEF TF | If revised, proposed closing date: | December 2014 |
| Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner: | Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) |
| Other execution partners: |  |
| **Project Financing** | *at CEO endorsement (US$)* | *at Midterm Review (US$)\** |
| [1] GEF financing: | 3,365,545 | 1,178,939 |
| [2] UNDP contribution: | - | - |
| [3] Government: | 14,200,000 | 11,360,000 |
| [4] Other partners: | - | - |
| [5] Total co-financing : | 14,200,000 | 11,360,000 |
| PROJECT TOTAL COSTS | 17,564,545 | 12,538,939 |

**Project description**

The project aims to overcome barriers to sustainability of Thailand’s protected area (PA) system, by looking into effective management and sustainable financing of protected areas. The project will also build the confidence and capacities of the PA management authorities and provide them with resources to test innovative PA management and financing schemes. In addition, it will support development of appropriate incentives, establishment of an effective monitoring system, and community participation in conservation efforts. Systemic barriers will be addressed at the national level, while demonstrations of strengthened PA management on the ground through sustainable financing will be done at demonstration sites. These demonstrations will include, for example, developing novel models of PA management, increased participation by local communities and other stakeholders, and mobilization of diversified revenue sources, supported by improved knowledge-based planning and accounting systems. Financial management capacity weaknesses and systemic barriers to effective management and budgeting will be addressed at the national level, while demonstrations of strengthened PA management, design of new financing mechanisms, and the increased use of improved models of PA management and co-management will be pursued at the four pilot sites.

**Project Progress Summary**

Progress made to date varies but in general it has not been very good. Only one out of the four Outcomes is likely to be achieved fully. Only one Output can be claimed to have been achieved. Of the remaining ten, five are likely to be achieved and five are unlikely to be achieved. However, out of the 11 Outputs only four are relevant to the Outcome; of the rest, three are partly relevant and four are not relevant. This means that even if some of the Outputs are achieved, the respective Outcome may not be achieved.

The situation has not improved much since a year ago when PIR-2014 reported a rather critical assessment of project results - “*The interventions are still piecemeal without a coherence direction yet. There are activity plans at central and site levels; but they lack comprehensive and systematic linkages among them. The activities and consultancies required tend to come up on an ad-hoc basis. Key Outputs are delivered but have not been consolidated to achieve outcomes. There is a critical need for the project to have a better grip of how each output, each consultancy will contribute to key outcomes*”. The Evaluators concur with this assessment.

More specifically, the Objective sought an enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing and while progress has been achieved with tools for management planning, and tools for sustainable financing, both were on a pilot scale and need evaluation and writing up as guidance before they can be replicated. Therefore, while some progress can be claimed, it is unlikely that all this work can be completed in the remaining time and without an extension, the Objective will only be partly achieved.

Outcome 1 sought improved governance and an enabling environment, and the project has delivered the Five-year Integrated NP Management Plan, the workshop on Improved Management of Thailand’s PA System is planned to discuss its adoption by DNP, and the Effectiveness Unit has been set up although effective M&E and knowledge-based data management system is not yet in place and neither is the expected enabling environment – the Outcome has been partially achieved. Outcome 2 sought enhanced capacities and the project has delivered the Effectiveness Unit and training has been carried out. While there is a need to ascertain whether capacities have indeed been enhanced, this Outcome is expected to be achieved. Outcome 3 has been allocated 42% of the project budget and it sought revenue generation mechanisms. The project has delivered some enhancement of capacities and improvements in co-management, and some financing mechanisms have been identified. The Outcome has been partly achieved, but the ultimate target of increased funding levels is unlikely to be achieved. Outcome 4 sought new models of PA management and ultimately effective management of the PA System. The revised Outputs are not relevant to the Outcome and even if the Outputs were to be achieved, the Outcome, as written, is not likely to be achieved.

**MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MEASURE** | **ELEMENT** | **ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION** | **MTR RATING** |
| **Project Design** | Design and LogFrame | Project design is complicated and not cohesive. It is over-ambitious in scope with too many localities spread out over a broad geographical area; there are no mechanisms for communication and mutual learning. There are no mechanisms for replication. Indicators are not provided for the four Outcomes and risks mitigation measures are weak. The design of project Governance and Implementation Arrangements is not robust. Efforts to improve the design through changes in the SRF reshuffled the Outputs and changed the substance of Outcome 4 and Outcomes remained without indicators. | **Unsatisfactory (U)** |
| **Progress Towards Results** | **Objective:** To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system | The necessary enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing has not been created – policies, legislation, procedures, collaboration, capacities, roles & responsibilities, etc, need formulation and/or updating. In addition, pilots need evaluation and writing up as guidance before they can be replicated. It is unlikely that this work can be completed in the remaining time without an extension.  | **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)** |
| **Outcome 1:** Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA system sustainability | Good progress has been made but significant work remaining. It may not be possible in the remaining months before project wind-down and closure to satisfy the shortfall and it is unlikely that the Outcome will be achieved fully, without an extension.  | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Outcome 2:** Institutional and individual capacities enhanced | The project has carried out a number of capacity enhancing activities and more are planned. There is a need to extend capacity building to the community level so as to provide for serious co-management. But above all, there is a need to assess how successful all the training and capacity building has been by testing the capacity. The Outcome is expected to achieve most of its targets with minor shortcomings. | **Satisfactory (S)** |
| **Outcome 3:** Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA system | This is the key Outcome and it commands 42% of the project budget. Its focus is sustainable financing at System level and the project is a long way from this. The Targets have been partly met and may be reached by the project end. However, even if all the targets are fully met, the Outcome may not be fully achieved as targeted in the remaining time. | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Outcome 4:** New models of PA management support effective management of the System | The changes to the Outputs under this Outcome, in effect, changed the Outcome. In pursuing the new Outputs, the project has only made limited progress and it is going to be a challenge to achieve the Outputs before project closure. However, the possibility exists.  | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | Implementation and execution | Low ownership by DNP, changes to PM and Project Director and the stalemate with disbursements have impacted the project such that with 80% of the time gone, budget delivery is a mere 35%. | **Moderately Unsatisfactory****(MU)** |
| Adaptive management | The problems created by the PM gap were dealt with reasonably well; and the disbursement difficulties have been recognized although they are yet to be fixed. However, following the changes effected at the Inception Phase, the SRF remained static and there is little evidence of adaptive management as a result of the project’s M&E. | **Moderately Satisfactory****(MS)** |
| **Sustainability** | Financial risks to sustainability | If the degree of ownership by DNP is increased, project benefits will become part of the core functions of DNP and as such they will be supported by the DNP core budget. This means that the financial risk will be greatly reduced, but this is far from certain and the financial risks remain. | **Moderately Unlikely****(MU)** |
| Socio-economic risks to sustainability | Active engagement of local communities in several pilot activities can potentially lead to socio-economic sustainability of project initiatives, provided that these activities resulted in improved livelihoods and well-being of communities around PAs. | **Moderately Likely****(ML)** |
| Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability | DNP needs to take better ownership of the project and push for further changes in its system and enabling conditions. The existing legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes still pose risks to project benefits. Unless its strict hierarchy and bureaucratic processes are relaxed, and there is more delegation/devolution, the institutional and governance risks at central level remain. | At Central level**Moderately Unlikely****(MU)** |
| At the local PA level, a good rapport has been established with local communities and local leadership seems committed and at least in the locations we visited. | At local level**Likely****(L)** |
| Environmental risks to sustainability | Fire is a serious environmental risk and a related risk is posed by the large number of communities and their farming activities within the boundaries of PAs.  | **Moderately Likely****(ML)** |

**Summary of conclusions**

Conclusions have been collated according to the four key evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness (and impact), and sustainability.

**Relevance and design** The project is seen as very relevant to the needs of Thailand as well as to the strategic objectives of the GEF. However, project design is complicated and it does not have enough cohesion. It is over-ambitious in scope with too many localities spread out over a broad geographical area, without the necessary mechanisms for communication and mutual learning. The concept of “pilot” activities has not been well-understood by project design which does not include any mechanisms for replication. Indicators are not provided for the four Outcomes. Risks were identified but the mitigation measures are weak. The design of project Governance and Implementation Arrangements is not robust, and this has affected the project. Efforts to improve the design at the inception phase through changes in the SRF reshuffled the Outputs and changed the substance of Outcome 4. The column headed “Indicators” shows the Outputs instead of Indicators.

**Project implementation efficiency** has not been high. It has been impacted by inordinate delays before and after start-up, a low level of ownership by the Government, excessive bureaucratic procedures particularly for the disbursement process, changes in the project manager’s position and a gap between incumbents, changes in the Project Director’s position, and a management style without a mechanism for communication and experience sharing between pilots. As a result, project delivery has stalled and by the end of December (latest figures available), with 80% of project time gone, the project had only spent 35% of the budget. Without an extension, it is most unlikely that the project could spend the over US$2 million remaining.

**Project results and effectiveness** The ProDoc identified five barriers that the project was to address and these were reflected in the scope and dimensions of the project and informed the SRF which was weak and lacking some crucial elements as noted above. Some progress has been made in addressing Barrier 1, primarily through consultants’ reports but the necessary enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing has not been created. Barrier 2 was weak institutional and individual capacities and some good progress has been made in addressing this. There is still a need to extend capacity building to the community level so as to provide for serious co-management and it is also necessary to assess how successful all the training and capacity building has been by measuring capacity. Some innovative approaches have been piloted to address Barrier 3 which was the lack of tools, methods, or guidelines for developing management plans. The pilots still need to be evaluated and written up as guidance before they can be confirmed and put out for replication. Barrier 4 focused on the weak mechanisms for revenue generation and while the project has explored some approaches it is a long way from achieving sustainable financing at PA System level. Barrier 5 is similar to Barrier 3 and in the same way, the innovative approaches piloted by the project need to be evaluated before they can be confirmed and put out for replication.

**Sustainability and sustainability plan** There are some risks that project benefits will not survive for long beyond project closure and the reasons for this are discussed elsewhere. Existing legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes still pose institutional risks to project benefits sustainability, and the financial risk to sustainability will be greatly reduced if the degree of ownership by DNP is increased. Active engagement of local communities in several pilot activities can potentially lead to socio-economic sustainability, provided that these activities result in improved livelihoods and well-being of communities around PAs. This will also reduce the environmental risks posed by the large number of communities and their farming activities within the boundaries of PAs. Sustainability can also be enhanced if the project adopts an effective exit strategy or sustainability plan.

**Recommendations Summary Table**

(these are shorter versions of the recommendations that appear in the Report)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REC #** | **RECOMMENDATION** | **ENTITY RESPONSIBLE** |
| **8.1** | ***Project governance*** |  |
| **8.1.1** | That **UNDP** set up a Project Executive Board (PEB) of 3-4 persons who would meet as and when required but not less than every three months.  | UNDP |
| **8.1.2** | Then, to maintain the forum for ideas exchange and advice, revitalize the broader-based Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to meet every 3-4 months. | UNDP |
| **8.2** | ***Project implementation and management*** |  |
| **8.2.1** | That **DNP** exercise a higher level of ownership of the project and consider it as being in support of its core activities and responsibilities and that it works with UNDP to urgently resolve the financial management and disbursement impasse.  | DNP |
| **8.2.2** | That **UNDP** ensures that the new PEB (see above) is an effective governance body for the project providing policy, advice, direction and requiring accountability.  | UNDP |
| **8.2.3** | That the **PMU** adopts a more inclusive and participatory management style with an effective web pattern of communication between implementers and beneficiaries.  | PMU |
| **8.2.4** | That the **PMU** set up a working group comprising relevant DNP units to consider the consultants’ recommendations and produce a working paper on how they can be implemented by DNP. The paper to serve as the discussion document for a broader workshop comprising high ranking officials from DNP, MoNRE and NESDB to draft an Action Plan for effective PA management.  | PMU |
| **8.2.5** | That the **PMU** should adopt the results-based management approach, incorporating the Training-Action-Follow-up (TAF) approach to assess the changes brought about by training. Furthermore, there needs to be a recognition that pilots are not results, but tools through which results are achieved. Before they are rolled out for replication they need to be evaluated, refined and then confirmed as successful models to be written up and offered for replication | PMU |
| **8.2.6** | **DNP** should strengthen the engagement of the National Parks Innovation Institute in the project both at national and site level, so as to obtain the utmost benefit for the DNP system from project products. Staff allocated to the Effectiveness Unit should consider this as part of their core responsibilities with clear performance indicators. | DNP |
| **8.3** | ***Barriers to further progress at Outcomes level*** |  |
| **8.3.1** | Under Outcome 1 **PMU** should give prominence and urgency to the planned workshop (see 8.2.4 above) of high level decision makers to discuss recommendations made by the international consultants on improved PA System management and develop an action plan towards the enabling environment required to achieve the outcome. That arising from its planned workshop on the lessons learnt over the past ten years of PAC operation, the **PMU** should develop a model for effective PAC engagement comprising training needs assessment of PAC members in selected pilot sites, and the necessary curriculum to enhance PAC capacity.  | PMU |
| **8.3.2** | Under Outcome 2 **DNP** should organize regular knowledge exchange forums on key issues introduced by the project for departmental officials and related partner agencies. Following each thematic knowledge forum, concrete actions should be planned and implemented to integrate the knowledge into DNP’s work to the extent possible.**DNP** should ensure that training curricula developed by the project on improved PA management and sustainable financing should be integrated into regular training programmes for all PA Superintendents and senior staff.  | DNP |
| **8.3.3** | Under Outcome 3 The **PMU**, working with **DNP** and **UNDP**, and working with the SRF Consultant, should review the scope of Outcome 3, confirm or revise Outputs, and prioritize the Activities so as to reflect the possibility that there may not be a project extension. The result of these deliberations should be presented for approval to the PEB and the RTA.More specifically, the focus under Output 3.1 should go on to implementation**.** Focus for Output 3.2 should now go on finalizing the implementation of mechanism at pilot sites, evaluation of the pilots, writing up for replication and for upscaling to System level. Under Output 3.3, the focus should now go on community partnerships – with equal status and equal responsibilities for serious co-management. This should include the policy and legislative provisions for joint managements. Work under Output 3.4 should be carried out under Outcome 2. Move this Output to Outcome 2. As a priority, the **PMU**, with the concurrence of the PEB, should arrange for an evaluation consultant to work with stakeholders to assess the level of success of each and any pilot project against its original objectives and targets, record the lessons learnt, refine the process if necessary, and write it up in a manner that can be replicated.If there are time constraints, the PMU should focus on models for the following, listed in our suggested order of priority:1 Financial mechanism for revenue raising/cost-effectiveness/cost-offsetting (e.g. through Doi Inthanon Conservation Fund, Khao Kitchagoot Sustainable Tourism Project, Tarutao /Reef Guardian Project)2 Co-management approach (e.g through improved PAC role and through community’s engagement in the sustainable buffer zone management project in Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary)3 Complex approach (e.g. the case of EFCOM administration and project implementation)4 Objective-driven management plan and implementation (e.g. by Klong Lan NP) | PMU, DNP, UNDP |
| **8.3.4** | Under Outcome 4 **UNDP**, with the concurrence of the **PEB** and the approval of the **GEF**, should change the Outcome wording statement from - *New models of PA management support effective management of the System* to - *New models of PA management captured, communicated and advocated*so as to create better relevance and harmony between the Outcome and the Outputs which should now be confirmed.**PMU** should constantly capture and feed the knowledge/lessons learnt from the implementation of pilot activities to DNP Management as well as to the PEB in search of support and advice for scaling up.It is also important for the **DNP** to display and share the project’s products (with a disclaimer if necessary) within the department as well as with the wider community | UNDP, PMU, DNP |
| **8.4** | ***Meaningful involvement of communities*** |  |
|  | That the **PMU**, while respecting cultural and traditional nuances as well as ethnic rights, should work with community leaders to achieve a partnership for mutual benefit from Protected Areas. The immediate aim of this partnership should be true co-management following capacity building at community level to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the values and vulnerabilities of PAs. The ultimate aim is to decrease, and eliminate where possible, the impacts of communities who live and work within PAs. Consideration should be given to alternative income generation to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals, fire and similar impacts.  | PMU |
| **8.5** | ***Monitoring and Evaluation and the SRF*** |  |
| **8.5.1** | The **PMU** should engage an expert consultant to lead a review of the SRF seeking improvements to the Indicators for the Objective and the Outcomes, a revision of some Outputs to ensure their relevance to the respective Outcome, and an adjustment of Baselines and Targets to reflect new Indicators. The review should be carried out according to UNDP guidance as discussed in section 3. At the same time, it should revise the M&E Plan and populate it with Targets from the revised SRF and timelines. It should then monitor impact or progress towards it (achievement/results) as well as the manner in which progress has been achieved (or not), that is, process. Use both impact and process monitoring to keep the SRF under continuous review, recommending changes (adaptive management) with the concurrence of the TAG to the PEB | PMU |
| **8.5.2** | The **DNP** should review the mandate of its Innovation Institute, strengthening its role in M&E across the department and including monitoring of the project guided by the targets set in the revised SRF | DNP |
| **8.5.3** | More specifically, consideration should be given to the following amendments to the SRF – * Move Output 3.4 to Outcome 2 (see 8.3.3.2 above)
* Change the wording of Outcome 4 statement (see 8.3.4 above)
* Develop Indicators for each of the four Outcomes
* Identify Baselines for each of the new Indicators reflecting the current state of progress or achievement
* Identify new Targets for each of the new Indicators
* To the extent possible and as appropriate, use gender-disaggregated Indicators, Baselines and Targets (see 8.7 below)
 | UNDP, DNP, PMU |
| **8.6** | ***Communication, sharing and outreach*** |  |
| **8.6.1** | The **PMU** should review its webpage on the Innovation Institute website (in addition to its Facebook page) and use it as a mechanism for communication within the project and beyond to all stakeholders and others who are interested in the project | PMU |
| **8.6.2** | It is also important for the **DNP** to display and share the project’s products (with a disclaimer if necessary) within the department as well as with the wider community | DNP |
| **8.7** | ***Gender Mainstreaming*** |  |
|  | In its annual planning workshop, the **PMU** should engage a gender consultant to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming and lead the participants through the gender mainstreaming planning process which includes four steps, *viz*:1 Gender analysis based on gender-disaggregated data to provide basic understanding about men’s and women’s different roles, needs, and conditions within the project’s context. This could include, for example, numbers of male and female participants/beneficiaries of project activities, their specific needs/conditions, and their roles/potential contributions to the planned activities.2 Designing how the project’s interventions/activities could address different gender roles/needs while still responding to the objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project.3 Designing gender-disaggregated indicators for each of the interventions/activities4 Conduct M&E based on the workplan which incorporates gender-disaggregated indicators and prepare a report which includes gender-disaggregated data/results. | PMU |
| **8.8** | ***Exit strategy for sustainability of project benefits*** |  |
|  | The **PMU**, with the endorsement of both DNP and UNDP, should organize a Sustainability/Exit Workshop some two months before project closure, inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest in the project’s products, 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 | PMUDNPUNDP |
| **8.9** | ***Project extension*** |  |
|  | After ascertaining that each of the above recommendations has been accepted and considered in the Management Response, **UNDP,** with the concurrence of the PEB, should obtain GEF concurrence for the project to be extended by another 12 months at no additional cost to GEF to terminate in December 2016 | UNDP |

**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Purpose of the evaluation[[1]](#footnote-1)**

This is the independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNDP/GEF project on *Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area System*carried out in accordance with the Terms of Reference (Annex 1).

The **purpose** of the MTR is to satisfy the GEF/UNDP requirement for such a review with the ultimate aim of helping the implementation team and stakeholders with the successful delivery of project results, products and impacts.

The **objective** of the MTR is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project Objective and Outcomes as specified in the ProDoc, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s risks to sustainability.

The **scope** of the review is broad and it is depicted in the MTR Planning Matrix in Annex 2 which guided the evaluation. It spans project design, the Strategic Results Framework (LogFrame), progress towards the Outcomes, management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project level monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, reporting and communications, and the risks to sustainability of project results. The scope of this MTR also includes consideration of UNDP’s corporate targets in particular the eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion, sustainable human development, and gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In assessing achievements by the project, the review has sought answers to a number of questions which arise from the project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs as amended and recorded in the Project Inception Report.[[2]](#footnote-2) The questions formed the basis of the self-assessment of progress by the PMU and can be seen in Annex 3 which also includes the PMU’s full response.

**1.2 Methodology**

The MTR was guided by principles enunciated in the monitoring and evaluation policy of the GEF[[3]](#footnote-3) and followed UNDP guidance[[4]](#footnote-4). In particular, the Evaluators adopted a participatory approach which, while eliciting opinions and views from stakeholders, was complemented by our own observations and findings, such that our independence was never placed in jeopardy.

**1.2.1 Evaluation dimensions**

The evaluation exercise commenced in mid-February 2015 and a mission to Thailand started on 16 March 2015. Following extensive consultation, including at a number of project sites, Preliminary Findings were presented on 30 March 2015 and the mission ended on the next day. After a period of about three weeks, the evaluators delivered their first draft report and comments were received from stakeholders and a second draft was produced. Further comments were received and a third draft was produced which resulted in further comments. The final Mid-Term Review Report was delivered at the end of July 2015.

A detailed schedule and time-line for the entire review assignment is in Annex 4.

**1.2.2 The basis for evaluation**

The basis for this MTR 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 Strategic Results Framework (SRF) captures the essence of the ProDoc and the project. In the case of this project the SRF was amended at the inception phase and it is that amended version which is addressed in this evaluation since that is the version that has guided the project implementers.

**1.2.3 The approach adopted**

The review 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 UNDP and the Project Management Unit. In addition, relevant websites were also visited and studied. The MTR team received extensive briefings and additional documentation at the beginning of the mission. Following this, we 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. This phase ended with the presentation of Preliminary Findings to key stakeholders as available.

The second phase focused on analysis and drafting and it started after the end of the mission, from home base. This phase concluded with the production of a draft version of the report which was forwarded to UNDP, the Government and the PMU for comments.

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 significant difference of opinion between the comment and the original text, this has been acknowledged in a footnote. An Audit Trail has also been kept and is available as Annex 5 in a separate file.

As noted in the Acknowledgements, the Evaluators benefited greatly from the wide spectrum of views, opinions and advice that they received during the course of their work. However, the opinions expressed, the conclusions reached and the recommendations made in this report are solely those of the Evaluators.

**1.2.4 Data collection**

Two basic tools were used in the search for primary data and information – 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. If the information was not available in document form but only from consultations, the evaluators 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 evaluators 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 others were obtained subsequently. 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 6 which also contains a short list of the websites that were visited and reviewed.

Some 78 persons were met and consulted ranging from UNDP and project management personnel, to central and local Government and various beneficiaries, including at community level, and implementation partners.

Interview protocols were described in the MTR Inception Report and according to Annex 7. 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’s products and benefits were likely to be sustainable (= the basic evaluation questions). The evaluators 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.

While it was not possible to meet all stakeholders, there was no plan to just meet with a sample – all who could be met and consulted, were. The Review Team relied on the advice of the UNDP CO, the PMU and Government, on who they were to meet with. However, having received the advice of the project team on who to meet and which sites to visit, the Evaluators ensured that the list included all key stakeholders, reflected a balance between government and non-government interviewees, and was truly representative of the project context. 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 evaluators is to be found in Annex 8.

**1.2.5 Stakeholders’ 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 evaluators 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, risk management, stakeholder involvement, and self-assessment of progress towards the project Outcomes and targets.

The Project Manager and/or other members of the implementation unit were invited to accompany the evaluators in their 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, as already noted above, 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 evaluators alone.

**1.2.6 Evaluation boundaries and limitations**

The usual constraints of time and money posed some challenges, but these difficulties were overcome with the help of UNDP and the PMU, and did not constitute limitations on the evaluation.

**1.2.7 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. Preliminary assessments were shared with stakeholders in an attempt to confirm the accuracy of data 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 an audit trail has been kept (Annex 5), 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 evaluators are confident that these did not influence in any significant way the ultimate information that was obtained, the analysis carried out and the findings obtained.

**1.2.8 The rating system**

GEF/UNDP guidance requires certain project aspects which are addressed by a Mid-Term Review (as opposed to a Terminal Evaluation) to be rated. These are:

* Progress towards Results (by Outcomes)
* Project Implementation & Adaptive Management
* Sustainability

The standard GEF rating system was applied (see Annex 9) and each of the aspects has been rated separately with brief justifications based on findings. In rating progress towards results, the evaluators based their assessment on the SRF which had some discrepancies. As a result, comparative ratings for progress towards the Objective and progress towards the outcomes show some discrepancies. These are brought about primarily by the assessment of progress towards Targets (rather than the actual results sought by the Outcome statements) since some Targets were not relevant to the Outcomes.

The rating of various elements of the project is carried out according to GEF guidance and ethics, and based on the experience of the evaluators. A score of Highly Satisfactory is not common (around 4%)[[5]](#footnote-5) 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 (MS) quartile (76%).

**1.3 Structure of this report**

The evaluators 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 UNDP guidance[[6]](#footnote-6) and is according to the standards established by UNEG[[7]](#footnote-7). The signed UNEG Code of Conduct is in Annex 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 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 the potential for sustainability of the products and services that it produced. The findings are based on factual evidence obtained by the evaluators 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.

**2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

**2.1 Development context [[8]](#footnote-8)**

**2.1.1 Environment context**

Thailand’s biodiversity is globally significant. IUCN’s Red List notes that Thailand has over 1700 globally threatened species, including several Critically Endangered species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and plants. Nine per cent of all species known to science can be found in the country and significant portions of several WWF Ecoregions 200 also fall inside Thailand. Thailand’s topography contributes to high gamma diversity, particularly of coastal and marine ecosystems along the thin long mountainous peninsula of Southern Thailand.

In order to conserve its globally and nationally important biodiversity, Thailand started to establish protected areas (PAs) in the 1960s. Currently, the country’s protected area system consists of more than 400 PAs, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, forest parks, non-hunting areas, botanical gardens, and arboreta, covering approximately 18% of the country’s total land area and 8% of its territorial seas.

**2.1.2 Policy and legislation context**

Thailand’s protect area system is largely managed by the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). The legal framework for protected area management in Thailand rests on three important Acts:

* *The National Parks Act of 1961* which states that a national park is to be *'preserved in its natural state for the public education and enjoyment*'*.* The Act permits visitors inside national parks, but forbids residence, hunting, clearing and gathering of vegetation, mining and the introduction of livestock within park boundaries.
* *The Wildlife Protection and Preservation Act of 1960 (revised in 1992)*, stating that wildlife sanctuaries are areas for *'the conservation of wildlife habitat so that wildlife can freely breed and increase their populations in the natural environment'*. Wildlife sanctuaries are not generally open to the public but researchers are allowed*.*
* *The Natural Forest Reserve Act of 1964* which provides the underlying legislative framework for all Government regulation of forest areas in Thailand, including forest parks and non-hunting areas*.*

There is also a number of other important Acts, Resolutions and Policies important for protected areas management and conservation of biodiversity in Thailand. This includes particularly the Constitution which provides a mandate for radical reform of the governance system, and for management and governance of rural natural resources with peoples’ participation.

**2.1.3 Institutional context**

DNP which has the mandate and jurisdiction for management of protected areas in Thailand consists of 13 divisions/offices at the national level and 21 sub-national (regional) offices. The Central Divisions, including National Park and Wildlife Conservation Divisions, are in charge of policies and planning while the regional offices are responsible for supervision, backstopping and overseeing PA management in their regions. At the individual Protected Area level, a head station and a number of sub-stations exist, depending on the budget and the extent of the PA. The officer in charge is the PA superintendent, supported by one or more assistant superintendents. In practice, a number of day-to-day tasks and some management decisions remain within the discretion of the individual superintendents. Other decisions appear to be made at the DNP Bangkok level.

Local governments (Tambon Administrative Organizations - TAOs) located within or immediately around PAs are mandated to undertake local environmental planning and management, as well as developing local infrastructure and spatial planning. They receive 5% of all national park revenue. Protected Area Advisory Committees (PACs) are set up by Administrative Order, as nominated by the PA managers and appointed by the DNP Director General for each protected area. Each PAC is composed of representatives from the PA staff, the local TAO, local communities and leaders, and local NGOs. The role of a PAC is to advise and assist PA staff in conflict resolution, management planning and monitoring, benefit and responsibility sharing, and approval and evaluation of pilot projects proposed by local communities.

**2.1.4 Socio-economic context**

During the past 40 years, Thailand has experienced steady economic growth but at the cost of its rich natural resources. While the Government, NGOs and other partners have focused much effort through the existing PA system and other conservation initiatives over the past few decades, the country’s PA system is experiencing growing fragmentation and there are concerns that the size of many gazetted national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are insufficient to sustain their flora and fauna.

Key types of threats associated with the loss of biodiversity in Thailand, leading to the formulation of this project include:

*Deforestation*: Much of the country’s rapid economic development in the past 40 years which depended on its rich natural resource endowments resulted in sharp decrease of forest coverage. This forest loss was caused by increasing pressure on land, including infrastructure development, industrialization, and promotion of cash crops.

*Agriculture:* Large scale commercial agricultural development (primarily for exports) has placed incredible strains on water resources and watersheds. Use of agro-chemicals and their leakages into water sources are considered an important non-point pollution source. People living in PA and adjacent areas also rely primarily on resources in protected area for their livelihoods.

*Development and Urbanization:* Rapid industrial development caused pollution problems. Construction of roads and other infrastructure have also caused fragmentation and losses of habitats. Construction of dams, for example, made several parts of the protected areas more accessible and led to increased numbers of poaching incidences.

*Tourism:* Tourism is an important contributor for Thailand’s protected area system. However, in some places, inappropriate facilities have been built or proposed in Thailand’s national parks to promote tourism. Excessive tourism activities and improper management of pollution have contributed to the degradation of coastal habitats and marine resources.

 *Unsustainable use:* While hunting and fishing are not permitted, communities living in and around protected areas continue to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes. In addition, the trade in illegal and endangered species continues for certain species.

**2.2 Problems that the project sought to address**

According to the CEO Endorsement Request (CEO ER), the project was in response to the following five threats to Thailand’s biodiversity:

* Deforestation (50% lost between 1960 and 2000)
* Agriculture/land use (5 million people estimated to be living inside protected areas)
* Land conversion – development and urbanization
* Tourism (especially tourism developments within protected areas)
* Unsustainable Use, including Hunting and Fishing

The CEO ER proposed the long-term solution for Thailand’s protected area system as comprising strengthened and systematic protected area management planning, improved institutional and staff capacity, and effective use of new models of protected area management, all supported by knowledge-based planning, improved budget allocations, and new and sustainable financing mechanisms. But it also went on to identify five key barriers to the long-term solution. These were:

* Weak policies, planning and information management
* Weak institutional and individual capacities for effective PA management and financial planning
* Park superintendents and staff do not have access to tools, methods, or guidelines for developing management plans
* Deficiencies in capacity and the variety and scale of revenue and financing generating activities and mechanisms for protected areas
* Limited range and examples of effective models of PA management

**2.3 Project Description and Strategy**

In response to the above threats and barriers, the project adopted the following Objective:

*To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system*

and it proposed to do this by aiming for four Outcomes, namely:

**Outcome 1:** *Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA System sustainability*

**Outcome 2:** *Institutional and individual capacities enhanced*

**Outcome 3:** *Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA System*

**Outcome 4:** *New models of PA management support effective management of the System*

The project description in the ProDoc states that the project aims to overcome barriers to the sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area (PA) system, through effective management and sustainable financing of protected areas.

The project was also expected to build the confidence and capacities of the PA management authorities and provide them with resources to test innovative PA management and financing schemes. In addition, the project was expected to support development of appropriate incentives, establishment of an effective monitoring system, and facilitate community participation in conservation efforts.

The project aimed to address systemic barriers and financial management capacity weaknesses at the national level, while demonstrations of strengthened PA management on the ground through sustainable financing will be done at demonstration sites. These demonstrations were to include, for example, developing novel models of PA management, increased participation by local communities and other stakeholders through co-management, design of new financing mechanisms, and mobilization of diversified revenue sources, all supported by improved knowledge-based planning and accounting systems.

**2.4 Field localities**

The Project Document specified five PAs as pilot sites, including Doi-Inthanon National Park, Khao-Chamao National Park, Tarutao Marine National Park, Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary and Klong Lan National Park. All of them were selected as stand-alone PAs. Criteria for site selection included, (1) potential to demonstrate a model for replication, (2) capacity of Superintendent, and (3) potential for revenue mobilization.

During the inception phase, Mae Wong National Park was added to Huay Kha Khaeng WS and Klong Lan NP, and the three sites were clustered as the Sub-Western Forest Complex (WEFCOM).

Seven more PAs were also added to Khao Chamao NP, making one cluster of Eastern Forest Complex (EFCOM). As a result, the project eventually focused on 4 pilot areas of 13 PAs including:

1. Inthanon National Park
2. Sub-WEFCOM
3. EFCOM
4. Tarutao Marine National Park

A forest complex is defined as ‘a group of protected areas linked through natural systems’. Thailand has been piloting the management of forest complexes to pave the way for more effective integration of protected areas with sustainable development. Administratively, complex areas are managed by respective DNP regional offices, which would provide central platforms for management, budget and technical assistance disbursements and coordinating effectively with local and regional stakeholders. The reason for the project to add more PAs to sub-WEFCOM and EFCOM was to enhance capacity of the Regional Offices in these aspects.

A short description of each pilot area is provided below.

**2.4.1 Tarutau National Park**

Tarutao National Park is one of the most well-known tourist destinations in Thailand. Itcovers 149,000 ha of Thailand's Andaman Sea in Satun Province, Southern Thailand. Its main feature is the coastal and marine ecosystem, under Category II of IUCN list. The area is rich in a variety of plant and animal communities which occupy different ecosystems including coral reef habitats. A number of wildlife species are also found in this area which is home to many species of cetaceans and nesting sea turtles.

The main challenges faced by the park are related to unsustainable land-use, unsustainable tourism, and improper/contaminated waste disposal by the tourism industry.

**2.4.2 Doi Inthanon National Park**

Located in Chiang Mai province, Northern Thailand, Doi Inthanon National Park covers 48,240 ha of forest ecosystem under IUCN Category II. This mountain range is the catchment of origin for many rivers including the Ping River that fills up Bhumipol Dam, the site of power generation. The park comprises many forest types, including hill evergreen forest, deciduous dipterocarp forest and mixed deciduous forest. The forests are home to important plants, wild flowers and a great variety of birds.

The challenge facing Doi Inthanon is community agriculture as there is a relatively large number of communities living within and around the park. Agricultural land is cleared from season to season through the use of fire which often go out of control and result in severe devastation of protected forests.

**2.4.3 Eastern Forests Complex**

The Eastern Forest Complex comprises eight national parks and wildlife sanctuaries**.** Located in the eastern part of the country, the area is seen by DNP as IUCN Category II. Its tropical rain forest is a perfect home to many major plants including wild orchids. Forest habitats within the areaare used bymany wildlife and bird species**.** Khao-Chamoa-Khao Wong National Park also serves as an important supply of water to Rayong Province.

Management issues of the Eastern Forest Complex vary from one park to another. The most common ones are related to wildlife management (human-elephant conflict) and the impact of tourism.

**2.4.4 (Sub) Western Forests Complex**

The Western Forest Complex (WEFCOM) is composed of 11 national parks and six wildlife sanctuaries. Huay Kha Khaeng WS, Klong Lan NP, and Mae Wong NP are part of this complex.

Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site in December 1991. The total area coverage is 278,000 ha. It is one of the most outstanding conservation areas in mainland Southeast Asia on account of its largely undisturbed primeval forest. It contains one of the last important areas of lowland riverine forest remaining in Thailand. The site is biogeographically unique, capable of sustaining flora and fauna indefinitely, of exceptional natural beauty and scientific value, and includes very high biological diversity. Major threats to the area include wildlife hunting and community agriculture.

Klong Lan National Park is located in Khamphaeng Phet Province with a total area of 187,500 rai. It was declared a protected area in December 1982. The terrain is mountainous complex with sandy soil. It comprises evergreen forest, mixed deciduous forest and bamboo forest at different altitudes. Klong Lan waterfall is one of the most famous tourist attractions in Thailand.

Mae Wong National Park is located between Khamphaeng Phet and Nakorn Sawan provinces, covering an area of 894 km2. The park is rugged and hilly with the highest peak, Khao Mo Ko Chu, at 1,964 m, one of the highest in Thailand. Mae Wong is home to many rare birds such as [Rufous-necked Hornbill](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/rufous-necked-hornbill), [Burmese Yuhina](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/burmese-yuhina), [Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/coral-billed-scimitar-babbler), [Grey Peacock-pheasant](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/grey-peacock-pheasant), [Mountain Hawk-eagle](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/mountain-hawk-eagle). Camera traps from August 2011 released by DNP, Wildlife and Plant Conservation and WWF reveals that [tigers](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/tiger) are still around in Mae Wong – nine tigers have been recorded. Some other mammals that can be found in the park are [Asian black bear](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/asian-black-bear), [Phayre's leaf monkey](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/phayres-leaf-monkey), [Golden Jackal](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/golden-jackal), [Lar Gibbon](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/lar-gibbon), and [Malayan Tapir](https://www.thainationalparks.com/specie/malayan-tapir) among others.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Major threats of the sub-WEFCOM are unsustainable tourism and human activities in the buffer zones of wildlife sanctuaries.

**2.5 Project timing and milestones**

The CEO Endorsement Request for the project says that project implementation was due to start on September 1, 2009 and close on September 31, 2013 – a four year duration. But according to PIR-2012 the Project started with the signature of the ProDoc on 27 September 2010 and project closure was extended to December 2014. PIR-2013 shortens the duration somewhat when it gives the revised closing date as 25 September 2014. Then, PIR-2014 gives the latest closing date as 31 December 2015. In effect, the project has been extended twice.

The extensions were the direct result of the delays and uncertainties faced by the project and which arose from political, procedural and flood recovery difficulties. In fact, according to the Inception Report, except for a Project Orientation Workshop in August 2011, nothing happened until January 2012 when the Inception Workshop was held. This was followed by the First Project Steering Committee/Board meeting in March 2012. The Second Project Board Meeting was held in September 2012 and while the project picked up momentum from then on, its delivery rate was still very sluggish.

There were two foremost reasons for the delays as recorded in the PIRs –

Firstly, there was a delay in getting activity plans developed at site level, due to the lack of understanding and coordination between the PMU and the pilot sites. And, by the time the activity plans had been completed and approved by DNP, further delays were caused by the resignation of the Project Manager in May 2014 and the gap of three months before the new Project Manager came on board in August 2014.

Secondly, project progress and delivery have been held back by constraints in the financial flow. The whole implementation of the project in the first two years was facilitated by UNDP because of the “high risk” rating from the micro-assessment process conducted prior to advancing the budget into DNP system, in line with the National Implementation Modality (NIM). However, UNDP procedures have their own constraints when facilitating roll-out activities at site-level and realising these issues and the fact that the activity plans had to be fully rolled out in the third year, DNP and UNDP agreed that some of the activities especially at field level would have to be implemented with funding through the DNP system. The second micro-assessment was conducted in late 2013 with a result of moderate risk. This allowed UNDP to make advance transfers to the DNP system with its overly demanding disbursement process. Recognising that the government system was too cumbersome and complicated to deliver the project, UNDP has consulted DNP to streamline its internal processes to facilitate project implementation. However, this request has not been carried out, hence the bottlenecks in implementation from both systems. The problems with financial management illustrate a lack of timely adaptive management.

**2.6 Main stakeholders**

The ProDoc identified over 20 stakeholder organizations or groups ranging from central government agencies to community groups and NGOs – these were re-affirmed by the Inception Workshop. For many, their roles involved membership and participation in the Project Steering Committee. However, some took on a more active role and the level of stakeholder participation in project implementation is discussed in section 4.5 below.

**3 FINDINGS: PROJECT STRATEGY AND RELEVANCE**

**3.1 Project relevance**

Project relevance, according to the OECD[[10]](#footnote-10) 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 the identified threats and barriers?

The ProDoc identified a number of barriers: Economic, Social, Environmental, Knowledge/Technical and Institutional/Policy, and with its focus on better and more efficient management of its Protected Areas and financial sustainability of the PA system, the project has been consistent with the requirements of Thailand, even if on its own it will not lead to a solution of the overall problems. And, in spite of the delays experienced by the project, its relevance to Thailand did not diminish.

The project adopted a pilot approach at four main localities to test innovative solutions to the weak and ineffective management of PAs and their financial security. It also aimed to resolve the institutional and regulatory weaknesses upstream. Its approach, combined the involvement of the private sector, the regulatory bodies and local communities in a mix of conservation/protection/wise use activities generating both environmental and socio-economic benefits.

The project is also in line with the GEF Objectives for Biodiversity, especially *Objective 1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems.* The objective seeks the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services.

It can be concluded that the project has been highly relevant to the needs of Thailand as well as to the GEF global objectives.

**3.2 Project design**

The basic design is somewhat complicated, and although the project fits under the extremely broad title and Objective, it does not have enough cohesion. The four elements (Outcomes) were not cohesive enough and this necessitated a reorientation of the framework at the Inception Phase. Although this did not resolve the challenge completely, it can be considered as adaptive management.

The project design is over-ambitious in scope – too many localities spread out over a broad geographical area, some duplicating similar pilot activities, without the necessary mechanisms for communication and mutual learning. In addition, similar to other GEF biodiversity projects, it would seem that the time required for community engagement so as to achieve true co-management has been underestimated. Furthermore, there is no explicit attempt by the project design to address gender equity.

The concept of “pilot” activities has not been well-understood by project design. Pilots are not results, but tools through which results are achieved. Before they can be rolled out for replication, pilots need to be evaluated, refined and then confirmed as successful models to be written up and offered for replication. Project design does not include any mechanisms for replication.

The ProDoc is weak in at least two aspects – Indicators and Risk Management. In fact, as discussed in section 3.3 below, indicators are only provided for the Objective and there are no real indicators for the four Outcomes. This is a serious design flaw and most unhelpful for the project implementers. Regarding risk management, the ProDoc does identify some risks, but as discussed in section 4.6 below, the mitigation measures are weak.

Finally, the design of project Governance and Implementation Arrangements are not considered adequately robust, and this has affected the project. These are discussed fully in sections 4.1 and 4.4 respectively below.

Project design is rated as **Unsatisfactory (U)**.

**3.3 The Strategic Results Framework**

**3.3.1 Indicators – a missing element in the SRF**

As noted in section 3.2 above, there is a fundamental flaw in the SRF – *viz.* there are no Indicators except for the Objective. This anomaly starts from the signed ProDoc and is carried through to the Inception Report and on to the PIRs. The discussion in the ProDoc *Section 2.2 Project Goal, Objective, Outcomes and Outputs/activities* clearly and correctly addresses Outputs, however, in Table 5 in *Section 2.3 Project Indicators, Risks and Assumptions*, the column headed *Indicators*, only provides “indicators” (of questionable quality) for the Objective, whereas for the Outcomes there is merely a repeat of the Outputs where the Indicators should be. This same misconception is repeated in the SRF in *Section II: Strategic Results Framework and GEF Increment* of the ProDoc. And, in spite of the review exercise carried out during the Inception Phase on the SRF, this irregularity persisted. The lack of Indicators, let alone SMART[[11]](#footnote-11) Indicators, is not helpful for project M&E.

**3.3.2 The revised SRF**

The GEF CEO Endorsement Request, when agreed, provides approval of the project on the basis of the ProDoc and a key element is the Strategic Results Framework (= LogFrame). Changes to the Objective are not allowed and changes at the Outcome level are allowed but not encouraged and need to be fully justified and formally approved.

The weak project design and the passage of time provided good justification for a review of the SRF at the Inception Phase and the Inception Report describes the process as well as the changes arising and Annex 4 of the Inception Report carries the Revised Project Logical Framework[[12]](#footnote-12). While the Inception Report is undated, the Inception Workshop is known to have taken place in January 2012. According to UNDP, a Technical Group[[13]](#footnote-13) of representatives from NESDB, DMCR, WCS, Sueb Nakasathien Foundation, WWF, IUCN, academics from Kasetsart and Mahidol Universities, internal DNP staff, and UNDP, met twice to help revise the SRF, and the Second Project Steering Committee meeting in September 2012 approved the revised SRF. This laudable effort indicates the high level of importance accorded to the SRF. However, the changes fell somewhat short of requirements.

PIR-2013 describes the changes as – “*Outcome 2, 3 and 4 are reorganized to make them good umbrellas for newly categorized outputs. Key changes made for given Outcomes are: - Outcome 3 and 4 combined - New Outcome 4 focusing on knowledge management and dissemination, policy advocacy and public supports*”. This is confusing because while the Inception Report text referred to the revised Outcomes, Annex 3 used the old Outcomes for annual planning with the old wording and Outcomes 3 and 4 were not combined. What did happen was a reshuffling of the various Outputs and Activities and as a result, Outcome 4 lost its original Outputs and was given two new ones which are not relevant to the Outcome – in effect this change in scope is the same as changing the Outcome without changing the Outcome!

PIR-2013 continues – “*To re-categorize outputs into the four outcomes as recommended by project board to better see linkages and work flow e.g. - Part of Outcome 2 on development of planning and budgeting framework integrated with Outcome 3 - Complex management, field test and site demonstration on co-management, new financing mechanisms also combined in Outcome 3 - Output 2.3 and 4.3 are gone as they are revised or integrated into Outcome 2 and 3*”.

UNDP discussed the changes and reasons for the changes with the Evaluators. We were advised that the aim of the changes was to consolidate site level activities in Outcome 3 and the Technical Group argued that if the process and tool to make this happen could “demonstrate” the roll out of the effective management or business plan at site level, it could provide a more powerful evidence-based link back to the policy and capacity building Outputs in Outcomes 1 and 2. A further reason for the changes was to make the communication, advocacy, and lessons-learned activities more pronounced (instead of being cross-cutting) under the new Outcome 4. However, UNDP notes that this has not been executed through and indeed, the indicators for this Outcome were not developed.

The Evaluators carried out a more thorough comparison as in the table below.

**Table 1. Comparison of the original and the new SRF**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ORIGINAL SRF ELEMENT** | **CHANGES** | **SRF AFTER REVISIONS** |
| **Objective:** To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system | Unchanged | **Objective:** To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system |
| **Outcome 1:** Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA system sustainability | Unchanged | **Outcome 1:** Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA system sustainability |
| **Output 1.1:** 5-year integrated national PA system management plan and financial strategy endorsed | Unchanged | **Output 1.1:** 5-year integrated national PA system management plan and financial strategy endorsed |
| **Output 1.2:** Policies strengthening role of PA Advisory Committees and community participation in PA management is in place | Unchanged | **Output 1.2:** Policies strengthening role of PA Advisory Committees and community participation in PA management is in place |
| **Output 1.3:** Effective M&E and knowledge-based data management system is in place to assess progress and to inform policy decisions | Unchanged | **Output 1.3:** Effective M&E and knowledge-based data management system is in place to assess progress and to inform policy decisions |
| **Outcome 2:** Institutional and individual capacities enhanced | Unchanged | **Outcome 2:** Institutional and individual capacities enhanced |
| **Output 2.1:** New PA management planning framework, planning tools, and methods in place and implemented across the PA system | To new 3.1 |  |
|  | New 2.1 | **Output 2.1:** Effectiveness Unit in place to support project and institutionalised for long-term role in DNP |
| **Output 2.2:** New PA business plan framework, integrating management and financial planning, including tools, and methods in place, implemented across the PA system | To new 3.1 |  |
| **Output 2.3:** Capacity building programs on effective PA management and financial planning developed and institutionalized within DNP and implemented at 5 PA demonstration sites | Slight change in wording and re-numbering | **Output 2.2:** Capacity Building Programs on Effective PA Management and Financial Planning Developed for DNP staff as well as partners; and Institutionalised within DNP and partners |
| **Outcome 3:** Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA system | Unchanged | **Outcome 3:** Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA system |
| **Output 3.1:** Capacity built to assess and implement new financing mechanisms, including sustainable tourism plans | Abandoned |  |
|  | 2.1 + 2.2 amalgamated and moved here  | **Output 3.1:** New PA Integrated Management Planning Framework including tools and methods in place and implemented at the pilot units  |
| **Output 3.2:** Appropriate cost offsetting / sharing mechanisms in place and implemented | Change not significant – improved wording | **Output 3.2:** Financing Mechanism Identified and Implemented at the pilot units |
|  | 4.1+ 4.2 amalgamated and moved here | **Output 3.3:** Co- management Approaches Enhanced: including strengthened PAC at site-level and mechanism/ channels for public engagement in PA management established at site level  |
|  | From 4.3 with significant change in focus  | **Output 3.4:** Regional DNP Offices and PA Staff Capacities Enhanced to Coordinate Management Support and budget allocations across multiple PA in Eastern Complex for improved biodiversity conservation, management effectiveness and cost efficiencies  |
| **Outcome 4:** New models of PA management support effective management of the System | Unchanged | **Outcome 4:** New models of PA management support effective management of the System |
| **Output 4.1:** Community, local government and other stakeholder support and collaboration for PA management supported through 'operationalization' of PACs | Sent to 3.3 |  |
|  | New 4.1 | **Output 4.1:** Communication Strategy and Materials developed for partnership engagement and advocacy |
| **Output 4.2:** Capacity developed for communities to establish and effectively operate Community PA Funds | Sent to 3.3 |  |
|  | New 4.2 | **Output 4.2:** Lessons-learned Captured into Management Models for Replication and Policy Decision |
| **Output 4.3:** Regional DNP offices and PA staff capacities enhanced to coordinate management support and budget allocations across multiple PAs in WEFCOM for improved cost efficiencies | Moved to new 3.4 and changed |  |

From the above comparison, the Evaluators draw the following observations:

* Original 2.1 and 2.2 reported as amalgamated and moved to new 3.1. In effect, 2.1 is lost in the move and the application is reduced from the *PA System* to *the pilot units*, this is a significant change.
* Original 2.3 has migrated to new 2.2 and in the process has lost its application *at 5 PA demonstration sites.* The scope also expands to cover partners, not just DNP. This is a significant change as it will require different way of achieving the intended output.
* The scope of Outcome 2 is improved with a better focus on capacity although *Effectiveness Unit* might have fitted better under Outcome 1.
* Original 3.1 has been abandoned and has not been replaced- this is significant.
* Original 4.1 and 4.2 amalgamated and moved to new 3.3. In the move, capacity development for communities is lost – this is significant.
* Original 4.3 moved to new 3.4 with significant change in focus from WEFCOM to Eastern Complex.
* New 4.1 and 4.2 are additional to original scope and while Outcome 4 wording has not changed, the scope of the Outcome has changed completely and is now a misfit.

Some of the changes to the SRF at the Inception Phase are significant and the scope is still over-ambitious for a four-year project. The Outcome Indicators are still missing. We are advised that the changes to the SRF were discussed with the RTA of the time, put to the Project Board and adequately approved/agreed.

We must add that in spite of its weaknesses and other problems with the SRF emanating from the Inception Workshop, this was not refined further through adaptive management during the subsequent project implementation.

**3.3.3 Possible improvements to the SRF**

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. But the Outputs are not the Targets; it is the Outcomes that are the ultimate Targets. 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, particularly in order to assess progress. A MTR relies on good Indicators.

All these elements – Baseline, Inputs, Outputs, Targets, Outcomes, Assumptions, Risks, and Indicators – make up the Strategic Results Framework (or Logical Framework Matrix). All the elements are essential and the SRF is not functional if any are missing. An excellent discussion on the components of the SRF, their desired qualities, and how they are determined, is provided by UNDP guidance[[14]](#footnote-14), especially Section 2.4.

The SRF for this project remained weak and incomplete even after the revision at the Inception phase. While it has Indicators for the Objective, these are ineffective, and it does not have Indicators for any of the Outcomes. As there are no Indicators for the Outcomes, and as Outputs are used instead, many of the Baselines and Targets are not relevant to the respective Outcomes. There is a need for the SRF to be reviewed and this must be carried out by the stakeholders who must finish up owning the new SRF.

Recommendation 8.5 below provides specific changes, particularly to Indicators, to the SRF for consideration by stakeholders. The following two tables provide possible Indicators for the Objective and the Outcomes. These Indicators arise from the results sought by the respective Objective or Outcome and each is assessed for its SMART qualities. These Indicators are merely proposals.  They need to be discussed by stakeholders and then either adopted or rejected and replaced.  Once they have settled on the Indicators, stakeholders will need to determine the baseline for each and set the targets that they wish to reach.  Advice is provided in the UNDP guidance (*op.cit*), page 61 onwards.

**Table 2. Proposed Indicators for the Objective**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OBJECTIVE** | **RESULTS SOUGHT** | **PROPOSED INDICATORS** | **INDICATOR QUALITIES** |
| *To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system* | barriers to effective management overcome | **0.1** Enabling environment of policies, legislation, capacity, guidance for effective PA management | Both of these proposed Indicators are **Specific** to the Objective. When Targets are set, their progress is **Measurable** in a quantitative manner. They are realistic and **Achievable** in a cost-effective way. Both are extremely **Relevant** to the purpose and goal of the project. When the targets are set, the Indicators will be **Time-bound** with clear target dates. Both proposed Indicators are SMART indicators of progress towards the expected impact of the project. |
| barriers to sustained financing overcome | **0.2** Capacity, tools and guidance for achieving sustainable financing |

**Table 3. Proposed Indicators for the Outcomes**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OUTCOME** | **RESULTS SOUGHT** | **PROPOSED NEW INDICATORS** | **INDICATOR QUALITIES** |
| **OUTCOME 1:** *Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA System sustainability* | * Improved governance and effective enabling environment
 | **1.1** Effectiveness of service delivery by DNP | This Indicator is not exclusively **Specific** to the Outcome. When Targets are set, it is **Measurable** qualitatively and depending on the Targets, may also be measurable quantitatively. It is realistic and **Achievable** in a cost-effective way, and highly **Relevant** to the Outcome and the aims of the project. The targets can be **Time-bound** with clear target dates. It is a SMART indicator of impact of the project. |
| * PA System sustainability
 | Sustainability is a result/impact which goes beyond the timeline of the project and as such it cannot be measured during the lifetime of the project |
| **OUTCOME 2:** *Institutional and individual capacities enhanced* | * Institutional capacities enhanced
 | **2.1** DNP ability to respond to challenges (including financial) of managing the PA System | This Indicator is **Specific** to the Outcome. It is **Measurable** in a qualitative manner. It is realistic and **Achievable** and extremely **Relevant** to the purpose and goal of the project. It can be **Time-bound** with clear target dates. This is a SMART indicator of progress towards one of the impacts of the project. |
| * Individual capacities enhanced
 | **2.2** Application of enhanced capacities to better management, improved community relations, increased protection | Similar to the above, this Indicator is **Specific** to the Outcome because it is a measure of whether capacity has been enhanced. It is not easy to **Measure** in a quantitative manner. It is realistic and **Achievable** as well as very **Relevant** to what the project is attempting to achieve. The targets will be **Time-bound** with clear target dates. This is a SMART indicator of progress towards the expected impact of the project. |
| **OUTCOME 3:** *Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA System* | * Mechanisms and management approaches tested at all 5 sites and evaluated
 | **3.1** Number of revenue generation mechanisms tested successfully at the pilot sites | The proposed Indicator is very **Specific** to the Outcome. It is clearly **Measurable** in a quantitative manner. It is also realistic and **Achievable** in a cost-effective way. It is extremely **Relevant** to the purpose and goal of the project. It is easily made **Time-bound** with clear target dates. This is a SMART indicator of progress. |
| * Funding levels increased
 | **3.2** Extent of increased funding generated at the 5 pilot sites | This is a very **Specific** Indicator for the Outcome. It is directly **Measurable** quantitatively and is expected to be **Achievable** in the project timescale. It is very **Relevant** to the purpose and goal of the project. The quantifiable Targets can be made **Time-bound** with clear dates. It is a SMART or nearly SMART indicator of project impact.  |
| * Upscaling to PA System
 | **3.3** Extent of increased funding generated at the System level | This Indicator builds on the two above. It is directly **Specific** to the Outcome and **Measurable** in a quantitative manner. It is not certain that it is **Achievable** in the project timescale. It is certainly **Relevant** to the purpose and goal of the project. When the targets are set, it would help if they are **Time-bound** with clear target dates. This is a nearly SMART indicator of project impact although it may not be achievable in its entirety in the project timescale. |
| **OUTCOME 4[[15]](#footnote-15):** *New models of PA management captured, communicated and advocated* | * Lessons recorded and communicated
 | **4.1** Tools and products developed and implemented for effective communication | This is a very **Specific** Indicator for the Outcome. It is **Measurable** in a quantitative manner against Targets set. It is realistic and **Achievable**. It is also very **Relevant** to the project in its search for a system-wide impact. The Indicator will be **Time-bound** through clear target dates. This is a SMART indicator of progress towards the expected impact of the project. |
| * Advocacy and outreach
 | **4.2** Level of outreach achieved | This Indicator is **Specific** to the Outcome. It is **Measurable** qualitatively (such as through repeated survey). It is realistic and **Achievable** in a cost-effective way. It is certainly **Relevant** to a project dealing with pilots which need to be replicated. It can be **Time-bound** with clear target dates. This is a SMART indicator of a result which is going to help achieve ultimate project impact. |

In addition to indicators for the Objective and the Outcomes, it is also useful to adopt some process indicators to assess effective implementation and mainstreaming of UNDP strategic goals. The following table provides some suggestions for consideration.

**Table 4. Proposed Process Indicators of effective implementation and mainstreaming of UNDP strategic goals**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Process 1** Participation at community level | Opportunities for participation at community level maximised  | Community participants and their role in implementation planned in AWPs and recorded in PIRs |
| **Process 2** Cost effectiveness | The Government contribution in kind to be utilized to keep costs to a minimum.  | Co-financing to be tracked and recorded and reported |
| **Process 3** Involvement of women | Implementation of the Gender Strategy with gender considerations mainstreamed and embedded in the project implementation process | To be measured by the ratio of women participating according to AWPs and PIRs as well as direct project benefits on women participants. |
| **Process 4** Human rights | Recognition and respect of traditional land occupation | To be measured by survey of community members |
| **Process 5** Governance | Institutional capacity strengthening at central government and community level leading to enhanced governance of natural resources management | This will be covered by the various capacity building activities under the mainstream Outputs and Activities |

In selecting indicators, it should be borne in mind that it is desirable, to the extent possible, to select gender-disaggregated Indicators as appropriate.

**4 FINDINGS: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION – EFFICIENCY**

**4.1 Project governance**

Project Steering Committees (PSC) are expected to play three roles: (1) Serve as the project executive body to supervise and monitor project delivery according to the annual work plan, (2) Act as the source of guidance regarding the technical and overall feasibility of the project, and (3) Serve as a forum for project stakeholders and beneficiaries to ensure that project benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

The ProDoc suggested quarterly meetings for the PSC. There was an expectation that frequent PSC meetings together with its broad-based membership, would lead to collaboration on innovations in PA financing and management, especially by the private sector which benefits from the PA’s natural resources. In effect, the PSC has had only four annual meetings and this proved to be insufficient, for example when the project faced difficulty and delay in effecting disbursements.

There was no consideration of gender equity when determining membership of the PSC which expanded from the original plans and became unwieldy. Furthermore, more than half of the individuals representing designated organizations changed over time. When coupled with only one meeting per year and half the members being new, the PCS had very limited ability and commitment to provide the necessary strategic and technical support for project implementation. There is no clear evidence of effective ‘steering’ by the PSC. Neither has the PSC been able to effect coordination among the various government agencies to ensure that activities are fully integrated with other developmental initiatives in the country.

It will be more effective to adopt a model which is being applied increasingly by UNDP elsewhere – separate out the executive and guidance role from that of a cross-sectoral stakeholders’ forum to advise project implementation. The executive and guidance role should be given to a Project Executive Board (PEB) comprising 3-4 senior persons from MoNRE, UNDP and DNP. The PEB should meet as and when required but, in view of the impending project closure, not less than every three months to expedite important decisions, provide guidance to the PMU and require accountability.

In order to safeguard the forum for ideas exchange and advice to the PMU, UNDP, with the collaboration of DNP, should revitalize[[16]](#footnote-16) the broader-based Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprising representatives of all the key stakeholders as well as individuals known to possess relevant expertise. The TAG will meet every 3-4 months and consider topics/problems referred to it by the PB or the PMU but also topics identified on its own initiative.

**4.2 UNDP role as the Implementing Agency**

In the role of GEF Implementing Agency for this project, UNDP provided technical support to the PMU as well as to the Government GEF Operational Focal Point. It also assisted the executing agency with the recruitment of senior project personnel, 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. 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 Inclusive Green Growth and Sustainable Development Unit of the Country Office in Bangkok. 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, visits to project sites and the annual PIR.

**4.3 DNP role as Executing Agency**

The Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) 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 it was responsible for the following functions:

(i) coordinating activities to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes

(ii) certifying expenditures in line with approved budgets and work-plans

(iii) facilitating, monitoring and reporting on the procurement of inputs and delivery of outputs

(iv) coordinating interventions financed by GEF/UNDP with other parallel interventions

(v) approval of Terms of Reference for consultants and tender documents for sub-contracted inputs

(vi) reporting to UNDP on project delivery and impact

DNP 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 MoNRE also housed the function of GEF OFP, and as such, was able to ensure

coordination among relevant GEF funded projects and activities.

As part of the project formulation process, DNP capacity was assessed and out of a maximum score of 102, achieved a score of 78 and some of the scores are now known to have been overly optimistic. The assessment identified a number of targets for improvement and actions that were meant to be taken by DNP and the project. DNP did make some efforts regarding the individual and institutional capacity building as recommended in the scorecard as part of the project.

We have detected a low level of ownership of the project in DNP and this and other challenges are discussed in section 4.4 below. One of the key difficulties faced by DNP in project implementation has been the lengthy approval process for disbursements which is described by PIR-2014 as a “*bottle-neck in rolling out activities at site level due to the complication and delays of financial flow in the government procedures*”. PIR-2014 also reports that UNDP senior management met with DNP’s Acting Director General in the first quarter of 2014 with a set of suggestions to improve the situation. Apparently, the urgency of the problem was recognized by DNP and commitments were made to address the delays by adjusting financial procedures to speed up approvals in support of project implementation on the ground. Unfortunately, as discussed in section 4.7 below, these system improvements either did not take place or have been ineffective, and DNP is still struggling with the disbursement process to the detriment of the project.

**4.4 Project management**

Day to day implementation and management of the project is carried out by a Project Management Unit (PMU) headed by the Project Manager (PM) who is accountable to DNP senior officials as well as to the Project Steering Committee. The structure of the PMU is illustrated below.

**Figure 1. Project Management Structure (PMU)**

**DNP DG**

**Director of National Park Division**

**International /National Consultant**

* **Outcome 1**
* **Outcome 2**
* **Outcome 4**

**Project Director**

**Project Manager**

**Finance & Administration**

**Field Coordinator**

**Project Coordinator**

**Finance Officer**

**Finance Officer**

**WEFCOM**

**Doi Inthanon**

**National Consultant**

**Admin Officer**

**Admin Officer**

**Tarutao**

**EFCOM**

**Sub-Field Coordinators in sub-projects**

**WEFCOM**

**EFCOM**

**Tarutao**

**Mae-Wong-Klong Lan NP**

**Research Assistantnttantnt**

**Research Assistanttantnt**

**Research Assistantnt**

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The PMU Office is embedded in the DNP, physically, and this should lead to close coordination and smooth implementation – what we observed is somewhat different. The PMU has been adequately staffed, perhaps over-staffed, and while the current PM is female, there is no evidence of any attempt towards gender equity. The first Project Manager resigned and the recruitment of the replacement took a few months. According to PIR-2014 the PM’s “*contract ended in May 2014 ….. and the new project manager [came] on board on 18 August 2014”*. In the absence of a project manager, the Project Director increased his involvement in project activities and project management and the Project Coordinator, with close supervision from UNDP, also went beyond his role and responsibilities to cover a number of activities which would normally be carried out by the project manager. However, in spite of these laudable efforts, this gap came at a critical time when all pilot projects in demonstration sites were ready to go and needed the leadership and guidance to take them through the PSC’s approval process. The absence of a functional PM during this period prolonged the approval and disbursement process, especially for activities under Outcome 3 which is the key Outcome accounting for 42% of the total project budget.

In order to facilitate activities, Field Coordinator positions were created in all pilot sites but incumbents changed frequently with insufficient handover. In most cases, the replacements had to spend time to learn about the project, and this affected the smooth operation of activities on the ground. It was not easy to ascertain exactly what the project was contributing to some of the PAs visited, except money. However, in some pilot sites, we were able to observe excellent rapport by field coordinators with stakeholders and partners.

The PMU management style is hierarchical and centralised with a radial arrangement rather than a network which means that field positions report to the central PMU with little direct interaction between and among the field positions themselves. Regular face-to-face meetings of all key implementers at central and field levels are needed to create a forum for mutual learning and problem solving.

The position of Project Director (part of the Government’s co-financing in kind) is not a full-time position for the project but it is critical for the success of the project and frequent changes in this position have not helped. Most of those appointed as Project Director, are tied up with their regular work and responsibilities in DNP and their appointment as CATSPA Project Director is an additional duty on a part-time basis. As a result, their contribution to the project has been limited. To make matters worse, in the first year of project implementation, a number of staff appointed to various positions within the Effectiveness Unit were based outside Bangkok and participated in project activities only when they were invited to meetings by the PMU. Because the DNP approach tends to be one of micro-management, these additional demands on the Project Director appointee and the frequent changes in appointee have had a great negative impact on the project.

Work planning by the PMU, through the AWP process appears thorough and comprehensive with most of the activities under each outcome following the revised SRF as adjusted during the Inception Phase. However, there is no evidence of performance monitoring (see section 4.9 below) leading to adjustments to work plans or the SRF through adaptive management.

Financial management difficulties have already been mentioned above and are discussed fully in section 4.7 below. The Evaluators have been advised by UNDP that together with DNP they have initiated a review of the financial management problems and are trying to identify a way forward. However, we have seen a lack of ownership of this problem and it remains to be seen whether these latest laudable efforts will produce the desired result.

Project management overall is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

**4.5 Stakeholder involvement in project implementation**

UNDP guidance[[17]](#footnote-17) defines stakeholders as – “*Agencies, organizations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the intervention or its evaluation*”, and stakeholder engagement as – “*The process by which a project involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions*”.

Going by these definitions, this project had a broad spectrum of potential stakeholders ranging from government organizations to indigenous communities who should be actively involved in project implementation. In fact, the ProDoc identified 14 organizations as key stakeholders and predicted their roles in project implementation. The Evaluators invited the PMU to go through the list and record actual stakeholder involvement in project implementation related to specific Outcome/s. The PMU were advised to focus on real, meaningful involvement, not just what the project provided to stakeholders (such as training and information), but also what stakeholders provided to the project. The PMU response is incorporated in the following assessment by the Evaluators.

**Table 5. Stakeholder involvement in project implementation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT** | **INVOLVEMENT** |
| **MoNRE** MoNRE is the ministerial host of this project and through DNP will facilitate project execution. MoNRE will pursue intra- and inter-ministerial cooperation and change and reform, through National Environment Board (NEB) which is the highest decision-making body for the environment. It is chaired by the Prime Minister, but often this is delegated to the Deputy Prime Minister, who often is also minister of MoNRE. MoNRE is mandated to conserve biodiversity resources and protect the environment, by setting standards, laws and providing annual budget supports to line agencies.  | MONRE is a member of the PSC and the PS can approve participation in project activities by non-government participants. It could be more proactive in facilitating intra-ministerial cooperation at pilot sites e.g. between DNP and RFD in buffer zones of Huay Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary where the project aims to enhance the capacity of community forest committees previously established by RFD on sustainable forest management and alternative income generation to reduce their dependency on the forest/parks for livelihoods. MoNRE, through the Office of National Cooperation which is the Secretariat to the GEF OFP, should provide ministerial level support for smooth cooperation between the two departments.At policy level, the project has been strategic to organize a workshop on “Sustainable Marine National Park Management” to respond to issues related to ineffective tourism management which has become a major threat to several marine PAs in Thailand. The workshop was chaired by MoNRE Minister and DNP, and CATSPA served as the secretariat to compile comments/suggestions from the broad-based stakeholders for high-level policy considerations. This is a perfect entry point to engage MoNRE in facilitating inter and intra-ministry cooperation to collectively address the issues related to sustainable tourism in marine PAs. |
| **DNP** DNP is the primary agency responsible for managing the PA system and for biodiversity conservation. DNP is the principal proponent and implementer for this project, facilitating the successful execution of the project, providing necessary operational support, and most importantly, ensuring that lessons learnt from CATSPA lead to sustainable improvements in PA management at the national level. | At the policy level, the Director General, the Deputy DG, and various Wildlife and Plant Conservation Specialists have been involved from time to time through informal and formal meetings as well as a study tour. Mainly, they facilitate project implementation, accelerate procedures and provide officers for various meetings At the system level, the PMU is working under the National Parks Office and closely with the National Parks and Protected Areas Innovation Institute. In addition, there has been collaboration with other DNP units such as training, planning and IT, National Park Development, Personnel, forestry research and the financial unit and treasure bureau. At the implementation level, the PMU is in regular contact with 13 demonstration sites working groups, consisting of superintendents, deputies, rangers, admin officers, Protected Areas Committees, regional conservation senior officers, etc. Coordination started early and extends into concept development, sharing problems and seeking solutions, providing stakeholder analysis and engagement. All this through site level implementation.However, engaging DNP personnel in project management and implementation has not been easy because the response from DNP has been relatively muted.DNP needs to take ownership of CATSPA and see it as their project which has benefits for some of their core roles and responsibilities. DNP should better appreciate the project’s products and ensure the post-project sustainability and impact of the project’s initiatives. DNP staff assigned to the ‘Effectiveness Unit’ in particular, should be more actively engaged in project planning and implementation and their contribution to the project should be acknowledged by DNP as an extension of their role and recognized and credited in staff performance assessments. |
| **Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy (ONEP)**As the Secretariat to NEB, ONEP also sets policies and measures for conservation of natural resources and environment. ONEP is the focal point of all environmental treaties, and it also houses an office that approves environmental impact assessment report. In this project, ONEP’s contribution comes from assisting DNP in its overall project execution, and specifically guiding and facilitating DNP in its capacity as a member of the Project Board. ONEP could also take part in some components of the project to ensure policy consistency. | ONEP is a member of the PSC but they could have a more pro-active role. For example, when the pilot activities/models have been evaluated, any changes to improve policies and measures for conservation of natural resources and environment should be taken over for further action by ONEP who is the Secretariat to the National Environmental Board. |
| **National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)**NESDB is the highest authority for economic and social development planning in Thailand. A five-year economic and social development plan, presently 10th plan, is produced and monitored by NESDB. As a potential member of the Project Board, NESDB’s involvement in the CATSPA project could ensure policy consistency and synergies with broader development plans, particularly the national five-year plans. | Apart from being a member of the project board, NESDB is expected to provide advice and support to establish a mechanism to include the Payment for the Ecosystem (PES) into the government’s planning and budgeting system once it has proved to be feasible by the project.It seems that the very important role identified for the NESDB at the project planning phase has not eventuated. In fact, while the NESDB participated in every PSC meeting (same delegate), its contributions were of a general nature and not yet directly related to PES. For the remaining period, NESDB should be engaged closely to provide policy and technical support in the piloting of PES model, especially to identify possible mechanisms to integrate PES into the national planning and budgeting system.  |
| **Department of Coastal and Marine Resources**DCMR has the exclusive administrative authority over coastal zones and marine areas of the country. Its potential role, besides being a member on the Project Board to guide the project operations, is to collaborate in the project implementation at the site level, specifically at Tarutao Island. It could also provide technical advice and logistical supports for project implementation, as well as policy integration.  | DCMR is a member of the PSC and participates in the implementation of Outcome 3 in Tarutao NP. They provided technical support for activities such as the Marine SMART Patrol, coral reef protection and the launching of mooring buoys.In addition to satisfactory collaboration between the project and the DCMR at the Tarutao site, DCMR is also engaged as a member of the working group to conduct follow-up actions of the workshop on New Marine PA Management Model held in March. This will be a good opportunity to leverage the knowledge generated under Outcome 1 of the project. |
| **Provincial government** The appointed governors (by the Ministry of Interior) have the highest authority at the provincial level. In principle, most of the line government agencies present at the provincial level report to the governor. The Provincial Administrative Organization is headed by an elected Head that facilitates development of a province. Provincial government will have an important role in coordinating administrative support needed at the provincial level, and in ensuring policy and planning consistency at that level. They will be encouraged to provide additional co-funding for project initiatives that bring about local benefits. | The ProDoc was somewhat vague on the role of Provincial Governments and the PMU did not provide much information. Although it might be late in the project timeline, the project could still explore opportunities to integrate some pilot activities with the provincial development plan particularly under the provincial ‘green growth’ strategy. This could be done at individual PA level as all pilot PAs are part of the provincial development structure. If this cannot be done during the project timeline, the results and lessons learnt from the pilot activities should be presented to the Provincial Planning Committee in the next round of annual planning to explore opportunities to sustain the initiatives through the government’s regular system. |
| **Local government** Local government at the lowest level are called Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO). TAO, are directly elected by local peoples, and thus have the administrative authority at the sub-district level. Local governments could provide matching funds, participate as members of PAC, and provide critical guidance to the operations and enforcement of rules and regulations and ensure that local planning include lessons/outputs from CATSPA. | Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) are involved in most of the demonstration projects, including Doi Inthanon conservation trust fund, sustainable cultural tourism management in Kitchakoot National Park (EFCOM) , and conservation activities by the Reef Guardian Group in Tarutao. Sixty-eight TAOs in the buffer zone of sub-WEFCOM are also invited to the planning of conservation and alternative income generation activities of pilot communities. It is expected that TAOs will provide co-funding to support these activities. All TAOs located in the same sub-district with NPs receive 5% of the Park’s revenue. The project should ensure that TAOs are fully engaged in the planning and implementation of project activities and in providing co-funding from their budget. TAO’s engagement in the project can also influence local government policies in sustainable natural resources and environmental management |
| **Local communities** Village and sub-district heads report to the Ministry of Interior through the appointed District Head. Local communities normally also have their own “natural” leaders, who could speak, facilitate, cooperate and mediate conflicts on behalf of the larger members of the communities. These leaders could be appointed to be members of PACs | All demonstration projects involve local communities in the planning and implementation. At Doi Inthanon, local communities as well as ethnic groups have participated in consultative meetings as well as actual activities. Also, 68 communities around the buffer zone along Huey Kha Kheng Wildlife Sanctuary, and Klong Lan and Mae Wong National Parks are main target groups of the buffer zone management project. In Kitchakoot National Park, the monks and local people from surrounding communities are key stakeholders who will implement sustainable cultural tourism project to a famous temple located in the Park’s area. It is expected that part of the income from the activity will be contributed back to the Park as the community’s PES. Members of the Reef Guardian at Tarutao National Park come from various groups such as local guides, tour operators, entrepreneurs, boat taxi drivers, scuba drivers and fishermen. They are all very active in conservation activities as their livelihoods rely on marine resources.As described by the PMU, local communities are fully consulted and engaged by the project in some of the pilot activities. In most cases, they are in the driver’s seat to implement the activities, leading to direct benefits on their livelihoods and long term sustainability of the project’s initiatives. From interviews, it was also obvious that local communities in target sites are enthusiastic to implement the pilot activities, especially on alternative income generation. This should be enhanced to reduce their dependency on PA resources and increase their joint efforts to protect the PAs. |
| **Royal Forest Department** RFD is responsible for the management of public forests outside, normally adjacent to, PAs. Their support to the project through the Project Board, and at the site level will be important for achieving project objectives | RFD is a PSC member and Community Forests in the buffer zone of Huay Kha Khaeng wildlife sanctuary are officially under the RFD. Under its programme, RFD needs to establish ‘provincial community forests’ for Uthaithani province. The programme shares the same goal as CATSPA’s buffer zone management project. So CATSPSA will work closely with RFD in the remaining time. Carbon stock and forest certification will be one of the joint efforts, which are expected to be replicated in the future. This joint action corresponds to Outcomes 1, 3 and 4. The project should aim to develop a replicable model where DNP and RFD work collaboratively in the buffer zone areas, based on the activities in Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. Technical or regulatory barriers which cannot be solved at the field level should be reported to the PSC for high level support from RFD and DNP. Another potential area for RFD contribution is in the area of forest-based carbon stock as a potential source of revenue for local communities. This should be further explored in the remaining period of the project. At least, RFD should provide guidance for the process.  |
| **NGOs** NGOs and other civil societies operate quite actively to assist communities, and in some cases in close collaboration with the DNP, on various aspects, such as livelihood improvement, and water resources management. Relevant international NGOs as well as local NGOs will contribute public awareness and capacity development skills and guidance to the project. Some of them will be invited to join the Project Board. Moreover, where possible, additional co-funding will be encouraged. | CATSPA is working with both national and international NGOs at the system and site level. IUCN and WWF are on the PSC; one of the project’s international consultants is senior advisor to IUCN-World PA Commission and Species Survival Commission. He provides technical support to senior DNP officers participating in the World Park Congress. WCS-Thailand is sitting on the project’s academic committee and provides technical assistance to the project from time to time. Among others, is the application of the SMART Patrol System for marine protection and the introduction of “Grey Chinese Goral’ to Doi Inthanon NP. Collaboration with GIZ (through Eco-BEST project) is focus on developing financing mechanisms.At site level, CATSPA works with Thai Rak Pah Foundation to set up Doi Inthanon Conservation Fund; the Seub Nakhasathein Foundation in buffer zone management in the sub-western forest complex’s project, and Rak Khao Chamao group in the biological corridor in the eastern forest complex.The project has identified appropriate NGO partners both at national and site levels and has benefited from synergized efforts with some of them, for example, joint training on Ecosystem Service Valuation Methods and Valuation Result Analysis with GIZ. Technical contributions on the SMART Patrol System for MPAs also helped to improve the old methods formerly used by marine NPs. Although this collaboration may not have gone to the extent envisaged in the ProDoc, it has been beneficial to the project and increased its effectiveness.  |
| **Provincial Conservation Forum (PCF)**PCF has been established at the Western Forest Complex Project to be a forum of exchange of information, and consultation regarding natural resources management in the area. PCF will contribute directly to the CATSPA project by sustaining the collaborative activities initiated during the WEFCOM initiative, and ensuring that improved management and financing options are properly designed to fit local environments and conditions | The PCF has become relatively weak after the termination of WEFCOM projects. However, CATSPA is going to reset part of the PCF in two provinces (Utaithani and Kamphaeng Phet) via the sub-bufferzone management project. To re-establish the PCF and engage them in the sub-bufffer zone management is seen as an effective means of building up or sustaining the mechanism set up by the WEFCOM project. The re-established PCF should be further strengthened through networking by participating members (e.g. community forest committees). Networking activities could include, for example, joint management of community forests, knowledge sharing forum, advocacy, and resource mobilisation. |
| **Local schools** Local schools have gained and enjoyed free access to use of PA facilities and human resources as part of lessons in science and nature studies. A representative from local schools should be a member of the PAC, and students could join in some local activities, such as fund-raising, public campaign, awareness raising and be local tour guides | Klong Lan National park targets adjacent local schools in order to raise awareness of school kids and youth through water quality monitoring activities. REEF Guardian is going to organize two youth camps from Adang Rawi school for preserving coral reef at Tarutao National Park. Apart from the reports on collaboration between a national park and schools and between an NGO and schools, it is not clear how local schools participate in the project. At least, representatives of local schools in pilot sites should be invited to join PAC. The project should also encourage schools to integrate knowledge about sustainable PA management into their local curriculum with sufficient and systematic learning content and activities. Students and schools should be encouraged to join in public campaigns, fund raising, or be local tour guide for the NPs. |
| **Trade & tourism associations** Tourism organizations and tour companies have very remote contact with DNP, except at the site, especially when problems arise. In principle, tour operations and association have to observe and be obliged by laws governing the PAs. A collaborative role is mainly expected for these associations, including in bringing more resources to the park, and ensuring that the kind of tourism activities being promoted do not go against the objectives of conservation, but rather help enhancing it | In the recent workshop on ‘Sustainable Marine NP Management’ organized by CATSPA, the Department of Tourism and tour agencies were engaged to provide ideas/solutions to emerging problems of unsustainable tourism which have critical impact on marine NPs. Most of the members of Reef Guardian Group in Tarutao come from the tour sector and participate actively in conservation activities of the project. Three Chiang Mai tourism associations, namely Chiang Mai Tourism Business Association, the Association of Northern Tourism Federation (Chiang Mai) and Chiang Mai Guide Association are actively participating in the establishment of Doi Inthanon National Park Frust Fund, from the concept formulation through to the registration process. The PMU refers to effective collaboration between the private sector and the project, and this is to be applauded. In the remaining period, the project should work more intensively with tourism sector both at national and site level. At the national level, Department of Tourism and representatives of the Tourism Association which sits on the PSC should provide advice and support to the project regarding sustainable tourism management in PAs. Knowledge and information on laws governing the PAs should be made available to tour operators.At the site level, a pilot on sustainable tourism should be jointly developed, piloted, evaluated and documented by the project and tour operators. This can be replicated through Outcome 4 activities. |
| **Protected Area Committees** PACs have been mandated by the Director General Order in 2005 to broaden participation of local stakeholders in conservation of a PA. PAC is the most tangible form of local stakeholder participation in local activities, including conflict resolution and fund-raising | PAC from 13 pilot sites participated in the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) process. PACs in eastern forest complex have participated in the EFCom PAC establishment. In fact, PACs have been engaged in all demonstration projects. CATSPA will organize four regional workshops to draw lessons learnt on PAC management from the 10 year experience. PACs from the project’s pilot sites will be invited to share their experience and ideas for improvement. The results will be used to draft guidelines on ‘Strengthening PAC Capacity’ The PMU describes a very positive level of PAC involvement in project activities and the planned activities will ensure that a valuable legacy is left behind by the project. But it would be even more valuable if the project can introduce a trial at one of the pilot sites for meaningful co-management which could be evaluated and written up for replication – unfortunately the time remaining may not be adequate.For meaningful engagement of the PAC, it is recommended that all of the pilot activities are reviewed by PACs of respective PAs. In addition to their advisory role, PACs should also support and monitor the implementation of pilot activities and ensure that the benefits of the projects go to the intended beneficiaries. PAC should also help to develop a common understanding among local stakeholders about sustainable PA management. |

Of the 14 stakeholder organisations identified above, six are central government organizations, two are local government organizations and four are truly local grassroots organizations. PACs are a mixture of government and communities but are locally based, while NGOs are also a mixture with a bias towards central and international organizations. Although local representation appears low, it is comprised of multiple organizations at various localities and, on the surface, the list of stakeholders appears reasonably well balanced between officialdom and communities. The same cannot be said about gender representation and balance. The Evaluators have not come across any explicit attempt either by the ProDoc or by successive project implementation to address gender balance in the identification and engagement of stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the level of actual engagement of stakeholder at central level is not so high with many potential partners at central level simply serving as members of the PSC (with its total of four meetings, one year apart) and with little or no involvement at the Outcome and Outputs level. However, now that the pilot projects are well under way, the PSC can be expected to become more involved in promoting the necessary policy and facilitating replication.

At the local level, the situation is more auspicious and the PMU described how the project engages with concerned stakeholders as much as possible in each pilot site. Participation for effective co-management is the aim of the project. For example, in Doi Inthanon, over ten groups from the private sector are engaged in Conservation Trust Fund activities; in EFCom over 15 local groups from five provinces and local stakeholders at Chantaburi temples have participated; the Reef Guardian project engages with the majority of Tarutao NP’s stakeholders; and 68 communities in Sub-WEFCom buffer zone areas have been engaged in the buffer zone management project along with concerned TAOs, District and Provincial authorities as well as the RFD which has official ownership of community forests in reserved forest areas.

**4.6 Risk Management**

The Inception Report addressed Risks and added two to the list from the ProDoc, finishing up with a list of ten risks.

In view of the delays that afflicted the project and the possibility that these delays could have been the result of potential risks and therefore should have been foreseen and mitigated against, the Evaluators sought an update on the risk situation from the PMU. We invited the PMU to comment on the risks which had been identified in the ProDoc and reviewed by the Inception Workshop, whether the risks had eventuated, whether the mitigation measures were adequate and what the consequences had been. Annex 11 is the PMU response together with the Evaluators’ reactions.

As can be seen from Annex 11, we believe that at least three of the “risks” identified in the ProDoc and confirmed in the Inception Report are not risks at all but problems and barriers that the project was designed to address. Mitigation measures proposed in the ProDoc are somewhat weak and they were not revised by the Inception Workshop. The rating of the various risks (five “Low”, four “Medium” and one “High”) is also too soft and the Evaluators feel that at least four risks can be considered as “High”. The PMU response is not the update we expected – it is more an indication of what the project will do / may do.

Risk management should be seen as part of the monitoring process of project implementation and ideally, should lead to updates and adaptive measures to counter the risks. According to UNDP, adaptive measures that arose from consideration of risks were: (1) field coordinator positions created to support the implementation at site level as well as to strengthen the coordination between PMU and pilot sites; (2) financial management.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In an effort to overcome the dearth of information from the PMU, we examined the PIRs, but we did not find the information we were looking for. PIR-2012 does not discuss risks – it states categorically that there are no critical risks. PIR-2013 rates overall risk as “*Substantial*” whereas PIR-2014 rates the risk level as “*High*”. However, both these latter two have a reasonably comprehensive discussion of risks although this amounts more to a progress report and a watching brief rather than a set of robust mitigation measures and contingency plans, just in case the risk eventuated.

**4.7 Project finance**

**4.7.1 Budget planning, management and efficiency**

The total project budget was US$17,564,545. Of this, the GEF Trust Fund contributed US$3,365,545 and US$ 14,200,000 came from Government co-financing. This is a co-financing ratio of just over 1:4 which is somewhat low according to GEF requirements. The GEF resources were allocated as follows in Figure 2 below –

**Figure 2. Percentage allocations of GEF budget per Outcome**

The greater part of GEF resources was allocated to Outcome 3 (some 42%) and Outcome 4 was allocated the smallest budget. The allocation to project management (which includes Monitoring and Evaluation) amounted to 11%. At just above the GEF guidance limit of 10%, this is acceptable, however, it leaves little or no room for manoeuvre.

Financial management has not been effective and as can be seen from Figure 3 below, except for Project Management costs, the Budget is seriously underspent.

**Figure 3. Budget allocations, expenditure and balance remaining per Outcome**



By the end of December 2014 (latest figures available), only 35% of the budget had been spent with more than 80% of time gone. In the remaining six months, USD2,186,606 remain to be spent. The worst underexpenditure is for Outcome 4, with a mere 16% of the budget spent. Whereas at the other end of the scale, the budget for Project Management costs is right on target with around 82% spent. Unfortunately, this auspicious situation is tempered with some concern because there are no Project Management resources remaining for a no-cost project extension.

The cause of financial inefficiency and under-expenditure is the project’s inability to make timely disbursements. This lack of delivery was brought up time and again in our consultations with stakeholders from senior levels of DNP to stakeholders at the field level. Activities have been written up and approved in the Annual Work Plan, budgets have been set aside, the paper work has been done, but then it seems to get caught in the financial management procedures of DNP. This has seriously hindered project implementation and is the main contributor to the gross underexpenditure. It was reported to us that project staff salaries have not been paid or paid with significant delays, resulting in at least one resignation. We were also told that in the case of an NGO sub-contractor, expenses had to be paid out of their own pocket to keep the project moving, hoping to recover the expenses eventually. A number of approved activities cannot be implemented because they are still awaiting funds transfer. There is a serious risk that these delays and inability of the project to deliver will erode the credibility of the project in the eyes of the stakeholders at community level – hard won rapport will be lost.

This situation, which was foreseen as far back as 2013[[19]](#footnote-19), cannot continue and UNDP and DNP need to find a solution before any extension can be considered. \We have been advised that following our presentation of preliminary findings at the end of our mission, UNDP and DNP have met to discuss potential solutions to this problem and this is seen as a most positive development.

**4.7.2 Co-financing**

The signed ProDoc had a co-financing pledge of USD14,200,000 from the Government.

According to PIR-2012 USD13,000 had been obtained in co-financing since project start and it is noted as having been in kind for office space, utilities, labour and expertise. PIR-2013 advises that USD639,000 had been obtained in co-financing and PIR-2014 does not seem to mention co-financing. The figures are presumed to be cumulative and this means that in the 12 months between June 2012 and June 2013 some USD626,000 had been obtained.

In an attempt to get a better picture and obtain an update on co-financing pledged and delivered, the Evaluators invited the PMU to provide an estimate of co-financing received to date, and the following table is the response.

**Table 6. Co-Financing pledged and realized to date**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING** | **CO-FINANCER** | **TYPE OF CO-FINANCING** | **AMOUNT CONFIRMED AT CEO ENDORSEMENT**  | **ACTUAL AMOUNT AT DEC 2014** | **ACTUAL % OF EXPECTED AMOUNT** |
| Government | Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) | In-kind | 14,200,000 | 11,360,000 | 80 |
|  |  | **TOTAL** | **14,200,000** | **11,360,000** | **80** |

The figures in the table are orders of magnitude larger than those reported in PIR-2013 – some USD10 million in co-financing over a period of 18 months (June 2013 to December 2014) compared with USD626,000 in the previous 12 months. This calls into question the veracity and accuracy of these figures and unfortunately the next PIR (02 June 2014) does not report on co-financing.

**4.8 Reporting and communication**

**4.8.1 Reporting**

M&E is being carried out as part of a system of reporting, in line with UNDP-GEF policies. Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) are prepared each quarter and PIRs once a year, according to the Atlas standard format. The QPR is prepared by the Project Manager and Project Coordinator, using information supplied by the project field coordinators. Project Management ensure that the UNDP CO receives quarterly progress reports providing updates on the status of planned activities, the status of the overall project schedule, the achievement of milestones by outcome and output, management issues and mitigation measures, and an outline of the activities and milestones planned for the following quarter.

From the QPRs, the UNDP CO has prepared Quarterly Operational Reports which have been forwarded to the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit, and in turn submitted to UNDP HQ and to the GEF. The major findings and observations of all these reports have been given in annual reports, the Project Implementation Review (PIR), which is also submitted by the Project Team to the UNDP-CO, UNDP Regional Coordination Unit, and UNDP HQ for review and official comments, followed by final submission to the GEF. The PIRs report on progress at the Outcome level.

Information from all key reports is compiled into the Annual Report which is submitted to the PSC members before their annual meeting. Through this means, the key national ministries/ national government and partners from the private sector have been kept abreast of the Project’s implementation progress.

As has been noted above, PSC meetings once a year is not sufficient for a project with this level of complexity and wide scope. However, the PMU has access to direct reporting to the DNP’s DG on any emerging issues.

As far as can be ascertained project management has not reported adaptive management changes to the Project Board and any lessons which may have arisen, have not been documented, and not shared with partners. Neither is it known how the project team and partners have addressed poorly-rated PIRs.

**4.8.2 Communication**

Internal communication was done through meetings, telephone and emails which appeared to be sufficient at central level. Communication between the PMU and pilot sites seemed to be ineffective due to frequent changes of field coordinators and the distant locations; while communication between pilot sites seemed to be non-existent. The Project Director, Project Manager and Project Coordinator conducted periodic visits to pilot sites when face-to-face communication is needed with the field team, for example during the formulation process of concepts and proposals for pilot projects.

A communication strategy and workplan are in place for external communication. The project has made efforts to communicate its results to a wider regional, national and local audience via several channels, *e.g.* the project’s website, Facebook, blog, group mails and print materials. The themes of project publications include, for example, Integrated National Management Master Plan, Doi Inthanon National Park Management Plan, Sustainability Financial Scorecard Manual, Tarutao National Park’s Economic Evaluation Report, Eastern Forest Complex’s Tourism Economic Evaluation Report, and Saving Thailand’s Natural Heritage. According to PIR-2014, key issues that the project advocated, such as the new PA System Plan and the conservation trust fund have gained the media’s attention and obtained coverage.

For the remaining period of the project, there is a need for pilot activities on new PA management and sustainable financing to be closely monitored and evaluated and the proven models must be communicated to relevant divisions within DNP and key partners for replication as possible. The remaining period should concentrate on knowledge sharing and management as specified under Outcome 4.

**4.9 Project level monitoring and evaluation**

The GEF has a number of requirements for project level monitoring and evaluation and these are shown in the following table together with the Evaluators’ observations.

**Table 7. GEF M&E requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GEF M&E REQUIREMENTS** | **EVALUATORS’ 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 | The SRF has indicators only for the Objective and not for the Outcomes and the PMU reported that QPRs were used for monitoring progress. The QPRs that were made available to the Evaluators comprise a good and thorough effort to monitor progress (towards impact). Two improvements are possible – firstly, each QPR could start with a reference to the expectations that had been set for the quarter; secondly, QPRs could have an additional section on process and implementation efficiency.  |
| SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators |
| A project baseline or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation  | Baselines were identified in the SRF. |
| An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities | According to the ProDoc, “*The project's M&E Plan will be presented and finalized at the Project's Inception Report following a collective fine-tuning of indicators, means of verification, and the full definition of project staff M&E responsibilities*”. The Inception Report does provide a very basic M&E Plan, but one which does not consider development objectives; without recognition of the different perspectives of women and men; without consideration of women, indigenous peoples, and the poor. |
| An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation | The M&E Plan in the Inception Report does identify responsible parties and timing but lacks an estimate of the budget required |

It would seem from the above that while QPRs were used as useful M&E tools, the SRF was not. Neither has there been an effective M&E Plan. The basic plan has no allocation of budgets for M&E activities and the main project Budget in the ProDoc allocates some funds for an international and a local evaluator but nothing else.

M&E activities have not been adequately planned, no partners seem to have been involved and the approach is not a participatory[[20]](#footnote-20) one. There has been no consideration of gender, no disaggregation; and M&E has not included risks. And while the METT has been used as a monitoring tool, it does not seem to have led to many targeted actions. Neither has it been mainstreamed into the management of the PA System.

**5 FINDINGS: PROGRESS MADE – EFFECTIVENESS**

**5.1 Project results and impacts**

A detailed analysis of progress that the project has made towards its Outcomes and the Objective has been carried out with the full participation of the PMU and in consultation with other stakeholders. The tabulated result of this analysis is in Annex 12 which starts with an assessment of progress towards the Objective then, because the SRF does not have Indicators for the Outcomes, carries out an assessment of progress towards the Outputs. It then attempts to relate the Outputs to the respective Outcomes with an assessment of the progress made and the likely results by end of project. It is worth noting that out of the 11 Outputs only four are relevant to their Outcome; of the rest, three are partly relevant and four are not relevant. This means that even if some of the Outputs are achieved, the respective Outcome may not be achieved.

The assessment of progress is based on self-assessment by the PMU and documents review, consultations and field observations by the Evaluators. Among the documents reviewed were the PIRs, including PIR-2015 which was provided to the Evaluators, in draft form, over two months after the end of the mission.

Figure 4 below presents a summary of the progress made to date which in general has not been very good. Only one Output can be claimed to have been achieved. Of the remaining ten, five are likely to be achieved and five are unlikely to be achieved. As for the Outcomes, only one out of four is likely to be achieved fully.

The situation has not improved much since a year ago when PIR-2014 reported a rather critical assessment of project results. It found that “*The interventions are still piecemeal without a coherence direction yet. There are activity plans at central and site levels; but they lack comprehensive and systematic linkages among them. The activities and consultancies required tend to come up on an ad-hoc basis. Key Outputs are delivered but have not been consolidated to achieve outcomes. There is a critical need for the project to have a better grip of how each output, each consultancy will contribute to key outcomes*”. The Evaluators concur with this assessment.

**Figure 4. Summary of progress towards the Objective, Outcomes and Outputs**

**OBJECTIVE:** To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system

**PROGRESS**: The necessary enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing has not been created. While progress has been achieved with tools for management planning, and tools for sustainable financing, both were on a pilot scale and need evaluation and writing up as guidance before they can be replicated – this should be possible within the remaining time. While some progress can be claimed, it is unlikely that all this work can be completed in the remaining time. Without an extension, the Objective will only be achieved partly.

**OUTPUT 4. 1**: Communication strategy and materials developed for partnership engagement and advocacy

**PROGRESS**: Partly achieved - Strategy in draft. May be achieved.

**Output 4.2** Lessons-learned captured into Management Models for replication and policy decision

**PROGRESS**: Minimal progress and cannot even be considered as partly achieved. Unlikely to be achieved fully

**OUTPUT 3. 1**: New PA Integrated Management Planning Framework including tools and methods in place and implemented at the pilot units

**PROGRESS**: PA planning framework achieved at pilot sites, however, complete implementation uncertain in remaining time

**Output 3.2** Financing Mechanism identified and implemented at the pilot units

**PROGRESS**: Mechanism identified but not implemented. Unlikely to be achieved fully

**Output 3.3** Co- management approaches enhanced: including strengthened PAC at site-level and mechanisms/channels for public engagement in PA management established at site level

**PROGRESS**: PACs strengthened and their role is better defined. But serious co-management unlikely even with an extension

**Output 3.4** Regional DNP Offices and PA Staff capacities enhanced to coordinate management support and budget allocations across multiple PA in Eastern Complex for improved biodiversity conservation, management effectiveness and cost efficiencies

**PROGRESS**: Capacities have been enhanced but enhancement not measured. May be achieved

**OUTPUT 1.1**: 5-year integrated national PA system management plan and financial strategy endorsed

**PROGRESS**: Partly achieved - Pilots done and there is endorsement at local level. Upscaling to System level in order to achieve the Output, unlikely even with an extension

**Output 1.2** Policies strengthening role of PA Advisory Committees and community participation in PA management is in place

**PROGRESS**: Partly achieved, still short of co-management. Can be finalized especially with extension

**Output 1.3** Effective M&E and knowledge-based data management system is in place to assess progress and to inform policy decisions

**PROGRESS**: No progress made, may not be possible in remaining time.

**OUTCOME 4**: New models of PA management support effective management of the System

**PROGRESS**: The Outcome sought new models of PA management and ultimately effective management of the PA System. The Outputs are not relevant to the Outcome. Even if the Outputs were to be achieved, the Outcome, as written, is not likely to be achieved

**OUTCOME 1**: Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA system sustainability

**PROGRESS**: The Outcome sought improved governance and an enabling environment and the Outputs are not entirely relevant to the Outcome, except possibly Output 1.3 which is unlikely to be achieved. The Outcome, as written, is unlikely to be achieved

**OUTCOME 3**: Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA system

**PROGRESS**: The Outcome sought revenue generation mechanisms and the Outputs delivered some enhancement of capacities and improvements in co-management. Some financing mechanisms have been identified and a new PA planning framework has been designed. The Outcome has been partly achieved, but the ultimate target of increased funding levels is unlikely to be achieved

**OUTCOME 2**: Institutional and individual capacities enhanced

**PROGRESS**: The Outcome sought enhanced capacities and the Outputs have delivered the Effectiveness Unit and training has been carried out. However there has been no attempt to determine whether capacities have indeed been enhanced. However, this is still possible and the Outcome may be achieved

**OUTPUT 2. 1**: Effectiveness Unit in place to support project and institutionalised for long-term role in DNP

**PROGRESS**: Effectiveness Unit is in place. Needs to be institutionalised. May be achievable

**Output 2.2** Capacity Building Programs on Effective PA Management and Financial Planning developed for DNP staff as well as partners; and institutionalised within DNP and partners

**PROGRESS**: Training programmes have been designed but impact has not yet been measured. May be achievable especially with extension.

**5.2 GEF Tracking Tools**

In an effort to complement the above assessment of progress, the Evaluators examined the latest METT scores carried out in October 2014 (see Annex 13, separate file), and compared them with those annexed to the ProDoc.

**Table 8. Scores obtained from the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PROTECTED AREA** | **Nov 2008** | **Oct 2014** | **EVALUATORS’ COMMENTS** |
| 1. Khao Chamao – KhaoWong National Park | 53 | 66 | This is a significant gain |
| 2. Doi Inthanon NationalPark | 77 | 74 | This is a disappointing regression |
| 3. Tarutao National Park | 59 | 69 | This is a reasonable gain |
| 4. Khlong Lan National Park | 59 | 83 | This is an excellent improvement  |
| 5. Huai Kha KhaengWildlife Sanctuary | 62 | 73 | This is a definite improvement  |
| **AVERAGE SCORE** | 62 | 73 | On average, METT scores have improved by 16%.  |

The table shows that there has been progress in management efficiency as measured by the METTs in all but Doi Inthanon. The best improvement is in Khlong Lan National Park and the overall average score from the five targeted PAs shows an improvement of 16%. This satisfies the Targets set for two Outputs where an improvement of 10% was expected by mid-term, rising to 20% at project closure.

The results are not as auspicious when the Financial Sustainability Scorecard scores are examined. These scores are at system level and at the time of CEO Endorsement Request the score was 34% and the target set was 55%. The October 2014 assessment found a score of 31.64% which is a regression rather than an improvement.

**5.3 Mainstreaming of UNDP corporate goals**

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 evaluation of a UNDP project to assess the extent to which the project took on board these UNDP goals.

The ProDoc did not have an overt **gender** perspective and mentions gender only once – *“The project will give strong emphasis on promoting gender equity in its actions, thereby further aiding social sustainability”.* However, this does not seem to have been followed through and PIR-2013 stated that a gender and social assessment had been carried out, but then went on to discuss only the social aspects. 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 evaluators did not come across any effort to address gender differences in any planned action. Gender mainstreaming in project planning which comprises analysis, defining the approach, and providing a gender-focus for monitoring and evaluation, leads to women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences being taken into account . This will ensure that both men and women benefit equally from project interventions and that gender inequality is not perpetuated. In return, it will also help achieve better outcomes and impacts and enhance the sustainability of project benefits.

The project did not recognize the level of **poverty** prevalent in the contexts where it is operating. The ProDoc does not mention poverty. This is in a country where, admittedly there has been a steady decrease in the numbers below the poverty line, but where according to UNDP, poverty still afflicts just over 12% of the population. According to the World Bank[[21]](#footnote-21), “*Poverty in Thailand is primarily a rural phenomenon, with over 80% of the country's 7.3 million poor living in rural areas (as of 2013)*” – which is precisely where the project is operating and where it can potentially contribute to rural poverty reduction through alternative income generation and sustainable management of eco-tourism.

**Human rights** are not mentioned at all in the ProDoc, and this is a patent shortcoming. As UNDP says[[22]](#footnote-22) “*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*.” The project did not mainstream human rights in its operations and implementation[[23]](#footnote-23).

**6 FINDINGS: SUSTAINABILITY**

The project has delivered some benefits and more will be delivered by the time it closes, with or without an extension. However, there are certain risks that some of these benefits will not survive for long beyond project closure and these risks are considered below.

**6.1 Financial risks to sustainability**

Benefits of the project such as the Data Management System (Output 1.3), the Effectiveness Unit (Output 2.1), and the Communication Strategy (Output 4.1) require financial resources to be continued sustainably. The capacity enhancement carried out by the project under Outputs 2.2 and 3.4 for improved PA management and revenue generation will need on-going updating and extension and this too will need to be funded.

If the degree of ownership by DNP is increased, these and other project products/benefits will be assimilated by DNP as part of its core functions and as such they will be supported by the DNP core budget and the financial risk will be greatly reduced. However, this is far from certain and the financial risks remain. Financial sustainability is seen as **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**.

**6.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability**

There are both social and political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits. These risks can be guarded against by a higher level of stakeholder ownership, better communication and appreciation of the project benefits, and a more meaningful co-management system (although PACs have made good progress). It is also still necessary to bring communities on board through improved livelihoods and well-being as a result of better managed PAs.

The documentation of lessons arising from project implementation of pilots, has yet to begin and there are no firm plans for the evaluation, refinement and documentation that must precede replication. However, the Evaluators are confident that these tasks will be carried out by the project, especially if an extension is granted, and the socio-economic sustainability of project benefits is considered as **Moderately Likely (ML)**.

**6.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability**

There is a distinction in institutional and governance risk to sustainability between the central level and field locations. At central level, DNP needs to take better ownership of the project and push for further changes in its system and enabling conditions. The existing legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes still pose risks to project benefits. In spite of the project’s efforts, the enabling environment targeted under Outcome 1 is still elusive and project approaches and strategies cannot be mainstreamed into DNP’s operations and functions. This is primarily due to the strict hierarchy of the system, the overly bureaucratic processes and the lack of delegation/devolution. There are institutional and governance risks at central level such that sustainability is **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**.

At the local PA level, we have met some impressive champions who have welcomed the project’s approach and are trying to benefit from its approach and products. Among other things, they have established a good rapport with local communities that augurs well for the future. Although it will require them to overcome the inertia from central level, local leadership seems committed and at least in the locations we visited, the sustainability of project benefits appears **Likely (L)**.

**6.4 Environmental risks to sustainability**

This is an environmental project and the security of environmental sustainability should be a foregone conclusion. However, we find at least three risks to environmental sustainability.

From what we have seen in Doi Inthanon, fire is used by communities within and adjacent to PAs as part of their farming practice and most often, these fires get out of control and destroy hectares of PA forests, grasslands and their environments. Our concern is exacerbated by what seems to be a defeatist attitude on the part of PA management.

A related risk to environmental sustainability is posed by the large number of communities that live within the boundaries of the PA. Of greatest concern are their farming activities which are mostly on a commercial scale with the use of pesticides and fertilizers that that may entail.

Reintroductions are being carried out following extensive research on the potential disruption to existing ecosystem services, species at risk, or other ecological values. This research and analysis as well as active management and monitoring, must be maintained because the risk remains that the host ecosystem may be less resilient and robust than expected. This is especially important in the face of a changing climate.

These environmental factors are of concern at least in Doi Inthanon and could undermine and reverse the project’s outcomes and results. However, in view of the close collaboration between PA management and communities elsewhere (for example in Tarutao, Klong Lan, and Huay Kha Khaeng), overall environmental sustainability is seen as **Moderately Likely (ML).**

**7 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY RATINGS**

**7.1 Conclusions**

This section takes its cue from the four key evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness (and impact), and sustainability. It gathers together the logical end-arguments arising from the findings of this evaluation. Some of these have been developed in the preceding text and therefore they are included here as mere summaries to ensure completeness; others are more substantive discussions arising from findings and analysis.

**7.1.1 Project relevance and design**

The project is seen as very relevant to the needs of Thailand as well as to the strategic objectives of the GEF.

The project design is complicated and it does not have enough cohesion. It is over-ambitious in scope with too many localities spread out over a broad geographical area, without the necessary mechanisms for communication and mutual learning. The concept of “pilot” activities has not been well-understood by project design which does not include any mechanisms for replication.

Indicators are not provided for the four Outcomes in the ProDoc and this anomaly persisted through the Inception Workshop, PIRs and into project implementation with the revised SRF thus hindering the project M&E. Risks were identified but the mitigation measures are weak. The design of project Governance and Implementation Arrangements is not robust, and this has affected the project.

Efforts to improve the design at the inception phase through changes in the SRF reshuffled the Outputs. Out of the 11 Outputs only four are relevant to their respective Outcome; of the rest, three are partly relevant and four are not relevant. This means that in some cases, even if the Outputs are achieved, the respective Outcome may not be achieved.

The revision also changed the substance but not the statement of Outcome 4 – the Outputs under Outcome 4 have changed but the original wording statement has been retained. What was desired by the revision was a new Outcome but by not changing the statement, it is still the old Outcome.

There is a need to rectify the situation with regards to the SRF and this requires adjustments in one Outcome and one Output, the development of Indicators for the four Outcomes, and the setting of Baselines and Targets for the new Indicators. The details of the required changes are listed in Recommendation 8.5.

**7.1.2 Project implementation efficiency**

Project implementation has not been very efficient. It has been impacted by inordinate delays before and after start-up, a low level of ownership by the Government, excessive bureaucratic procedures particularly for the disbursement process, changes in the Project Manager’s position and a gap between incumbents, changes in the Project Director’s position, and a management style without a mechanism for communication and experience sharing between pilots.

As a result, project delivery has stalled and by the end of December (latest figures available), with 80% of project time gone, the project had only spent 35% of the budget. Without an extension, it is most unlikely that the project could spent the over US$2 million remaining.

There is a need for DNP to exercise a higher level of ownership of the project and consider it as being in support of its core activities and responsibilities. There is a need to make project governance more effective with an incisive decision-making and policy body such as the PEB, and an advisory body such as the TAG. There is a need to adopt a more inclusive and participatory project management style with an effective web pattern of communication between implementers and beneficiaries, without having to go through the PMU. There is a need to resolve the financial management and disbursement impasse and allow the project to gather momentum in its delivery.

Unless these problems with implementation and delivery are resolved there is no point in having an extension.

**7.1.3 Project results and effectiveness**

The ProDoc identified five barriers that the project was to address and these were reflected in the scope and dimensions of the project and informed the SRF which was weak and lacking some crucial elements as noted above. Out of 11 Outputs, only one can be said to have been achieved. Of the remaining ten, five are likely to be achieved and five are unlikely to be achieved. When taken up to the next level, the Outcomes, only one out of four Outcomes is confidently expected to be achieved by project closure. Of the rest, two out of three may be achieved if there is an extension.

The table below lists the original barriers and records the results or progress obtained by the project. It then identifies remaining challenges and the likelihood of results being obtained by project closure with or without an extension.

**Table 9. Barriers, results and remaining challenges**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ORIGINAL BARRIERS FROM THE PRODOC** | **PROJECT RESULTS** | **REMAINING CHALLENGES** |
| 1 Weak policies, planning and information management  | Some progress made through consultants’ reports but the necessary enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing has not been created – policies, legislation, procedures, collaboration, capacities, roles & responsibilities, etc, need formulation and/or updating. | There has been little progress towards the creation of an enabling environment, namely policies, legislation, procedures, etc. These matters take time and it is unlikely that this work can be completed in the remaining project life (by December 2015) although it might be possible if there is an extension.  |
| 2 Institutional and individual capacities  | Good progress has been made although significant work remaining.  | There is a need to extend capacity building to the community level so as to provide for serious co-management. It is also necessary to assess how successful all the training and capacity building has been by measuring capacity. Both of these outstanding tasks are likely to be achieved by project end, particularly if there is an extension. |
| 3 No access to tools, methods, or guidelines for developing management plans | Some innovative approaches have been piloted  | In the planning and management for PAs, there is still a need to address the matter of encroachment so as to reduce the significant impacts of communities who live and work in PAs. This may be possible with an extension. Furthermore, the piloted innovative approaches need to be evaluated and written up as guidance before they can be confirmed and put out for replication. This is expected to be possible with an extension. |
| 4 Deficiencies in revenue and financing generating activities and mechanisms  | In spite of two, maybe three, relevant activities, the project is a long way from achieving sustainable financing at PA System level.  | In the time remaining, the project is most unlikely to overcome this barrier which may have been somewhat ambitious. It may not even be possible with an extension. |
| 5 No examples of effective models of PA management  | Some innovative approaches have been piloted | The pilots need to be evaluated and written up as guidance before they can be confirmed and put out for replication. This can be done if there is an extension. |

**7.1.4 Sustainability and sustainability plan**

There are some risks that project benefits will not survive for long beyond project closure. However, some of these can be alleviated between now and project closure.

For example, if the degree of ownership in the project by DNP is increased, many project products/benefits will be recognized as valuable to its core functions and the financial risk to sustainability will be greatly reduced. A higher degree of ownership by DNP could also assist the project with the creation of the enabling environment targeted under Outcome 1 and its mainstreaming into DNP’s operations and functions.

At the local PA level, where we have met some impressive champions, the risk to sustainability is much lower. However, they will need to overcome the inertia from central level. Local leadership will also need to nurture further the good rapport they have established with local communities and work towards meaningful co-management to reduce the socio-economic risks to sustainability.

Foremost among the environmental risks is the use of fire by communities living within and adjacent to PAs as part of their farming practice. A related risk is posed by the large number of communities that live within the boundaries of PAs. Of greatest concern are their farming activities which are mostly on a commercial scale with the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Some management activities in PAs, such as the reintroduction of various species is being carried out in the absence of an up to date management plan and this too poses an environmental risk to the sustainability of project benefits.

It might be seen as premature to be considering exit strategies during a MTR, however, if there is no extension, this project will end in eight months and in view of the concerns expressed above regarding sustainability, we believe attention is justified.

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 DNP and MoNRE (such as the RFD)
* 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

If the project is not to have an extension it will finish in December 2015 and the above will need to commence in September 2015. If an extension is approved, these activities will be postponed to September 2016. As part of the project winding down activities, we wish to suggest a Terminal or Exit Workshop which needs to be planned by the PMU with the full support of the PEB and with adequate budgetary provision. Such an event needs to serve to -

* Bring together project personnel, organizations and individuals identified to continue the work of the project – 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
* Identify the products/benefits/results achieved by the project and whether they can “live” on their own, or require a champion
* Consensus on who is taking over the responsibility for unfinished work and for products and benefits that need to be “adopted” and sustained by someone else
* It is most important to identify funding support, to the extent possible, to ensure financial sustainability

Two key documents in all the above will be the latest PIR and the Project Manager’s Project Terminal Report, even if only in draft form.

**7.2 Summary of assessments made and ratings awarded**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MEASURE** | **ELEMENT** | **ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION** | **MTR RATING** |
| **Project Design** | Design and LogFrame | Project design is complicated and not cohesive. It is over-ambitious in scope with too many localities spread out over a broad geographical area; there are no mechanisms for communication and mutual learning. There are no mechanisms for replication. Indicators are not provided for the four Outcomes and risks mitigation measures are weak. The design of project Governance and Implementation Arrangements is not robust. Efforts to improve the design through changes in the SRF reshuffled the Outputs and changed the substance of Outcome 4 and Outcomes remained without indicators. | **Unsatisfactory (U)** |
| **Progress Towards Results** | **Objective:** To overcome barriers to effective management and sustained financing of Thailand’s protected area system | The necessary enabling environment for successful PA System management and financing has not been created – policies, legislation, procedures, collaboration, capacities, roles & responsibilities, etc, need formulation and/or updating. In addition, pilots need evaluation and writing up as guidance before they can be replicated. It is unlikely that this work can be completed in the remaining time without an extension.  | **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)** |
| **Outcome 1:** Improved governance supports enabling environment for long term PA system sustainability | Good progress has been made but significant work remaining. It may not be possible in the remaining months before project wind-down and closure to satisfy the shortfall and it is unlikely that the Outcome will be achieved fully, without an extension.  | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Outcome 2:** Institutional and individual capacities enhanced | The project has carried out a number of capacity enhancing activities and more are planned. There is a need to extend capacity building to the community level so as to provide for serious co-management. But above all, there is a need to assess how successful all the training and capacity building has been by testing the capacity. The Outcome is expected to achieve most of its targets with minor shortcomings. | **Satisfactory (S)** |
| **Outcome 3:** Revenue generation mechanisms and management approaches are assessed and tested at 5 PA demonstration sites leading to increased funding levels of the PA system | This is the key Outcome and it commands 42% of the project budget. Its focus is sustainable financing at System level and the project is a long way from this. The Targets have been partly met and may be reached by the project end. However, even if all the targets are fully met, the Outcome may not be fully achieved as targeted in the remaining time. | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Outcome 4:** New models of PA management support effective management of the System | The changes to the Outputs under this Outcome, in effect, changed the Outcome. In pursuing the new Outputs, the project has only made limited progress and it is going to be a challenge to achieve the Outputs before project closure. However, the possibility exists.  | **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | Implementation and execution | Low ownership by DNP, changes to PM and Project Director and the stalemate with disbursements have impacted the project such that with 80% of the time gone, budget delivery is a mere 35%. | **Moderately Unsatisfactory****(MU)** |
| Adaptive management | The problems created by the PM gap were dealt with reasonably well; and the disbursement difficulties have been recognized although they are yet to be fixed. However, following the changes effected at the Inception Phase, the SRF remained static and there is little evidence of adaptive management as a result of the project’s M&E. | **Moderately Satisfactory****(MS)** |
| **Sustainability** | Financial risks to sustainability | If the degree of ownership by DNP is increased, project benefits will become part of the core functions of DNP and as such they will be supported by the DNP core budget. This means that the financial risk will be greatly reduced, but this is far from certain and the financial risks remain. | **Moderately Unlikely****(MU)** |
| Socio-economic risks to sustainability | Active engagement of local communities in several pilot activities can potentially lead to socio-economic sustainability of project initiatives, provided that these activities resulted in improved livelihoods and well-being of communities around PAs. | **Moderately Likely****(ML)** |
| Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability | DNP needs to take better ownership of the project and push for further changes in its system and enabling conditions. The existing legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes still pose risks to project benefits. Unless its strict hierarchy and bureaucratic processes are relaxed, and there is more delegation/devolution, the institutional and governance risks at central level remain. | At Central level**Moderately Unlikely****(MU)** |
| At the local PA level, a good rapport has been established with local communities and local leadership seems committed at least in the locations we visited. | At local level**Likely****(L)** |
| Environmental risks to sustainability | Fire is a serious environmental risk and a related risk is posed by the large number of communities and their farming activities within the boundaries of PAs.  | **Moderately Likely****(ML)** |

**8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**8.1 Issue: Project governance**

The Project Steering Committee has not functioned as expected and has provided little “steering” when the project really needed it such as when considering improvements to project design and addressing the disbursement stalemate.

**We recommend:**

**8.1.1** That **UNDP** set up a Project Executive Board (PEB) of 3-4 persons who would meet as and when required but not less than every three months.

**8.1.2** Then, to maintain a forum for ideas exchange and advice, **UNDP** should revitalize the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to meet every 3-4 months or as needed.

**8.2 Issue: Project implementation and management**

Project implementation and achievement have suffered from a number of factors ranging from a low level of ownership by DNP, weak governance, management style hindering effective lessons and experience sharing among the pilot sites, an overly-bureaucratic disbursement process, lack of action on consultants’ reports and other outputs, delays in adopting and upscaling to System level products and training curricula which have been tested and are ready to be institutionalised within DNP. The result has been under-performance by the project and lack of delivery.

**We recommend:**

**8.2.1** That **DNP** exercise a higher level of ownership of the project and consider it as being in support of its core activities and responsibilities and that it works with UNDP to urgently resolve the financial management and disbursement impasse.

**8.2.2** That **UNDP** ensures that the new PEB (see above) is an effective governance body for the project providing policy, advice, and direction and requiring accountability.

**8.2.3** That the **PMU** adopts a more inclusive and participatory management style with an effective web pattern of communication between implementers and beneficiaries.

**8.2.4** That the **PMU** set up a working group comprising relevant DNP units to consider the consultants’ recommendations and produce a working paper on how they can be implemented by DNP. The paper to serve as the discussion document for a broader workshop comprising high ranking officials from DNP, MoNRE and NESDB to draft an Action Plan for effective PA management, especially the required enabling environment of policies, legislation, procedures, etc, targeted by Outcome 1 (see below).

**8.2.5** That the **PMU** should adopt the results-based management approach, incorporating the Training-Action-Follow-up (TAF) approach to assess the changes brought about by training. Furthermore, there needs to be a recognition that pilots are not results, but tools through which results are achieved. Before they are rolled out for replication they need to be evaluated, refined and then confirmed as successful models to be written up and offered for replication.

**8.2.6** **DNP** should strengthen the engagement of the National Parks Innovation Institute in the project both at national and site level, so as to obtain the utmost benefit for the DNP system from project products. Staff allocated to the Effectiveness Unit should consider this as part of their core responsibilities with clear performance indicators..

**8.3 Issue: Barriers to further progress at Outcomes level**

Barriers have been identified which are hindering progress towards the Outcomes and some of these are the subjects of recommendations. They are summarized here according to Outcome for emphasis and augmented as necessary to improve the project’s chances of attaining its Outcomes.

**We recommend:**

**8.3.1** That under Outcome 1 which sought improved governance, an enabling environment, and PA System sustainability –

**8.3.1.1** **PMU** should give prominence and urgency to the planned workshop (see 8.2.4 above) of high level decision makers to discuss recommendations made by the international consultants on improved PA System management and develop an action plan towards the enabling environment required to achieve the outcome.

**8.3.1.2** That arising from its planned workshop on the lessons learnt over the past ten years of PAC operation, the **PMU** should develop a model for effective PAC engagement comprising training needs assessment of PAC members in selected pilot sites, and the necessary curriculum to enhance PAC capacity. Based on the evaluation of the tested model, recommendations should be made for DNP adoption. The PMU must ensure that the model is in place before project closure.

* + 1. That under Outcome 2 which sought institutional and individual capacities enhanced –

**8.3.2.1** **DNP** should organize regular knowledge exchange forums on key issues introduced by the project for departmental officials and related partner agencies. Following each thematic knowledge forum, concrete actions should be planned and implemented to integrate the knowledge into DNP’s work to the extent possible.

**8.3.2.2** **DNP** should ensure that training curricula developed by the project on improved PA management and sustainable financing should be integrated into regular training programmes for all PA Superintendents and senior staff. Future training curricula which will result from the pilots, such as on PAC Capacity Building, should also be gradually adopted by DNP.

**8.3.3** That Outcome 3, which is a complex outcome with multiple targets such as management approaches, tools and mechanisms tested at all five sites, increased funding levels, and upscaling to PA System level, should be reconsidered and refocused to ensure that the Outcome is achieved, although an extension will be required.

**8.3.3.1** The **PMU**, working with **DNP** and **UNDP**, and working with the SRF Consultant, should review the scope of Outcome 3, confirm or revise Outputs, and prioritize the Activities so as to reflect the possibility that there may not be a project extension. The result of these deliberations should be presented for approval to the PEB and the RTA.

**8.3.3.2** The following changes/improvements should be considered –

**Output 3.1** The PA planning framework has been designed at pilot sites and the focus now should go on to implementation**.**

**Output 3.2** Financing mechanism has been identified and implemented at the pilot units and the focus should now go on finalizing the implementation of mechanism at pilot sites, evaluation of the pilots, writing up for replication and for upscaling to System level.

**Output 3.3** PACs have been strengthened and their role is better defined. But serious co-management still elusive. The focus should now go on community partnerships – with equal status and equal responsibilities for serious co-management. This should include the policy and legislative provisions for joint management.

**Output 3.4** Capacities have been enhanced but enhancement has not been measured. It is suggested that this work can be carried out under Outcome 2. Move this Output to Outcome 2.

**8.3.3.3** As a priority, the **PMU**, with the concurrence of the PEB, should arrange for an evaluation consultant to work with stakeholders to assess the level of success of each and any pilot project against its original objectives and targets, record the lessons learnt, refine the process if necessary, and write it up in a manner that can be replicated. Concurrently, the team will need to assess the requirements of actors other than DNP who will have key roles in the replication.

**8.3.3.4** In the event that there are time constraints, the PMU should focus on models for the following, listed in our suggested order of priority:

1 Financial mechanism for revenue raising/cost-effectiveness/cost-offsetting (e.g. through Doi Inthanon Conservation Fund, Khao Kitchagoot Sustainable Tourism Project, Tarutao /Reef Guardian Project)

2 Co-management approach (e.g through improved PAC role and through community’s engagement in the sustainable buffer zone management project in Huay Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary)

3 Complex approach (e.g. the case of EFCOM administration and project implementation)

4 Objective-driven management plan and implementation (e.g. by Klong Lan NP)

**8.3.4** That for Outcome 4, where a mismatch resulted between the Outcome statement and the Outputs identified in the revised SRF –

**8.3.4.1 UNDP**, with the concurrence of the **PEB** and the approval of the **GEF**, should revert to the Outcome statement floated at the Inception Workshop, *i.e.* change the Outcome wording statement

from - *New models of PA management support effective management of the System*

to - *New models of PA management captured, communicated and advocated*

so as to create better relevance and harmony between the Outcome and the Outputs which should now be confirmed.

**8.3.4.2** **PMU** should constantly capture and feed the knowledge/lessons learnt from the implementation of pilot activities to DNP Management as well as to the PEB in search of support and advice for scaling up.

**8.3.4.3** It is also important for the **DNP** to display and share the project’s products (with a disclaimer if necessary) within the department as well as with the wider community

**8.4 Issue: Meaningful involvement of communities**

The project has engaged well at the community level and the response has been very encouraging. This positive rapport should be capitalized on to build a relationship of mutual trust between the communities and DNP and, in particular, manage and reduce the impact of some communities on the PAs.

**We recommend:**

That the **PMU**, while respecting cultural and traditional nuances as well as ethnic rights, should work with community leaders to achieve a partnership for mutual benefit from Protected Areas. The immediate aim of this partnership should be true co-management following capacity building at community level to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the values and vulnerabilities of PAs. The ultimate aim is to decrease, and eliminate where possible, the impacts of communities who live and work within PAs. Consideration should be given to alternative income generation to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals, fire and similar impacts. As noted above, co-management must be founded on appropriate policies and legislation as well as a commitment on the part of the government to work in true partnership with the communities.

**8.5 Issue: Monitoring and Evaluation and the SRF**

The project M&E Plan is incomplete, the SRF does not provide Indicators for the Outcomes and the PSC has been ineffective. In the absence of a thorough M&E system, many problems may not have been identified early enough, others may have gone unnoticed, and the project has suffered.

**We recommend:**

**8.5.1** That the **PMU** should engage an expert consultant to lead a review of the SRF seeking improvements to the Indicators for the Objective and the Outcomes, a revision of some Outputs to ensure their relevance to the respective Outcome, and an adjustment of Baselines and Targets to reflect new Indicators. The review should be carried out according to UNDP guidance as discussed in section 3 of this report. At the same time, it should revise the M&E Plan and populate it with Targets from the revised SRF and timelines. It should then monitor impact or progress towards it (achievement/results) as well as the manner in which progress has been achieved (or not), that is, process. Use both impact and process monitoring to keep the SRF under continuous review, recommending changes (adaptive management) with the concurrence of the TAG to the PEB.

**8.5.2** For its part, the **DNP** should review the mandate of its Innovation Institute, strengthening its role in M&E across the department and including monitoring of the project guided by the targets set in the revised SRF.

**8.5.3** More specifically, consideration should be given to the following amendments to the SRF –

* Move Output 3.4 to Outcome 2 (see 8.3.3.2 above)
* Change the wording of Outcome 4 statement (see 8.3.4 above)
* Develop new Indicators for each of the four Outcomes
* Identify Baselines for each of the new Indicators reflecting the current state of progress or achievement
* Identify Targets for each of the new Indicators
* To the extent possible and as appropriate, use gender-disaggregated Indicators, Baselines and Targets (see 8.7 below)

**8.6 Issue: Communication, sharing and outreach**

An effective communication strategy is advisable for any project. However, this becomes an essential ingredient for a project comprising a series of pilots, testing new approaches and aiming to have them applied widely. It is therefore essential for this project to utilize all means available to communicate and share the knowledge gained and the products produced (such as key reports, manuals and discussion papers prepared by consultants).

**We recommend:**

**8.6.1** That the **PMU** should review the CATSPA webpage in the Innovation Institute’s website (in addition to its Facebook page) and use it as a mechanism for communication within the project and beyond to all stakeholders and others who are interested in the project.

**8.6.2** It is also important for the **DNP** to display and share the project’s products (with a disclaimer if necessary) within the department as well as with the wider community.

**8.7 Issue: Gender Mainstreaming**

There have been no efforts to mainstream gender issues into project planning and implementation. Gender mainstreaming in project planning where women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences are taken into account would help to ensure that both men and women benefit equally from project interventions and that gender equity is attained. In return, it will also contribute to greater outcome, impact and sustainability of project as women’s and men’s needs and potential are fully addressed. In most cases, reporting on gender mainstreaming is weak due to a lack of clear goals or expected results, and a lack of gender disaggregated indicators.

**We recommend:**

That if there is a project extension, in its last annual planning workshop, the **PMU** should engage a gender consultant to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming and lead the participants through the gender mainstreaming planning process which includes four steps, *viz*:

1 Gender analysis based on gender-disaggregated data to provide basic understanding about men’s and women’s different roles, needs, and conditions within the project’s context. This could include, for example, numbers of male and female participants/beneficiaries of project activities, their specific needs/conditions, and their roles/potential contributions to the planned activities.

2 Designing how the project’s interventions/activities could address different gender roles/needs while still responding to the objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project.

3 Designing gender-disaggregated indicators for each of the interventions/activities

4 Conduct M&E based on the workplan which incorporates gender-disaggregated indicators and prepare a report which includes gender-disaggregated data/results.

**8.8 Issue: Exit strategy for sustainability of project benefits**

The project operated at a pilot scale and it relies for its impact on upscaling and replication. This makes an effective Exit Strategy / Sustainability Plan absolutely essential. A key highlight of the strategy should be an Exit Workshop.

**We recommend:**

That the **PMU**, with the endorsement of both DNP and UNDP, should organize a Sustainability/Exit Workshop some two months before project closure, inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest in the project’s products, services and other benefits. At the Workshop, the PM will present her Project Terminal Report (maybe in draft), then 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.

**8.9 Issue: Project extension**

If the DNP can demonstrate that there is still the will to sustain the project and with a clearer understanding and acceptance of the various roles and responsibilities, the restructuring and acceptance of the PEB as the top body for project governance, the enhancement of support by the TAG, the streamlining of the financial management procedures, and the removal of other barriers that have hindered it to date, the Evaluators believe that the project is viable and that it has a good chance of attaining its objective.

However, in order for this to happen, the recommendations made in this report must be accepted and implemented. If this does not happen within the next five months (by October 2015) the value of any extension will be jeopardised and the project should be terminated as currently planned by December 2015.

**We recommend:**

That after ascertaining that each of the above recommendations has been accepted and considered in the Management Response, **UNDP** with the concurrence of the **PEB**, should obtain **GEF** approval for the project to be extended by another 12 months at no additional cost to GEF to terminate in December 2016.

1. Taken from the evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex 1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Anonymous (2013) Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area System – Inception Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Global Environment Facility (2006) *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ullrich, Stephanie, et. al. (2014) *Guidance for conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects*. UNDP-GEF Directorate. United Nations Development Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. GEF Evaluation Office (2009) *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ullrich, Stephanie, et al (2014) *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects.*  UNDP GEF Directorate [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2005) *Standards for Evaluation in the UN System*. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Excerpt from “Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand’s Protected Area System” Project Document [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.thainationalparks.com/mae-wong-national-park> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. It is noted that the text of the Inception Report discussing the SRF is not entirely consistent with the annex of the same document showing the complete revised SRF. This MTR sees the text as a discussion of the issue and the actual revised SRF as that appearing in the annex. It is the revised SRF in the Annex which is used in this MTR. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. UNDP advised that the Technical Group was an ad hoc working group that met as and when needed, on average four times a year, to provide advice on site level work plans, the recommendations on system plans, the economic valuation works, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. UNDP (2009) *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results.* United Nations Development Programme, New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Outcome 4 new wording as recommended – see section 8, recommendation 8.3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. According to project structure in ProDoc, there is a TAG and the project has appointed TAG members. But they do not seem to have a significant role in practice. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ullrich, Stephanie, et. al. (2014) *Guidance for conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects*. UNDP-GEF Directorate. United Nations Development Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. UNDP notes that while adaptive measures were taken, the efficiency and effectiveness of the ensuing adaptive management were a problem. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. PIR-2013 states that “*Financial capacity assessment reveals significant risks on financial management system of implementing partner (IP) if project budget is transferred*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. #  See [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/discussion-paper--innovations-in-monitoring---evaluating-results/), 05 Nov 2013.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/overview> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democraticgovernance/focus_areas/focus_human_rights/> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. In some pilot sites, there are agreements with local communities that they can access resources in the PA. These are more of a case-by-case practice rather than a systematic plan across all PAs and arise out of the Constitution Provision of community’s rights regarding natural resources and it cannot be attributed to the project. However, the project could study how the community’s rights have been secured without damaging the ecological balance and the case can be written up for replication. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)