Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project
"Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and
Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental
Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya"
GEF PROJECT ID: 5272

(2016-2022)

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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(Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya)
(GEF PROJECT ID: 5272)
(Date 09/23)

Acknowledgements

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Giacomo Morelli as an external consultant.

The Evaluator would like to express his gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex III.

The Evaluator would like to thank the project team for their collaboration throughout the evaluation process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to those who supported the evaluation field mission and those who provided comments on the draft report.

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The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

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Brief consultant biography

The consultant is a professional with proven experience in the development sector in the thematic areas of agriculture, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, environment, sustainable land management, food security, livelihoods, natural resource management, and rural development. He holds an MSc in Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Certificate of Advanced Studies in Evaluation and has vast experience in evaluation, which he has accrued first-hand by conducting more than 30 evaluation assignments worldwide and by attending formal trainings. Since 2012, he has been engaging mainly with evaluations and having the opportunity to carry out evaluations for United Nations entities and international NGOs. He has a broad experience in evaluating GEF and EU funded projects. Prior to his work as Evaluator, he worked as consultant for a broad spectrum of organizations such as UN agencies, private companies, research institutes and international NGOs.

About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation

Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of a UNEP/GEF *"Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya"* project implemented between 2016 and 2022. The project's overall development goal was *to contribute to improved food security and incomes of smallholder farmers through sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro-biodiversity) management in Western Kenya.* The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Biodiversity, Capacities; Enabling Policies; Western Kenya; Sustainable Land Management; Sustainable Forest Management; Governance; Climate Change; Ecosystem Management; Value Chain Approach.

Primary data collection period: September / October 2022

Field mission dates: from 24 to 28 October 2022

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADSW	Anglican Development Services Western
BD	Biodiversity
CFA	Community Forest Associations
COVID-19	Coronas Virus Disease 2019
CBSP	Community-Based Seed Producer
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
FFS	Farmer Field School
FMO	Fund Management Officer
GE	Green Economy
GEF	Global Environment Facility
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
LD	Land Degradation
MMUST	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Midterm Review
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWFPS	Non-wood forest products and services
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee (internal UNEP committee that approves new projects)
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
ROP	Rural Outreach Program Africa
SCAOS	Sub-county Agricultural Officers
SC	Sustainable Consumption
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMAE	Small Scale Agricultural Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToC	Theory of Change
TORs	Terms of Reference
ToT	Trainer of Trainees
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WAOS	Ward Agricultural Officers

Project identification table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID:	5272		
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)	**Executing Agencies:**	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO).
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	SDG 1: 1.1; SDG 2:2.4; SDG 11:11.4; SDG 14:14.2, 14c; SDG 15:15.1, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7; SDG 16: 16b; SDG 17:17.6, 17,7, 17.11 and 17.14		
Sub-programme:	Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	EAa (i,iii) and EAb (i,ii)
UNEP approval date:	15 June 2016	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	2018-2019 PoW and the 2018-2021 MTS
GEF approval date:	12 July 2016	**Project type:**	FSP
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF 5	**Focal Area(s):**	Multi-Focal
GEF Strategic Priority:	LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services		
***Expected* start date:**	24 June 2016	**Actual start date:**	24 November 2016
***Planned* completion date:**	24 June 2021	**Actual operational completion date:**	31 July 2022
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	USD 13,488,205	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 Dec 2021:**	USD 3,263,940.27
GEF grant allocation:	USD 3,383,800	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021:**	USD 3,172,573
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	USD 80,000	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	NIL
***Expected* Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 9,904,405 (USD 4,294,097 cash; USD 5,610,308 in-kind)	**Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 8,670,705
First disbursement:	27 December 2016	**Planned date of financial closure:**	31 December 2022
No. of formal project revisions:	none	**Date of last approved project revision:**	none
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	11	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	**Last:** 27 January 2022 / **Next:** Not foreseen
Mid-term Review *(planned date)*:	January 2019	**Mid-term Review *(actual date)*:**	November 2020
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date)*:	June 2020	**Terminal Evaluation *(actual date)*:**	February 2023
Coverage - Country(ies):	Kenya	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	Not applicable	**Status of future project phases:**	Not applicable

Executive Summary
Project background

1. A new constitution came into force in Kenya from 2013 after a general election. Under the new constitutional dispensation, county governments were created with devolved functions which included a mandate on agriculture, land and natural resources. The areas that the county governments identified as critical for support included an enabling policy framework for agriculture and SLM at county level.

2. The intervention was a multi-focal area project funded under the 5th GEF Operational Programme. Its objective was to contribute to improved food security and incomes of smallholder farmers through sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro-biodiversity) management in Western Kenya.

3. The existing barrier which the project sought to address was "how to scale-out from the successful, but often fragmented and localized, SLM/SFM initiatives, to programmes that are fully integrated within the county development plans and budgets and hence are both institutionally and financially sustainable" (ProDoc, 2016). The project targeted the Kakamega and Nandi Forest in Western Kenya and adjacent farming areas. The implementing partner was UNEP and the executing agencies were AGRA and KALRO.

This evaluation

4. The evaluation was theory-based and made use of a utilization-focused and a participatory approach. The design of the evaluation included the following tools to collect relevant data: desk review of project documents and reports; individual and group interviews; focus group discussions; and field visits to project sites.

5. In line with UNEP Evaluation Guidelines and as per the Terms of Reference, the project was assessed against nine evaluation criteria: Strategic Relevance, Quality of Project Design, Nature of External Context, Effectiveness (availability of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and likelihood of impact), Financial Management, Efficiency, Monitoring and Reporting, Sustainability and the Factors Affecting and Performance and Cross-cutting Issues.

Key findings

6. With a decision taken by the Project Steering Committee on October 12th, 2018, the project substantially scaled down in its ambitions. The target values of the indicators at objective level of relevance for the GEF were reduced by approx. 80%. Specifically,[1]

   - The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha (i.e. 80% reduction) and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" was reduced from 20,000 to 3,913 ha (i.e. 80% reduction).

   - In addition, the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would target 100,000 ha of farming land and 50,000 forest land (i.e. not the 21,917 ha as actually happened) (i.e. 86% reduction)

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[1] See also 1.5 Changes in Design During Implementation section for details of entries in the Project Implementation Review reports.

7. The evaluation finds this reduction in targets to be a 'major amendment' as per the GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy 2016, pg 4: *Major amendment means a change in project design or implementation that has a significant impact on the project's objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing of more than 5%.* As a major amendment this reduction in targets should have been approved through a formal process involving UNEP and the GEF and would most likely have required adjustments to the agreed workplan and budget.

8. Such a decision was not recorded as an adaptive measure to "adapt" to changes occurring between the formulation of the project and its actual implementation. On the contrary, a review of the project records indicates that the decision was arbitrary and referred to being based on the *"the strategic objective of the Project is that by September 2020, 100,000 will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through established learning sites and 50 farmer group trained on the appropriate technologies"* (Project Steering Committee minutes, Oct 2018). That objective was not mentioned in any part of the ProDoc.

9. During the review of this draft evaluation report, the UNEP Evaluation Office noted that the above-mentioned reduction of targets is a point in case raised in the recommendations made by the Audit of the Ecosystems Division of UNEP, 2022, which covered the period Jan 2020 – Dec 2021:

    > Strengthen monitoring and accountability for project implementation by ensuring that it [UNEP] plays its full role in the Project Steering Committees to assure that project targets or outputs, when significantly reduced, provide proper justification with appropriate reduction in the related budget/expenditure (OIOS Audit Report, Executive Summary)

10. The evaluation also identified discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment). Any technical specialist reading the ProDoc, would not interpret the term 'landscape' to mean that the project would be conducted at micro-catchment level.

11. Although, in principle the project design was aligned to UNEP/Donor/Partner strategic priorities, its poor performance in delivery of outputs and achieving outcomes made the project not relevant for UNEP and the GEF. The evaluation exercise raises questions on whether GEF funds would have been secured, if the actual terminology (i.e. micro-catchment instead of landscape) had been used, and if the actual project area and revised targets had either been included in the actual proposal for approval or had been subject to a formal review process, as appropriate for a 'major' revision.

12. The project neither delivered its expected outputs nor achieved its outcomes. The capacities of Implementing Partners, Trainers of Trainers (TOTs), Sub-county Agricultural Officers (SWAOs) and Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs) resulted to be not sufficiently developed to promote learnings amongst the farming communities. In addition, the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga could not integrate the SLM strategies into their County Integrated Development Plan (CIDPs), because they were developed at a very late stage of the project's implementation period. The strategies did not present a level of detail that could help the county government to develop actual actions upon them. Finally, the inter-county forum to promote LSM/SFM was not established during the life span of the project, a MoU was drafted but not signed. The MoU is just a declaration of intention and was drafted at the very end of project implementation.

13. The role of UNEP and AGRA overlapped to a great degree. In reality, AGRA became the implementing partner and KALRO the executing partner. The expected role of UNEP was to supervise and provide technical guidance to AGRA, who in turn supervised and provided

technical guidance to KALRO. Either AGRA or UNEP were a superfluous step within the management set up of the project. Although, the word "executing" in the terminology of GEF funded projects means conducting activities at field level, AGRA became an implementing agency, not an executing agency.

14. A participatory monitoring and evaluation plan was adopted for the purpose of monitoring. The evaluation identified some weaknesses in this kind of monitoring: the capacity of the ToTs, Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and WAOs and SCAOs was not developed enough to promote learning amongst farmers; and data collection methods, data verification and the final project impact assessment were flawed. The records produced by the project M&E system are therefore not deemed reliable.

15. The sustainability of the project is not evidenced. Capacities were not well developed at all levels. The work done with the KFS is the only tangible result of the project that is sustainable. The Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans are their institutional tools for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem for the next coming years.

16. Finally, as the project did not promote any specific gender and human rights issues, therefore the evaluation did not identify any elements of sustainability in that regard.

Conclusions

17. The project M&E system had serious deficiencies. Conflicting evidence to support the previous statement was collected throughout the evaluation field mission in Kenya. As a consequence, the evaluation exercise does not endorse the project records as reliable sources of data to measure or understand its actual performance in terms of achievements at outcome and objective level.

18. The decision to reduce the project area (from landscapes to micro-catchment) was consistent with the AGRA approach, the so-called proximity community-based extension system, but incompatible with the requirements of the GEF in terms of environmental results.

19. The effectiveness of the project was very low. Two primary pieces of evidence supporting this statement are: i) the reduction of the project area nullified the chances of the project contributing to the original targets of the project. In other words, the ambitions in terms of relevant results for GEF were given up from the early stages of implementation; ii) at output level, the project did not deliver most of its outputs and did not achieve any of its outcomes even if its "revised" targets were considered as valid. The proximity community-based extension system approach proved to be not effective to promote the adoption of SLM and SFM practices at scale.

20. The utilization of certified seeds was identified as the key element that contributed to the increase of productivity at farm level. These seeds are able to produce more than those previously planted by the targeted farmers. The evaluation exercise considers that the agronomic performances of the certified seeds overshadow the low capacities of farmers to apply other SLM practices. In other words, the increase in agricultural productivity is mainly due to the adoption of these seeds rather than to the actual adoption of SLM practices at farm level.

21. AGRA's progress reports were characterized by omissions and/or incorrect information about the delivery of outputs. Such flaws were reflected in the UNEP Project Implementation Review reports (PIRs), as well.

22. The changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project very low in relevance for GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management and their strategic priorities LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce

pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services. The evaluation considers that if the ProDoc had been written coherently with how it was implemented, the project may well not have been considered eligible to access GEF funds.

23. Due to the very low level of output provision and outcome achievements both in terms of quantity and quality, the evaluation exercise concludes that country ownership and sustainability of the initiative is very low. The support to KFS to formulate the PFM plans represents the sole output with a high degree of sustainability, being their institutional guiding document for their activities.

24. The overall project performance is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory and the full ratings table can be found at page 57 of the present report.

Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1: Role of UNEP within the PSC	During the PSC meetings, it is vital to avoid failures that UNEP makes clear to all members what are the objectives of the project, why these objectives are important for its and donor's institutional mandates. The presentation of the objectives, in terms of scope and size, must be clear and cannot be delegated to the executing agency. The objectives as stated in the project document and their targets, specifically in the results framework, must be clearly reported in the PSC minutes. The global environmental benefits expected to be achieved by the project should be as well highlighted. A special focus should be given to their importance for the donor. The alignment to the priorities of UNEP and the donor must be amongst the primary concerns of the staff of UNEP who participate in the PSC meetings.
Context/comment:	The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP. It stems from the conclusion that the changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project largely insignificant for the GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management.

Lesson Learned #2: UNEP monitoring	UNEP project monitoring cannot be regarded as solely based on participation in PSC meetings, reading progress reports, and field visits. The monitoring must focus on the adherence of the implementation to the project document both for evident accountability issues and for the pursuit of the objectives related to global environment benefits, i.e. the reason why the GEF finances projects. In order to ensure the adherence to the project document, it is paramount reading through all project deliverables, compare the quality of deliverables and outputs against the expected quality as per the original project document. Deviations from the ProDoc can, and sometimes should, occur. They must be well justified and rooted in changes that have occurred in the context of the project implementation itself. They must be adaptive.
	Is the project pursuing its objectives? Does the deliverable serve project purposes? Are partners aware of the project objectives? Does the overall quality of the deliverables/outputs justify the project funds spent on their delivery? Has the external context changed? These and others are the questions, that one should ask one-self while monitoring the implementation of project activities. The simple reading of progress reports does not represent a solid way of monitoring any project with the aim of verifying its likelihood of achieving its objective and its alignment to UNEP's and donor's institutional mandates.
Context/comment:	The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP. It originates from the all set of conclusions. It is, in fact, astonishing that UNEP did not identify the problems affecting the overall implementation of the project, reflected in very negative evaluation ratings, starting from the change of project objective and targets, to the low quality of delivery of outputs and the lack of achievement of outcomes. It also reflects inadequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms followed by AGRA and KALRO.

Lesson Learned #3: Executing Agency and Reporting	Accurate project reporting is an essential requisite for good project management aiming at achieving project results and complying with high standards of accountability. Executing agencies, working in partnership with UNEP, must submit progress reports that are comprehensive, i.e. detailed enough for a person (who does not know deeply the project) to understand what the project is about, have the outputs broken down by geographical areas or gender or any other relevant category, have the deliverables described so to understand whether or not they comply with expectations of the ProDoc (if there are discrepancies between the delivery and expectations, such discrepancies should be spelt out and well explained and justified). The quality of progress reports from executing partners is later reflected in the quality of the PIRs.
Context/comment:	The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP.
	It is anchored upon the conclusions that there are significant discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment), and that AGRA's progress reports were characterized by omissions and/or incorrect information about the delivery of outputs.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	UNEP should review all its engagements with AGRA and KALRO as executing partners to confirm that any ongoing projects are being implemented to expected standards and in accordance with the project document.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The inclusion of the statement *"the strategic objective of the Project is that by September 2020, 100,000 will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through established learning sites and 50 farmer group trained on the appropriate technologies"* in the contracts between KALRO and project partners is considered a serious and arbitrary deviation from the original document, which led to the reformulation of the project targets with the partners during a PSC official meeting. In addition, there was already an objective in their issued contracts that did not correspond to the actual objectives of the project as per its project document, approved by the donor and by UNEP itself.
	In addition, AGRA's approach based on the proximity community-based extension system resulted to be doubtfully effective in promoting the adoption and the scaling up of SLM practices and technologies. The approach did not support UNEP in pursuing its institutional mandate.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Any ongoing projects and in the future.

Recommendation #2:	To take appropriate actions to ensure that project partners put adequate emphasis on gender and human rights issues both in the formulation of the ProDoc and in the actual implementation of any project that relates to the agricultural sector.
	Contracts with executing partners should have a dedicated section on the issues and the employment by project partners of a gender specialist should be suggested or required.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The role of women in the agriculture sector is worldwide recognized as a critical element for the successful development of rural communities. Fully understanding the needs and interests should be the starting point for the promotion of their participation in development projects. A blind approach to the dimension of an intervention may lead to problems that were not previously identified.
	Promotion of gender issues is a crucial aspect of UNEP mandate. Mere gender-targeting activities are not enough to fulfil its organizational mandate. UNEP has institutional obligations to pursue gender responsive and transformative actions.
	The project was gender-targeted. The gender dimension of the project was not analysed and no actions implemented

Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	During the formulation and implementation of any project.

INTRODUCTION

25. The project was funded under the 5th GEF Operational Programme. It is a multi-focal area project and, specifically, falls under: Land Degradation (LD) and its Strategic Objective 3 "Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape"; Biodiversity (BD) and its Strategic Objective 2 "Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors"; and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and its Strategic Objective "Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services".

26. The project document was aligned with UNEP's mandate, functions and Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017 and its biennial Programme of Work (PoW) 2015- 2016.

27. The project was consistent with the Ecosystem Management thematic priorities. Specifically, it was expected to contribute to the achievement of Expected Accomplishment EA (a): "Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased by (2): Tools, technical support and partnerships to improve food security and sustainable productivity in agricultural landscapes through the integration of the ecosystem approach."

28. The project Implementing Agency (IA) was the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), specifically the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, which is part of the UNEP Biodiversity and Land Branch within the Ecosystems Division. The lead Executing Agency (EA) was Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) in partnership with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) who led the project execution on the ground. The Kenya Ministry of Environment and Forestry, as the GEF Operational and Political Focal Point, was in charge of providing policy guidance to the project to meet the national priorities.

29. UNEP approved the project on 15 June 2016, GEF approved it on 12 July 2016. The original planned duration was 60 months (from June 2016 to June 2021). An extension of 12 months was granted, therefore the actual duration of the project is 72 months. A mid-term review (MTR) was prepared as a management-led process[2] and delivered in November 2020.

30. The planned project budget was USD 13,488,205. GEF funding was USD 3,583,800, while planned co-financing contributions were USD 9,904,405 (USD 4,294,097 cash; 5,610,308 in-kind).

31. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, as well as the updated guidance package for evaluators (developed by the UNEP Evaluation Office), the Terminal Evaluation of the GEF/UNEP project *"Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya"* was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

32. As per its Terms of Reference (Annex VII), the Terminal Evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP), GEF (Global Environment

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[2] The Evaluator notes that the Mid Term Review report describes itself as being a product of the UNEP Evaluation Office although it was the main deliverable of a management-led (i.e. Review) process.

Facility) and the main project partners, i.e. Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO).

33. The Evaluation was expected to identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house were also identified during the evaluation process.

34. The evaluation was part of a larger Portfolio Review on Sustainable Land Management of five GEF/UNEP projects that have recently ended. Hence, it also provided answers to a few relevant questions that pertain to UNEP's role in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and the global Land Degradation (LD) agenda, which form part of a separate Portfolio Brief to the Evaluation Office.

35. The main intended users of the evaluation are: GEF secretariat (the donor); UNEP (the Implementing Agency) and AGRA and KALRO (the Executing Agencies).

EVALUATION METHODS

36. The evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant (herein after referred to as the Evaluator). It took place between August 2022 and February 2023 under the management of the Evaluation Office of UNEP, based in Nairobi.

37. In line with UNEP Evaluation Guidelines and as per the Terms of Reference, the project was assessed against nine evaluation criteria: Strategic Relevance, Quality of Project Design, Nature of External Context, Effectiveness (availability of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and likelihood of impact), Financial Management, Efficiency, Monitoring and Reporting, Sustainability and the Factors Affecting and Performance and Cross-cutting Issues.

38. The Terminal Evaluation was requested to rate each criterion on a six-point scale as per UNEP guidance and as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability. In addition, the UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each evaluation criterion. The evaluation team has considered all the evidence gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix in order to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.

39. The Quality of Project Design criterion was assessed during the Inception Phase of the Evaluation.

40. In addition to the questions related to the above-mentioned criteria, the Terminal Evaluation answered a set of five additional questions required by the GEF portal. The 5 topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.The Evaluation Framework (Annex II) provides a comprehensive list of questions that the Terminal Evaluation considered during the evaluation organised per evaluation criterion, proposed evaluation indicators, source of data, and methods to answer each of them.

41. The evaluation was theory-based and made use of a utilization-focused and participatory approach. A theory-based evaluation focuses on analysing a project's underlying logic and causal linkages[3]. Projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve the agreed results through the selected strategy; this set of assumptions constitutes the 'project theory' or 'theory of change'. The evaluation analyses the project theory underpinning the project. In such a way, it is possible to recognize that a multitude of factors and interactions influence a project's effectiveness and seeks to identify those causal factors judged to be most critical to a project's overall success. A utilization-focused approach is based on the principle that evaluations should be judged on their usefulness to their intended users. Therefore, they should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and recommendations to inform decisions[4].

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[3] Rossi, P., Freeman, H. & Hofmann, G., 1999. Evaluation. A Systematic Approach. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage
[4] Patton, M. Q., 2008. Utilization-focused evaluation. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

42. The evaluation adopted a participatory approach (see Fig. 1), consulting with project team members, partners and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. Central to the evaluation was the analysis (and reconstruction) of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change and the Theory of Change reconstructed during the MTR exercise was slightly modified[5] during the Inception Phase of the Terminal Evaluation. The modifications were discussed by the Evaluator with officers belonging to UNEP, AGRA and KALRO, i.e. the implementing and executing agencies of the project. The (reconstructed) Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final evaluation report and has been used throughout the evaluation process.

43. The evaluation consultant also notes that, from the perspective of the Evaluation Office of UNEP and UNEP's Results Definitions (2019), that 'enhanced capacity' is only accepted as an outcome level result when there is evidence to confirm that this strengthened capacity has actually been demonstrated. This is reflected in the assumptions of the reconstructed TOC (see pg 29)

Figure 1: UNEP Evaluation Process
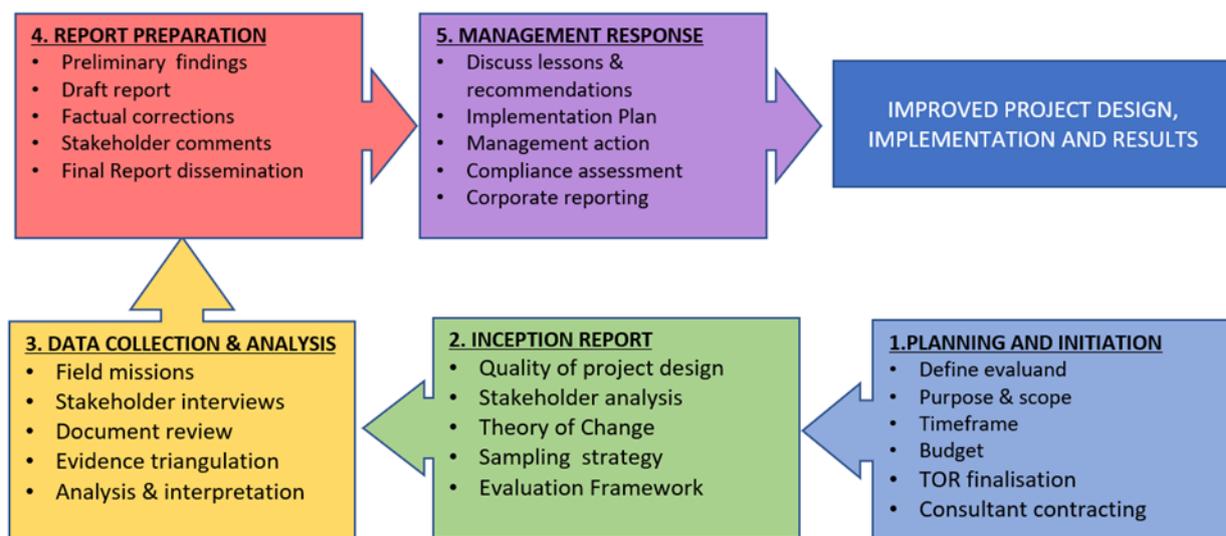
44. The terminal evaluation process followed a collaborative and participatory approach maintaining close engagement with key project stakeholders. The Evaluator maintained close communication with the project team and exchanged information throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to optimise the ownership of the evaluation findings.

45. The design of the evaluation included the following tools to collect relevant data: desk review of project documents and reports; individual and group interviews; focus group discussions; and field visits to project sites.

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[5] The main modifications pertain to the reformulation of the impact and the revision of some assumptions.

46. The Evaluator conducted on-line interviews with stakeholders who had easy access to internet. In this way, during the field mission in Kenya, he could focus exclusively on field activities, i.e. focus group discussion with farmers and members of the Innovation Platforms, interviews with Sub-county Agricultural Officers (SCAOs) and Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs) and site visits to project sites (learning sites, farms, Innovation Platform aggregation centres, and rehabilitated hotspots). In total 145 individuals were involved in the data collection phase, 61 women and 84 men. Farmers of 9 micro-catchments (out of 10) were met through interview and focus group discussions and site visits covered 8 micro-catchments.

Table 2: Respondents' Sample

		# people involved (M/F)	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project team	Implementing agency	5 (3/2)	5 (3/2)	5 (3/2)	100%
	Executing agencies	13 (11/3)	13 (11/3)	13(11/3)	100%
	# entities involved	# entities contacted	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project (implementing/ executing) partners			9	34 (22/12)	34 (22/12)	100%
Project (collaborating/contributing) partners			2	3 (3/0)	3 (3/0)	100%
Beneficiaries:			---	86 (45/41)	86 (45/41)	100%

47. Annex III and Annex IV present respectively the list of people consulted and the list of documents consulted during the evaluation.

48. The Evaluator ensured anonymity and confidentiality by not directly mentioning the names of respondents while making quotes. In addition, all responses are reported as aggregate findings without mentioning the source. Human rights were ensured through including and protecting views of all respondents irrespective of their sex, age or position and by guaranteeing participation of the marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups such as youth and women.

49. The evaluation made use of a "purposeful sampling[6]" to identify stakeholders to be consulted. The sampling was designed in consultation with the project management. The sampling and the consequent schedule of meetings for interviews, focus group discussions and field visit necessarily took into account the willingness and availability of stakeholders to meet the Evaluator. The "purposeful sampling" met the needs for the Terminal Evaluation. This involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. Studying information-rich cases, that is, interviewing people who are well informed about the project and who have a link with it, generates knowledge and deep understanding instead of empirical generalizations, which are typical of statistically representative probability sampling[4].

50. The Evaluator proposed a design based on qualitative methods because he worked as an individual consultant without the support of enumerators. A quantitative approach was consequently not feasible. The qualitative approach was also methodologically justified by the fact that the evaluation's interest is understanding how and why the project delivered its

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[6] *"The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations."* Patton MQ. Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3rd Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002.

results. In fact, quantitative methods, such as surveys, do not provide answers about how and why something has occurred.

51. The evaluation methods do not present any specific limitations. The qualitative methods applied provided solid evidence on project performance. In addition, it is highlighted that representatives from all project partners were interviewed. Farmers from nine out of ten micro-catchments were as well met. Only farmers belonging to the Chepturer micro-catchment could not be involved for time constraints.

THE PROJECT

1.1   Context

Figure 2 - Map of the project areas as per project implementation
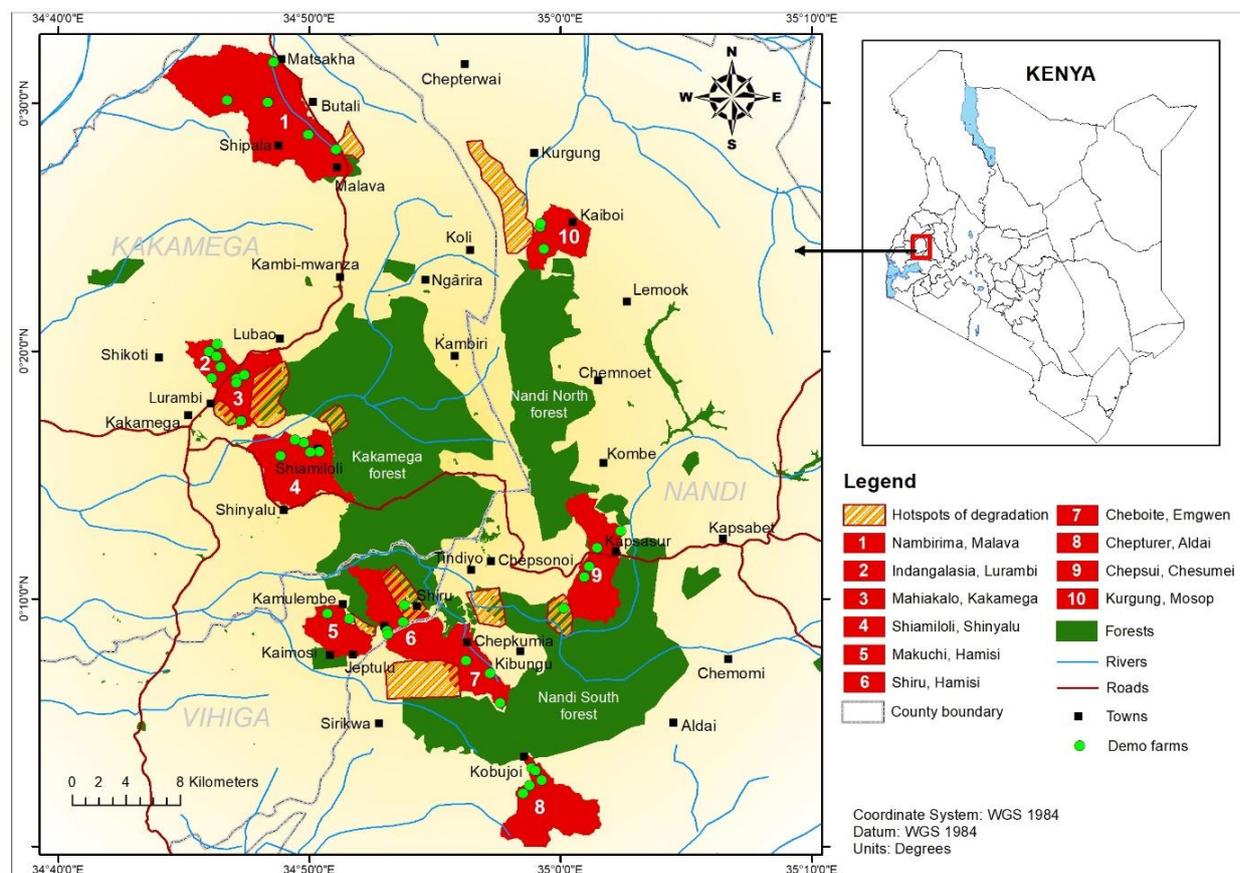
The map was kindly prepared for this evaluation report by Kennedy Were (Research Scientist at KALRO)

52. The ProDoc acknowledges that growing food demand and concurrent pressures on the natural resource base are likely to become critical in the coming decades for all Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries.

53. Western[7] Kenya, comprises 11 counties (Bomet, Busia, Homabay, Kakamega, Kericho, Kisii, Kisumu[8], Migori, Nyamira, Siaya and Vihiga). This project operated in Kakamega, Nandi[9] and Vihiga counties. Western has one of the densest populations of the country. The region is

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[7] 'Western' is one of the eight Provinces in Kenya.
[8] Kisumu is the third largest city in Kenya.
[9] Nandi county is part of Rift Valley Province. However, there is the Kakamega-Nandi forest ecosystem which is made up of Kakamega, Nandi South and Nandi North forests.

characterized by low agricultural productivity, high population pressure and lack of off-farm income opportunities (ProDoc, 2016).

54. Agricultural systems' biodiversity performs ecosystem services beyond the production of food, fiber, fuel and income. Biodiversity is necessary in the recycling of nutrients, control of local microclimate, regulating of local hydrological process, regulation of abundance of undesirable organisms and detoxification of noxious chemicals.

55. A new constitution came into force in Kenya from 2013 after a general election. Under the new constitutional dispensation, county governments were created with devolved functions which included a mandate on agriculture, land and natural resources. The areas that the county governments identified as critical for support included an enabling policy framework for agriculture and SLM at county level. The existing barrier which the proposed project sought to address was "how to scale-out from the successful, but often fragmented and localized, SLM/SFM initiatives, to programmes that are fully integrated within the county development plans and budgets and hence are both institutionally and financially sustainable" (ProDoc, 2016, pg 34).

56. The reasoning for the proposed intervention, as described in the project document (ProDoc, 2016) was to move the lessons learned in the piecemeal projects from the pilot sites to the wider productive landscapes and to strengthen the effective coordination of efforts on SLM/SFM, shifting towards a more programmatic approach to SLM/SFM in line with the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa's (AGRA) initiative of "Going beyond demos" (ProDoc, 2016, pg 35).

1.2   Results Framework

57. <u>Project goal</u> is "to contribute to improved food security and incomes of smallholder farmers through sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro-biodiversity) management in Western[10] Kenya" (ProDoc, 2016, Appendix 4)

58. <u>Project objective</u>[11] is "to increase smallholders' productivity through up-scaling of sustainable land management".

59. The ProDoc comprises 3 components, 3 outcomes and 21 outputs.

60. <u>Component 1</u>: Capacity Building of Stakeholders on SLM and SFM

61. **Outcome 1:** Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro- biodiversity) management practices

- *Output 1.1*: Baselines for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity established at landscape level
- *Output 1.2*: Capacity needs assessment for key stakeholders conducted
- *Output 1.3*: Development of Integrated Land Use Plans for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity conservation at Landscape Level
- *Output 1.4*: Support to conservation of biodiversity hot spots
- *Output 1.5*: Conduct training of trainers (ToT) for Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

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[10] The Evaluation notes that while Kakamega and Vihiga counties are in Western Province, Nandi county is in Rift Valley Province.

[11] *The development objective* is to promote the adoption and adaption of sustainable land and forest ecosystem management (SLM/SFM) practices across the productive landscape of Kakamega-Nandi ecosystem while *the global environment objective* of the proposed project is to reduce land and ecosystem degradation, mainstream biodiversity agro-biodiversity) conservation across the landscape and contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

- *Output 1.6*: Facilitation of FFS groups
- *Output 1.7*: Establishment of SLM/SFM biodiversity learning sites
- *Output 1.8*: Facilitation of farmer open and field-days
- *Output 1.9*: Support to implementation Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans
- *Output 1.10*: Capacity building of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other forest stakeholders
- *Output 1.11*: Documentation of SLM/SFM knowledge and technologies

62. Component 2: Mainstreaming Value Chain Approach to Smallholder Producers

63. **Outcome 2:** Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro- biodiversity) management practices

- *Output 2.1: Value chain analysis of target crops undertaken*
- *Output 2.2: Farmer groups linkage to inputs and output markets*
- *Output 2.3: Support to strengthening of Community Based Seed producers*
- *Output 2.4: Support to post- harvest management at household level*
- *Output 2.5: Support to women and youth groups in small scale agricultural enterprises*
- *Output 2.6: Support to development and commercialization of Non-wood forest products and services (NWFPS)*

64. Component 3: Enabling Policy and Institutional Framework

65. **Outcome 3:** Enabling policy and institutional framework for upscaling sustainable land, forests and biodiversity management at county level

- *Output 3.1: Assessment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity conservation related policies and strategies at county level*
- *Output 3.2: Support to development of county level SLM/SFM and biodiversity frameworks*
- *Output 3.3: Support to Ecosystem valuation and assessment*
- *Output 3.4: Support to inter-county ecosystem forum*

1.3   Stakeholders

66. The project targeted three main groups of beneficiaries: the Departments of Agriculture within the three project counties, Vihiga, Kakamega and Nandi; Kenyan Forest Service and the farmers residing in the project areas. No special focus was expected to be given to any sub-groups within the farmers.

1.4   Project Implementation Structure and Partners

67. The project Implementing Agency (IA) was UNEP, specifically the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, which is part of the UNEP Biodiversity and Land Branch within the Ecosystems Division. The lead Executing Agency (EA) was Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) in partnership with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) who led the project execution on the ground. The Kenya Ministry of Environment and Forestry, as the GEF Operational and Political Focal Point, provided policy guidance to the project to meet the national priorities.

68. Key activities implemented by Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) were supported directly from KALRO such as paying for allowances and related meeting costs.

Table 3: Key project stakeholders at field level

Executing agencies	Roles and responsibilities
Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)	**Overall project** Overall responsibility over implementation of activities.
Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)	**Overall project** Developing the project communication strategy Coordinating the work of the partners **Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land and forest management practices** Baseline mapping and assessment of land use activities in targeted landcapes Capacity needs asssement of farmer groups and other key stakeholders Conduct training of trainers (ToTs) for lead farmers and frontline extension staff Training of farmer groups Establishment of SLM/SFM learning sites for farmer groups **Outcome 2: Increased farmers' access to profitable input and output markets of targeted crops and forest products** Value chain analysis of maize-beans and indigenous vegetables undertaken Facilitate farmer groups linkage to affordable finance markets Support to establishment and strengthening of Community Based Seed producers Support to post-harvest management at household level Provide starter seed for Community based seed producers Enhance linkage of community-based systems to research and formal seed industry Training of farmers in post-harvest handling and management **Outcome 3: Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land and forests management at county level** Assessment of SLM/SFM related policies and strategies at county level Support to inter-county ecosystem forum Project communication strategy developed
Project's partners	**Roles and responsibilities**
Departments of Agriculture within the County government of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga	**Outcome 3: Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land and forests management at county level** Support to development of county level SLM/SFM policy frameworks Train the County Technical Committees on the development of policy frameworks Train county officials and MCAs on SLM related legislations bills and strategies. strategies include Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of forest resources through the concessional arrangements under the draft national forest policy and bill (2014) Facilitate a policy consultative dialogue meeting with respective county governments and stakeholders to discuss SLM/SFM related frameworks Support to the integration of SLM & SFM in CIDP and Strategies
Anglican Development Services Western (ADSW)	**Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land and forest management practices** Conduct training of trainers (ToT) for lead farmers and frontline extension staff Training of farmer groups Establish of SLM/SFM learning sites for farmer groups Facilitation of farmer open and field-days Support to post-harvest management at household level Identify and promote best practices for post-harvest handling focusing on small scale framers Demonstration of appropriate post-harvest technologies tailored for smallholders

Executing agencies	Roles and responsibilities
Rural Outreach Program Africa (ROP)	**Outcome 2: Increased farmers' access to profitable input and output markets of targeted crops and forest products** Value chain analysis of maize-beans and indigenous vegetables undertaken Hold community sensitization meetings to Profile value chain actors within selected landscapes Facilitate farmer groups linkage to affordable finance markets Capacity building of Innovation Platforms on Market information Support to post-harvest management at household level Support labor saving innovative technologies to reduce post-harvest loses. Promoting value addition at farm level Support to youth groups in small and medium scale agricultural enterprises (SMAEs) **Outcome 3: Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land and forests management at county** Capacity building of CFAs to enter into a Forest Management Agreement with KFS
Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)	**Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land and forest management practices** Conduct baseline mapping and assesement of land use activities in targeted landcapes Identify and rehabilitate selected degraded hotspots Hold stakeholders' sensitization meetings for developing Participatory Rehabilitation Plans Assess capacity needs of relevant stakeholders on rehabilitation of degraded areas Develop capacity needs assessment report for the rehabilitation of degraded areas Train stakeholders on rehabilitation procedures including farm forestry development Maintain rehabilitated degradation hotspots and assess the recovery of the hotspots Support to conservation of biodiversity hot spots
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST)	**Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land and forest management practices** Conduct baseline mapping and assessment of land use activities in targeted landscapes Training of farmer groups
Nature Kenya	**Capacity building of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other forest stakeholders** Identify and profile the CFAs, CBOs & local NGOs that are actively engaging in the forest & environmental conservation within the project area Undertake and document capacity Assessments for CFAs and other forest stakeholders to protect forest habitat. Facilitate CFAs and other forest stakeholders training on various aspects of sustainable forest management, e.g. managing /monitoring harvesting/silvicultural practices/forest regeneration and other critical areas as identified in the capacity assessment report Support CFAs/CBOs on exchange visits and networking with other CFAs across the three countries

1.5   Changes in Design during Implementation

69. With a decision taken by the Project Steering Committee on October 12th, 2018, the project ambition was substantially lowered (by 80%), as reflected in a reduction of the project's

targets. The PSC decided that "*the strategic objective[12] of the Project is that by September 2020, 100,000 individual farmers will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through established learning sites and 50 farmer groups trained on the appropriate technologies*". This formulation of the project objective had also been previously included in the contracts between KALRO and project partners, ADS-W, ROA, KEFRI, MMUST and Nature Kenya (first half 2018).

Specifically:

- The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha, i.e. 80% reduction.

- The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" was reduced from 20,000 to 3,913 ha, i.e. 80% reduction.

- At field level, the project area resulted to be equal to 21,927 ha, while in the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (2016, Appendix 13b) the target area was reported to be 150,000 ha. It is a reduction equivalent to 86%.

70. No formal documentation on the revision was provided to the evaluation, nor is it mentioned in the Mid Term Report, 2020. The PIR reports present a varied picture:

Table 4: Project targets in key documents/reports

Report	Indicator Targets (EOP = end of project)	Risk Rating/Text
CEO Endorsement	Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation: 50,000 ha (EPO target) Area (ha) of land put under SLM: 20,000 ha (EOP target)	Weather conditions are favourable Good incentives for FCAs Factors of production are favourable Good incentives for FFS
2018	Forest land under SLM: 10,000 ha (EOP target) No indicator for area of land put under SLM	Progress rating: Satisfactory
	Internal Risk: Workflow 'PM: The project implementation unit met and revised project targets based and the same were approved by the Project Steering Committee on 12th Oct 2018. We therefore request GEF to adjust the same in the project document'. Risk rated as 'low', pg 15.	
2019	Forest land under SLM: 10,000 ha (EOP target) No indicator for area of land put under SLM	Progress rating: Satisfactory
	Internal Risk: Workflow 'PM: The project implementation unit met and revised project targets based and the same were approved by the Project Steering Committee on 12th Oct 2018. We therefore request GEF to adjust the same in the project document'. Risk rated as 'low', pg 31.	
2020	Forest land under SLM: 10,000 ha (EOP target) Area (ha) of land put under SLM: 20,000 ha (EOP target)	Progress rating: Satisfactory Progress rating: Satisfactory
	Internal Risk: Workflow	

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[12] The original project objective is "to increase smallholders' productivity through up-scaling of sustainable land management" (ProDoc, 2016, Appendix 4, Results Framework).

	PM: The Project is progressing according to envisaged work plan and budget'. Risk rated as 'low', pg 44.	
2021	Forest land under SLM: 3,913 ha (EOP target)	Progress rating: Highly Satisfactory
	Area (ha) of land put under SLM: 7,772 ha (EOP target) *(EOP targets probably mistakenly put under the wrong indicator i.e. 7,772 ha forest land and 3,913 land).*	Progress rating: Satisfactory
2022	Forest land under SLM: 3,913 ha (EOP target)	Progress rating: Highly Satisfactory
	Area (ha) of land put under SLM: 7,772 ha (EOP target) *(EOP targets probably mistakenly put under the wrong indicator i.e. 7,772 ha forest land and 3,913 land).*	Progress rating: Satisfactory

71. The PIR report following the PSC decision, i.e. PIR 2019, records this in the "Risk Factor Table" as: *the project implementation unit met and revised project targets based and the same were approved by the Project Steering Committee on 12th Oct 2018. We therefore request GEF to adjust the same in the project document.* There is no description of what these changes are about (i.e. original targets vs revised targets) or what were the reasons on the ground that necessitated the changes. In addition, in the Results Framework of the PIR report (2019, pg 17) the indicator related to the area of land to be brought under SLM practices is omitted.

72. The PIR report (2020) reverts to reporting the end of project target of land under SLM as the original, higher level, of 20,000 ha, and PIR reports (2021 and 2020) mix up the end of project targets against the wrong indicators.

73. The Evaluator understands reductions of approx. 80% in targets with environmental consequences to be 'major amendments' and notes the GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy 2016, pg 4: *Major amendment means a change in project design or implementation that has a significant impact on the project's objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing of more than 5%.* In the event of a major amendment the following procedure should have been followed (ibid, pg 59):

- If the changes do not include an increase in GEF financing, but changes in project objectives or scope (i.e. downgrade GEB), the amendment follows the Agencies' policies before sending the amendment to the Secretariat.
- Once received, the Secretariat reviews the amended project proposal. If it concurs, it circulates the amended proposal to Council for four weeks for its comments and approval.

74. The evaluation finds this reduction in core indicators a substantial change that was insufficiently justified nor formally approved through the appropriate mechanism. This point recurs throughout this evaluation report as it affects Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability.

## 1.6   Project Financing

Table 5 - Expenditure by Outcome

OUTCOME	Estimated cost at design (US$1,000)	Last budget revision (2022)	Actual Cost/ expenditure (Dec 2021)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Outcome 1	1,572.2	1,458.9	Not available / Not reported	NA

Outcome 2	1,080.2	1,368.6	Not available / Not reported	NA
Outcome 3	620.2	445.0	Not available / Not reported	NA
Project Management	311.2	311.2	Not available / Not reported	NA
TOTAL	**3,583.8**	**3,583.8**	**3,263.9**	**91%**

Table 5 – Co-financing table

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US$1,000)		Government (US$1,000)		Other (US$1,000)		Total (US$1,000)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Cash	---	200	2,000	---	2,094	2,101	4,094	2,301
In-kind	200	---	5,228	7,110	382	989	5,810	8,100
TOTAL	**200**	**200**	**7,228**	**7,110**	**2,476**	**3,091**	**9,904**	**10,401**

THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION
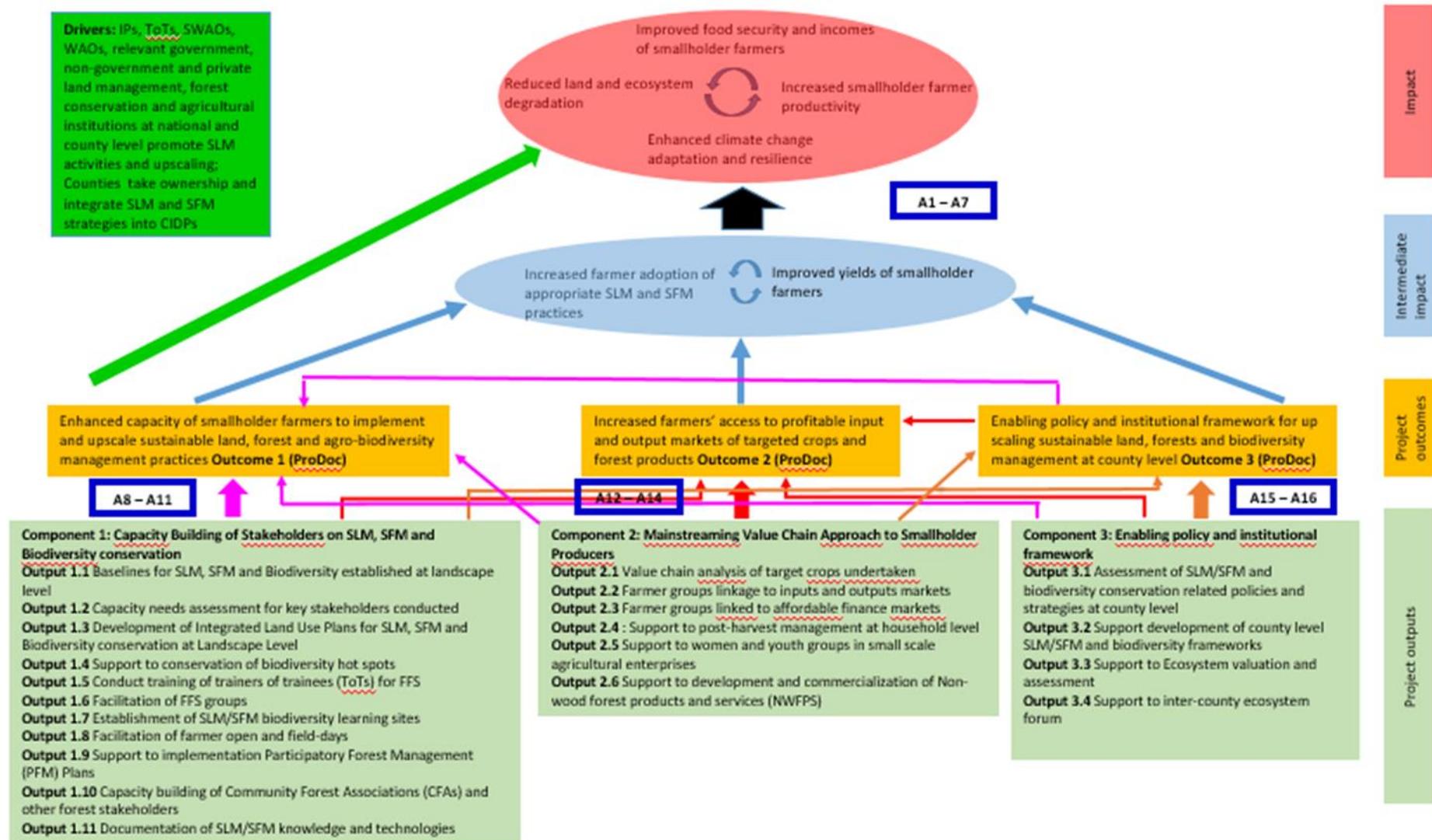
75. Assumptions to translate Outcome to Impact

- *A1: No major crop pests or diseases*
- *A2: No occurrence of extreme weather events*
- *A3: Enabling political and socio-economic environment*
- *A4: Favourable markets*
- *A5: Good incentives for CFAs*
- *A6: Availability of factors of production*
- *A7: Availability of incentives to promote farmer field schools*

76. Assumptions to achieve Outcome 1

- *A8: Enhanced capacity is applied*
- *A9: Enabling political and institutional framework to support SLM/SFM initiative*
- *A10: No occurrence of extreme weather events*
- *A11: Local policies provide incentives for farmers to adopt the practices*

77. Assumptions to achieve Outcome 2

- *A12. Presence of local policies which provide incentives for farmers to adopt the practices,*
- *A13: Market prices are favourable*
- *A14: Farmers willing to adopt improved seeds*

78. Assumptions to achieve Outcome 3

- *A15: Enabling policy and institutional framework is operationalised*
- *A16: Political will from national and county government*

EVALUATION FINDINGS

1.7   Strategic Relevance

1.7.1   Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

79. In principle, the project design was aligned to the UNEP MTS and POW. It was intended to contribute to the objective of the Ecosystem Management Sub-programme of UNEP MTS, which is to promote a transition to integrating the management of land, water and living resources, with a view to maintaining biodiversity and providing ecosystem services sustainably and equitably among countries.

80. The evaluation consultant notes that despite being aligned to the MTS objectives, due to the substantial reduction of project targets during implementation the potential contribution of this project is less than anticipated at approval. While the UNEP criterion ratings matrix does not explicitly address substantial reductions in targets, the evaluator has extrapolated this dimension from the HS and S levels into the unsatisfactory range.

81. <u>Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW</u> is rated as <u>Moderately Unsatisfactory</u>.

1.7.2   Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

82. The project was expected to demonstrate relevance to the GEF Land Degradation (LD) focal areas, Biodiversity (BD) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). It aimed at promoting the awareness and, to a certain degree, the adoption of sustainable land management and forest management practices at community level. It also attempted to promote SLM at policy level with relevant authorities. Finally, it intended as well to generate awareness about the importance of biodiversity for the development of production landscape and promoted the conservation of biodiversity.

83. With a decision taken by the Project Steering Committee on October 12th, 2018, the project substantially scaled down in its ambitions. The target values of the indicators at objective level of relevance for the GEF were reduced by approx. 80%. The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha, and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" was reduced from 20,000 to 3,913 ha. In addition, the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would target 100,000 ha of farming land and 50,000 forest land (i.e. not the 21,917 ha as actually happened). .

84. The project was implemented in ten micro-catchments. The decision of working on *micro-catchments* is not aligned with the terminology used in the project document, which consistently refers to *landscapes*. There is no mention of micro-catchments in the ProDoc. The word sub-catchment (not micro-catchment) is mentioned once in table 11: "Incremental reasoning framework" *Support to county level legislation on land tenure and land use participatory development of SLM, SFM and biodiversity conservation plans at landscape / sub-catchment level*. It is highly unlikely that any technical specialist would interpret 'landscape' to mean 'micro-catchment' and the difference between the two concepts is highly relevant in a project that has a focus on upscaling.

85. This evaluation process identifies a cause for concern where terminology and targets that establish a) alignment with GEF strategic priorities and b) makes a case for contributions for environmental benefits, are included in the approval process but overturned during implementation without seeking approval at the appropriate level for a 'major' revision.

86. <u>Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities</u> is rated as <u>Moderately Unsatisfactory</u>.

1.7.3 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

87. The project demonstrated some degree of relevance, although not quantitatively significant, for the international and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) n. 15: *protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*.

88. The project did not have significant relevance to the realisation of Aichi biodiversity targets:

- Target 1: People are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably;
- Target 7: Areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity; and
- Target 15: Ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration

89. Project activities were coherent also with the short, medium and long term sub-actions identified in Kenya National Adaptation Plan (2015 / 2030).

90. In principle, the project was relevant at county level because under the new country constitution (2013), county governments were created with devolved functions, which included a mandate on agriculture, land and natural resources.

91. <u>Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities</u> is rated as <u>Satisfactory.</u>

1.7.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

92. The ProDoc had a section dedicated to links with other GEF and non-GEF interventions that identified other initiatives with which the project could develop synergies or complementarities for the benefit of more efficient use of the resources available. Namely:

UNEP/FAO/GEF – Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use for Improved Human Nutrition and Well-being. Implemented by KALRO in the neighbouring Busia County.

UNDP/GEF - Strengthening the Protected Area Network within the Eastern Montane Forest Hotspot of Kenya. Implemented by UNDP in Kakamega, Nandi and Cherangani landscapes.

WB/GEF - Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP II). Kakamega and Nandi forests are referred to as being in the Lake Victoria watershed.

93. Nevertheless, no evidence was provided to the evaluation to suggest that the implementation sought any kind of complementarity or synergy with the initiatives in question. All the evidence suggests this has been implemented as a standalone project.

94. The rating under this sub-category takes into account that no duplication of effort was evidenced in the implementation area and there was passive knowledge of the named interventions, as well as other projects implemented by AGRA.

95. <u>Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence</u> is rated as <u>Moderately Unsatisfactory</u>.

> **Rating for Strategic Relevance: Moderately Satisfactory**

1.8   Quality of Project Design

96. This section presents a brief summary of the Project Design Quality. The full assessment was circulated as part of the Inception Report and is available from the UNEP Evaluation Office.

97. The operating context criterion is rated as Moderately Satisfactory. The ProDoc does mention the on-going/likelihood of conflict. Instead, it does not make any mention about the likelihood of natural disaster and change in national government. Actually, general elections were held, as planned, in Kenya on 8 August 2017, therefore the risk of change in national government should have been pointed out.

98. The project preparation criterion is rated as Satisfactory. Problem and situation analyses are clear and well done. However, it does not provide any description of stakeholder consultation/participation during project design process. Concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development are duly identified in the design.

99. The strategic relevance criterion is rated as Highly Satisfactory. The alignment and relevance for UNEP, GEF, the Government of Kenya and the counties involved is clear. Complementarity of the project with other interventions is also well described.

100.   The intended results and causality criterion is rated as Satisfactory. A ToC is missing, but it can be easily re-constructed starting from the Results Framework and outcomes are realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention. However, 'enhanced capacity' is not clearly an outcome level result unless it is specified that the enhanced capacity has to be demonstrated.

101.   The logical framework and monitoring criterion is rated as Satisfactory. The original Results Framework presents all elements that allows an effective monitoring of the project, although a well-articulated ToC is not presented. Few shortcomings are identified in the formulation of the indicators and in the definition of baseline value.

102.   The governance and supervision arrangements criterion is rated as Highly Satisfactory. The governance and supervision model is comprehensive, clear and appropriate and the roles within UNEP clearly defined.

103.   The partnerships criterion is rated as Highly Satisfactory. The roles and responsibilities of external partners are properly specified and appropriate to their capacities

104.   The learning, communication and outreach criterion is rated as Satisfactory. The project has a clear and adequate knowledge management approach. It also has appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders built on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders.

105.   The financial planning criterion is rated as Satisfactory. The budget was adequate at design stage and co-financing contributions were well identified and distributed throughout the budget lines.

106.   The efficiency criterion is rated as Satisfactory. The ProDoc included a cost-effectiveness section. The project built on previous experiences.

107.   The risk identification and safeguards criterion is rated as Satisfactory. Risks and related mitigation strategies are identified.

108.   The sustainability/replication and catalytic effects criterion is effect is rated as Satisfactory. Project design addresses relevant dimensions of sustainability. Moreover, for each dimension of the sustainability, proposed actions are suggested in order to increase the

degree of sustainability of the project. Moreover, in its very conception, represents a strategy to promote the scaling up and replication of SLEM practices.

109.   The identified <u>project design weaknesses/gaps</u> criterion is rated as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

1.9   Nature of the External Context

110.   The COVID-19 pandemic had only a serious consequence on the implementation of the project related to the impossibility to carry out two field days with farmers as large gatherings were forbidden by health restrictions put in place to limit the pandemic. All other activities were not seriously impacted by the governmental restriction to fight the pandemic. No other mayor changes in the political, legal, economic and institutional context happened that could have an impact on the smooth implementation of project activities.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Favourable

1.10   Effectiveness

1.10.1 Availability of Outputs

Output	Achievement of end target		
	Fully	Partly	Not Delivered
1.1 Baselines for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity established at landscape level			x
1.2 Capacity needs assessment for key stakeholders conducted			x
1.3 Development of Integrated Land Use Plans for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity conservation at Landscape Level			x
1.4 Support to conservation of biodiversity hot spots	x		
1.5 Conduct training of trainers of trainees (ToTs) for Farmer Field Schools (FFS)		x	
1.6 Facilitation of FFS groups		x	
1.7 Establishment of SLM/SFM biodiversity learning sites		x	
1.8 Facilitation of farmer open and field-days		x	
1.9 Support to implementation Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans	x		
1.10 Capacity building of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other forest stakeholders		x	
1.11 Documentation of SLM/SFM knowledge and technologies	x		
2.1 Value chain analysis of target crops undertaken		x	
2.2 Farmer groups linkage to inputs and outputs markets			x
2.3 Support to strengthening of Community Based Seed producers		x	
2.4 Support to post-harvest management at household level			x
2.5 Support to women and youth groups in small scale agricultural enterprises		x	
2.6 Support to development and commercialization of Non-wood forest products and services (NWFPS)		x	
3.1 Assessment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity conservation related policies and strategies at county level			x
3.2 Support development of county level SLM/SFM and biodiversity frameworks		x	
3.3 Support to Ecosystem valuation and assessment	x		
3.4 Support to inter-county ecosystem forum			x
TOTALS	**4**	**10**	**7**

111. **Output 1.1: Baselines for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity established at landscape level**

Indicator:	Baseline scenario of initial project values established[13]
Target:	Baseline reports and maps of projects sites in place

112. The "Implementation Landscapes Baselines Survey Report" characterising 10 micro-catchments across 8 sub counties within the Kakamega-Nandi Forest ecosystem for project implementation was delivered in September 2018. The report was validated by stakeholders from Vihiga, Kakamega and Nandi Counties, farmers' representatives, as well as project consortium partners.

113. The baseline survey focused on collecting data on: (1) farmers' demographics, (2) average yield of maize, (3) average yield of bean, (4) average yield of indigenous vegetable, (5) income from sales of maize, (6) beans, and (7) indigenous vegetable; (8) area of land put under SLM (farming land), (9) area of forest land under participatory forest management, (10) proportion of farmers using SLM technologies, (11) farmer's attendance of field days, (12) postharvest handling, (13) access to SLM information by farmers, (14) access to inputs and markets by farmers, (15) access to loans and financial services, and (16) available non wood forest products and commercialization.

114. A report on the status of crop agrobiodiversity in the project micro-catchments of Shamiloli (Kakamega), Cheboite (Nandi) and Makuchi (Vihiga) was delivered in April 2019. It is a description of the agro-biodiversity of vegetables and crops produced by the farmers in the three micro-catchments. In addition, brief analyses on the constraints faced by farmers, on the destination of their harvest (sales and self-consumption), on how pests and diseases are controlled and on the application of soil enrichment practices for improved yields are presented. It is a descriptive baseline: the report does not mention any critical elements, positive or negative, about the status of the crop agrobiodiversity.

115. A report on status of bean pollinators and virus diversity in Shamiloli (Kakamega), Cheboite (Nandi) and Makuchi (Vihiga) was delivered in June 2019. It is a baseline descriptive study.

116. A report on bee diversity, their sources of floral resources for pollination and honey production in the Kakamega forest ecosystem was delivered in April 2019. It is a descriptive study, but it also includes a mention to four pending activities: (i) molecular analysis of Apis mellifera to determine domesticated strains in the Kakamega forest ecosystem; (ii) to identify the pollen and rank plants in terms of importance in apiculture; (iii) assessment of the occurrence and effects of parasites affecting honeybees in the bee hives in the Kakamega forest ecosystem, and (iv) determination of the purity of honeybee products in domesticated bee hives in the Kakamega forest ecosystem. The pending activities were neither completed nor reported in any document available to the Evaluator.

117. A report on the status of tree agrobiodiversity and aboveground carbon stocks in Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga Counties was delivered in June 2019. It is a descriptive baseline study. It concludes that Eucalyptus is abundant in the three counties despite its negative environmental impacts on the environment and that both trees and soil stored considerable amount of carbon. It also includes a recommendation to plant more tree varieties with good economic value especially in areas that had low species diversity.

118. An assessment of ruminant livestock and forage diversity in Kakamega forest-ecosystem was delivered in June 2019. It is a study ending with two conclusions: (1)

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[13] All indicators and related target values are extracted from the Results Framework included in the ProDoc (Appendix 4)

continuous subdivision of land and continuous cultivation is contributing to loss of grass seed banks and hence the biodiversity and (ii) overgrazing and loss of grass biodiversity is the contributing factor to Kakamega forest destruction.

119. Output 1.1 was formally delivered, but for substantially smaller areas of forest and arable land than was targeted in the ProDoc. As the purpose of a baseline is to establish the status quo at the beginning of the project, and to inform the project action etc, by assessing a much smaller area the baseline work effectively limited the project's ambitions or pre-empted the reductions in the targeted land to be brought under sustainable management. In addition, the main baseline study, i.e."Implementation Landscapes Baselines Survey Report" was finalized before the PSC made the decision to reduce the project targets.

120. The evaluator notes the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance to consider timeliness; quality; utility to, and ownership by, the intended users in assessing the availability of outputs. The Evaluation Office requires that weight is given to those outputs that are of most importance in achieving outcomes. The evaluation considers this output as <u>not delivered</u>.

121. **<u>Output 1.2: Capacity needs assessment for key stakeholders conducted</u>**

Indicator:	Capacity needs of key project partners established
Target:	Capacity needs assessment for key stakeholders conducted

122. "A Training Need Assessment (TNA) Study" report of Stakeholders in Nandi, Kakamega, and Vihiga Counties, Kenya" was delivered in August 2018.

123. The assessment covered a variety of key stakeholders and identified gaps in several training areas. Specifically, 28 training areas for farmers, 13 for Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and forest user groups, 8 for ToT, 24 for the Innovation Platforms, 10 for input suppliers, 15 for traders, 9 for creditors, 16 for processors, 7 for transporters, 13 for NGO and County Extension Staff, for 14 Sub-county Technical Committees, and 7 for Policy Makers. Moreover, the study established that specialized training for different stakeholder categories in specific performance gaps in the transfer of SLM/SFM technologies in 6 training areas.

124. A workshop with representatives of each group of stakeholders was finally held to validate the findings and the recommendations of the assessment.

125. Based on the TNA recommendations, an SLM/SFM training manual and a training plan were developed. The two documents represented the main tools that guided the project implementation.

126. Output 1.2 was formally delivered. However, the baseline referred to an area that was much smaller that the area identified in the ProDoc. The evaluation considers the output as <u>not delivered</u>.

127. **<u>Output 1.3: Development of Integrated Land Use Plans for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity conservation at Landscape Level</u>**

Indicator: n. of land use plans developed
Target: 10 land use plans developed

128. Ten (10) Land Use Management Plans were drafted. They related to the ten micro-catchments that represented the project areas in the three counties. In Kakamega County the land use management plans related to the Mahiakalo, Shiamiloli, Indangalasia and Nambirima micro-catchments; in Nandi County to Cheiboite, Chepsui, Chepturer and Kurgung micro-catchments; and in Vihiga County to Makuchi and Shiru micro-catchments.

129.　　The ten plans identified the project area which measures 21,927 ha in total. The vast majority of the land is utilized for agricultural purposes, although the total amount of land under agriculture is not explicitly measured.

130.　　The section on land degradation identifies the land degradation issues. The identified land degradation issues are the same across all the 10 plans. The goal and the objectives are the same as well.

131.　　The management strategies section proposes SLM practices for the management zones identified within the micro-catchment. The SLM practices identified are the same across all the 10 plans. The sections also include the description of the demo blocks, i.e. the demonstration farms, defined as well as learning sites, developed in each micro-catchment.

132.　　The implementation plan section is identical in all 10 plans. The implementation matrix included in the plans is very generic, it identifies land degradation issues, SLM practices, responsible entities and a time frame of four year from 2018 to 2021. No targets are included.

133.　　The M&E section is identical in all plans. It is not specific at all. The section states that monitoring will be done continuously to measure the degree of success of the plan and to ensure that the intended actions are implemented in a timely manner in order to achieve the set management objectives. A monitoring tool with verifiable indicators and a time schedule will be prepared to guide the regular monitoring process by relevant parties. Evaluation will also be undertaken to assess the progress and achievements in implementation of the planned SLM actions. The evaluation will also help to address the constraints encountered in the process.

134.　　The evaluation exercise deems the usefulness of the Land Use Management Plans as very limited. The identification of land degradation issues and SLM to address them are the elements relevant for the project. The lack of indicators and related baseline and target values does not provide any indication on how to implement and monitor the adoption of SLM practises in the catchment. Finally, the time frame (2018/2022) indicated that the plans are thought just for the implementation of project activities. The chance to utilize the plans after project closure was not taken into consideration. The plans are not tools that may be utilized by the counties and be included into their County Integrated Development Plan. In this regard, it is noted that the Half Yearly Progress Reports (Jan/Jun 2021, Jul/Dec 2021, and Jan/Jun 2022) submitted on 30th July 2022 by AGRA to UNEP reports an inaccuracy: it mentions that the Land Use Management Plans were integrated into the implementation policy framework for the three targeted counties, while reports from evaluation respondents indicate that only in Nandi were some elements of the plans included in the draft of the County Integrated Development Plan.

135.　　The evaluation considers the output as <u>not delivered</u> on quality grounds. In addition, the geographical scope of the work reflected in the ten Land Use Plans at micro-catchment scale was small in relation to the original project area as expected in the ProDoc.

136.　　**Output 1.4: Support to conservation of biodiversity hot spots**

> Indicator: n. of hotspots conserved
>
> Target: 5 hotspots conserved

137.　　Conservation work was carried out and 5 hotspots rehabilitated (2 in Nandi and 2 Kakamega county, 1 Vihiga County). Key activities that led to rehabilitation of degraded sites included identification of 5 hotspots; 3 stakeholder meetings for 150 stakeholders in 8 sub counties and assessment of their capacity needs toward rehabilitation. This was followed by the development and adoption of catchment rehabilitation action plans that constituted strategies for rehabilitation such as rehabilitating stream banks, degraded watersheds

through replacement planting, replacing Eucalyptus trees planted on streambeds with suitable indigenous tree species, addressing land degradation by having erosion control structures in place e.g. terraces and grass strips. Community members engaged in rehabilitation of hotspots during the 16 tree planting field days. Four rehabilitated hotspots sites are being maintained by CFAs and adjacent landowners have a regeneration rate of 65%.

138.   Output 1.4 was <u>fully delivered</u>.

139.   **Output 1.5: Conduct training of trainers of trainees (ToTs) for Farmer Field Schools (FFS)**

> Indicator: n. of trainers of trainees (ToTs) trained by gender
>
> Target: 100 ToTs trained

140.   100 farmers (59 Women and 41 Men) were trained as ToTs on various aspects of sustainable land and forest management practices referring to the specific areas of conservation agriculture, water and soil conservation, community seed system, crop management cycle, agronomic practices, agroforestry, river and spring protection, land use planning, documentation and data dissemination.

141.   The evaluation exercise considers that output 1.5 was formally <u>delivered</u>. However because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

142.   **Output 1.6: Facilitation of FFS groups**

> Indicator: n. of farmer groups trained
>
> Target: 50 farmer groups trained

143.   50 farmer groups have been established through the Innovation Platforms and were trained on 8 relevant modules as per the training plan. These include trainings on good crop husbandry, soil and water conservation, postharvest handling & value addition, catchment rehabilitation, financial literacy, tree nursery establishment, record keeping and market linkages.

144.   Output 1.6 was <u>formally delivered</u>. However, because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

145.   **Output 1.7: Establishment of SLM/SFM biodiversity learning sites**

> Indicator: n. of learning sites established
>
> Target: 50 learning sites established

146.   50 learning sites have been established under the management of the Innovation Platforms. The learning sites are located in the 10 micro-catchments: and these sites were used to address the agronomic challenges the farmers face. The sites were being, and are expected to be, used to address the agricultural production issues faced by the farmers and to promote SLM/SFM practises. The evaluation acknowledges that some learning sites are still being used by farmers, although during the evaluation mission, it was reported to the Evaluator that some of them are no longer accessible to farmers. The owners refuse to keep using their farms as learning sites as they no longer receive, as during the implementation, inputs for their farm free of charge.

147.   Output 1.7 delivered against the target outlined in the ProDoc. However, the target was set based on a much larger intervention area: the density of learning sites across the project

area is equal to 438.5 ha per learning site; the same number of learning sites were expected to serve a total agricultural area of 100,000 ha, with an average density of 2,000 ha/learning site.

148.   The evaluation exercise considers output 1.7 as <u>partially delivered</u>.

149.   **Output 1.8: Facilitation of farmer open and field-days**

> Indicator: n. of farmers attending field days by gender
>
> Target: 30,000 farmers attended field days

150.   20,819 (10,534 men and 10,285 women) farmers attended 21 field-days held at the established learning sites. The aim of the field days was the creation of wider awareness on SLM/SFM practices outside the focal project sites

151.   Due to the Covid-19 pandemic large gatherings of people could not be held.

152.   The evaluation exercise considers the output 1.8 as <u>partially delivered</u>.

153.   **Output 1.9 Support to implementation Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans**

> Indicator: n. of Participatory Forest Management Plans developed and implemented
>
> Target: 6 PFM developed and implemented

154.   Five PFM Plans were formulated for the Forest Station of Kakamega, Kibiri, Kimondi, Kobujoi, and Malava.

155.   The PFM Plans provide a management framework for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem and improvement of livelihoods of the adjacent community. It is a direct support to the institutional capacity of KFS. The institution is, in fact, legally responsible to prepare and implement management plans with relevant stakeholders. As the Plans refer to the period 2022/2026, they could not, and were not, implemented in the course of the implementation. Nevertheless, the evaluation acknowledges that the work done throughout the implementation of the project is fully aligned with the objectives of the PFM Plans, i.e. addressing the livelihoods of local communities and promoting forest conservation initiatives.

156.   Five out of six management plans were delivered. The output is considered as <u>delivered</u> by the evaluation exercise.

157.   **Output 1.10: Capacity building of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other forest stakeholders**

> Indicator a: n. of forest user groups trained (with gender disaggregated data)
>
> Target a: 20 forest groups trained

158.   26 forest user groups and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were trained on the Forest Governance Act, participatory forest management and advocacy, governance, catchment rehabilitation, agroforestry systems, ecosystem management and biodiversity monitoring. The 26 Forest User Groups were trained on advocacy as a tool to initiate negotiations for forest management agreements.

159.   Output 1.10 was formally delivered. However, because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

160.   **Output 1.11 Documentation of SLM/SFM knowledge and technologies**

> Indicator: n. of people with access to SLM information[14]
>
> Target: SLM and agro-biodiversity best practices documented

161.   The SLM technology "Conservation agriculture for maize-legume systems with velvet bean as a dense cover crop" was documented and included in the on-line database of the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), a global network on SLM that promotes the documentation, sharing and use of knowledge to support adaptation, innovation and decision-making, which is free and open for consultation. The database is accessible freely worldwide.

162.   A report of SLM practices for Western Kenya was formulated in January 2018 and over 30 knowledge products have been developed throughout the whole implementation period.

163.   Output 1.11 was <u>fully delivered</u>.

164.   **Output 2.1: Value chain analysis of target crops undertaken**

> Indicator: value-chain analysis of target crops undertaken
>
> Target: value-chain analysis of target crops undertaken

165.   Three community led value chain analysis were undertaken in a participatory way in three micro-catchments: Cheibote (Nandi County); Shamiloli (Kakamega County); and Makuchi (Vihiga County). The analyses focus on the recognition of the role of the farmers within the value chain of agricultural producers (with special emphasis on maize, beans and leafy vegetables), the opportunities and constraints existing within the value chain and make recommendations to make their farming activities more productive.

166.   Output 2.1 was formally delivered. However, because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

167.   **Output 2.2: Farmer groups linkage to inputs and outputs markets**

> Indicator a: Proportion of farmers marketing their produce through structured markets
>
> Target: 80%
>
> Indicator b: Proportion of farmers accessing loans from micro-financing institutions
>
> Target: 30%

168.   The last PIR (2021) reported that most farmers have been linked with markets and have realized over 53% increase in volumes sold by household between April and March 2021. However, the project records report, (included in the excel file "Aggregation data"), that farmer groups sold their production of maize and beans on two occasions during project implementation, in a self-organized way, for a total value of 7,757,800 Kenyan Shillings[15]. Given the indicator's target (i.e. 80% of 100,000 "sensitized" farmers, namely 80,000 farmers) it can be calculated that each individual farmer belonging to the target has sold part of his/her produce through structured markets for a value of 97 Kenyan Shillings each, i.e. less than 1 USD.

169.   The evaluation exercise, therefore, concludes that it is likely that only a small portion of farmers had actual access to structured markets to sell their products and that the target

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[14] As noted in the Assessment of Project Design Quality, the formulation of the indicator is not SMART. The evaluation exercise takes in consideration the target, which instead is a qualitative measurement of the achievement of the output 1.11.

[15] Converts to approx. USD 63,000 (Dec 2022)

value of the indicator was not met. This feature was confirmed by anecdotal evidence during the focus group discussions with members of Innovation Platforms. Actually, the Innovation Platforms, established by the project in each micro-catchment, do not have the capacity to reach out to many farmers.

170.   Project records, included in the excel file "Credit", report that 322 farmers have accessed credit during the implementation of the project for a total of 4,252,500 Kenyan Shillings (i.e. approx. 13,000 KSh each). This value is far below the target value of the indicator.

171.   Output 2.2 was <u>not delivered</u>.

172.   **Output 2.3: Support to strengthening of Community Based Seed producers**

Indicator: n. of Community Based Seed producers supported

Target: 3 Community Based Seed producers supported

173.   Five community-based seed producer groups (CBSP) have engaged in the bulking of indigenous vegetable seeds on one acre piece of land and produced 200kg basic seeds for further multiplication by other farmers. The 5 community-based seed producers influenced 400 indigenous vegetable farmers in Nandi (120), Kakamega (180) and Vihiga (100) counties, who have cumulatively harvested 9.5 tons of their indigenous vegetables.

174.   Output 2.3 was formally delivered. However, because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

175.   **Output 2.4: Support to post-harvest management at household level**

Indicator: No. of farmers trained in post-harvest handling by gender

Target: 10,000 farmers trained in post-harvest handling

176.   According to project records 16,013 farmers (7,963 men, 7,750 women) were trained in post-harvest handling measures. Demonstration of appropriate post-harvest technologies tailored for smallholders were showcased in field days, trade fares and at the learning sites.

177.   However, the evaluation considers output 2.4 as <u>not delivered</u> because the project monitoring system which provides the data to assess this output is not considered appropriate (refer to section 1.13.2 "Monitoring and Project Implementation" for details).

178.   **Output 2.5: Support to women and youth groups in small scale agricultural enterprises**

Indicator: n. of women and youth groups supported

Target: 20 women and youth groups supported

179.   20 Small/Medium Sized Enterprises (10 youth), and (10 women) were supported through trainings on business plans and enterprise development.

180.   Output 2.5 was formally delivered. However, because of the drastic reduction of the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation does not consider the delivery of the output as satisfactory in relation to making the expected contribution to achieving the outcomes.

181.   **Output 2.6: Support to development and commercialization of Non-wood forest products and services (NWFPS)**

Indicator: No. of NWFPS developed and marketed

Target: 4 NWFPS developed by end of project

182. 3 NWFP, i.e. honey, mushrooms and tree seedlings were developed.

183. Output 2.6 was <u>partially delivered</u>.

184. **Output 3.1: Assessment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity conservation related policies and strategies at county level**

Indicator: Policy analysis report

Target: Policy analysis report with recommendations

185. The assessment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity conservation related policies and strategies at county level was not conducted and, consequently, no report delivered. In fact, only the Kakamega County Agricultural Soil Management policy existed at county level so there was no basis on which to carry out the assessment.

186. The evaluation considers output 3.1 as <u>not delivered</u>.

187. **Output 3.2: Support development of county level SLM/SFM and biodiversity frameworks**

Indicator: n. of county level SLM/SFM related strategies

Target: 2 SLM related strategies developed

188. Three reports related to the Sustainable Land and Forest Management Policy for Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga counties were formulated with the support of the project.

189. The content of the three reports is almost identical, there are no substantial differences between them. The core of the policy is represented by the chapter related to SLM and SFM issues which includes sub-chapters; in each sub-chapter issues there are the description of the main problems to address, a list of challenges and a list of policy statements. Each policy also has a chapter on the implementation framework, monitoring and evaluation of the policy, which is very general. No timelines, objectives or needed resources are identified. Who is in charge of what is not described, there is simply a mention of other important actors who can collaborate with the counties, i.e. national institutions, NGOs, and international donors.

190. The output 3.2 is formally delivered, but its usefulness as a management tool in the hands of policy makers is limited. It is a list of possible actions (i.e. the policy statements) that may contribute to address the problems (i.e. challenges) to solve the issues identified. All elements to operationalize it, such as, first and foremost, the quantification of each problem and the resources needed to carry out pertinent actions, are left out and are not identified. However, the policy is the first ever formulated document at county level. It represents the legal basis that may allow the county governments to direct resources to implement SLM/SFM related activities in the three counties and to issue bills and regulations on the matter. This aspect was deemed extremely important by all stakeholders interviewed on the matter. The evaluation considers output 3.2 as <u>partially delivered</u>.

191. **Output 3.3: Support to Ecosystem valuation and assessment**

Indicator: valuation of Kakamega-Nandi forest complex established

Target: ecosystem valuation established

192. A report on Ecosystem Services Valuation for the Kakamega Nandi North and Nandi South and Kibiri Forest Ecosystems was delivered. The valuation exercise was conducted taking into consideration the actual use and perceptions of the forest of farmers. In fact, focus group discussions with farmers were held in each micro-catchment.

193.   The valuation exercise was very much appreciated. Indeed, it added to the project efforts to raise awareness about the contribution of forest ecosystems to human well-being. Moreover, it represents a decision support tool for assessing the relative economic impact of alternative actions and uses in the hand of the County governments and established a basis for incentive schemes and markets for ecosystem services.

194.   Output 3.3 was <u>fully delivered</u>.

195.   **<u>Output 3.4: Support to inter-county ecosystem forum</u>**

> Indicator: Inter-county MoU
>
> Target: Inter-county MoU in place

196.   A Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Trans-boundary Inter County Forest Ecosystem was drafted with the support of the project. The MoU is not yet signed by the parties, i.e. the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga. The activities related to the formulation of the MoU were conducted in May and June 2022.

197.   The MoU recommends the county government to collaborate to *(i) increase the resilience of ecosystems; (ii) safeguard existing carbon sinks; (iii) promote the sustainable management of natural resources; and (iv) implement nature based solutions that the improved management of ecosystems can provide as a cost effective and complementary action to technological solutions to mitigation and adaptation.*

198.   The MoU stresses the importance of coordination and cooperation amongst counties to pursue its objective and recognizes that sharing ideas and practices, raising awareness on the value of ecosystem services and biodiversity within the general public and collaborating, where ecosystems cross regional boundaries, as appropriate.

199.   The MoU does not include any timeline, obligations for the parties and any financial commitment. And, the establishment of an ecosystem management forum for coordinating the implementation of inter county nature based solutions is a suggested action included in the MoU. In its formulation, the document is closer to a declaration of intent rather than to a MoU. Its formulation is far from what was described in the ProDoc.

200.   The evaluation exercise concludes that output 3.4 was <u>not delivered</u>.

201.   <u>Availability of outputs</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unsatisfactory</u>.

1.10.2 Achievement of project outcomes

202.   **<u>Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land, forest and biodiversity (including agro-biodiversity) management practices</u>**

> Indicator: Proportion of target farmers using appropriate SLM practices
>
> Target: 80%

203.   According to project records, 92,296 farmers were targeted through at least one capacity development activity and 61,600 of these adopted SLM practices, i.e. 67% of targeted farmers used at least one appropriate SLM practice. However, the evaluation exercise casts doubt on the quality of the monitoring of the adoption of the SLM practices at farm level (refer to section "1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation" for details).

204.   During the evaluation field mission, it was evident that the capacities to apply SLM practices at farm level is extremely variable. The TOTs, i.e. the farmers that were trained by project partners to train their peers (other farmers), have absorbed, to some extent, the notions and the knowledge around SLM. However, the rate of understanding of SLM principles and application decreased rapidly amongst other farmers. Site visits showed that those

farmers living in the immediate proximity of a learning site have applied SLM practices better/more in their farms in comparison to those farmers that were simply in contact with a ToT and were never visited at their farms by a ToT or any other actor of the project (WAOs, SCAOs and any other project partners). Although not statistically significant, the site visits carried out during the evaluation mission recorded two recurring problems:

i.) The compost is accumulated in mounds that do not present any structure. They are just mounds accumulated within the farms. Instead, the mounds should be deposited in three holes dug in the ground. The holes are necessary to control the maturation of the compost, which should happen in three phases over a period of 66 days.

ii.) The intercropping between maize and beans is not done correctly. Beans should be planted between the lines of maize. Instead, most of the farmers visited planted the seeds of maize and beans in the very same hole dug in the ground. These seeds will generate plants with stunted growth.

205.   In addition: distancing between and within the lines of maize is not always respected; maize and bean lines should be perpendicular to the slope line of the course to prevent erosion, (this was is not always the case); farmers reported different utilization of fertilizers, (amongst farmers, there is no common understand on how much fertilizer should be used); and amongst the SCAOs and WAOs there was confusion on what should be considered an SLM practice (for example, a few of them told the Evaluator that fertilizers and certified seeds were the most important SLM practices applied by the farmers in the project areas).

206.   Finally, although the ProDoc did not specify the number of SLM practices that each targeted farmer should have applied at the end of the project, the interpretation, made by AGRA and KALRO, that just one SLM practice is enough to inform the indicator is very broad: for example, according to the project records, namely in the excel file "Table 2: Early Adopting farmers list", 26,319 farmers who adopted the SLM "inorganic farming", 146 farmers who adopted the SLM "kitchen garden/composting" and 889 farmers who adopted a generic undefined SLM practice are considered as farmers who actually have adopted an SLM practice in their farm.

207.   The target value of the indicator was 80% of the targeted farmers, which would be 72,836 individual farmers. Therefore, according to project records (61,600 farmers), the outcome was not achieved. Moreover, the evaluation casts serious doubts on this number (refer to section 1.13.2 "Monitoring and Project Implementation" for details).

208.   **Outcome 2: Increased farmers' access to profitable input and output markets of targeted crops and forest products**

Indicator a: Proportion of target farmers with access to input and output markets (with gender disaggregated data)

Target a: 80%

Indicator b: Increase in volume of produce (target crops) sold by households through structured markets

Target b: 50%

209.   The last PIR (2021) reported that 31,671 farmers were linked to an input market. This would represent just 34% of the farmers targeted by the project, which are, according to project records, 92,296.

210.   Project records from the file "Table 7 End of project IPTT" reported that 50% of increase of produce actually happened.

211.   Outcome 2 was not achieved. Moreover, the evaluation casts serious doubts on this number (refer to section 1.13.2 "Monitoring and Project Implementation" for details).

212. **Outcome 3: Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land, forests and biodiversity management at county level**

> Indicator: n. of SLM related frameworks at county and landscape level
>
> Target: 3 institutional frameworks established by end of project

213. Outcome 3 was not <u>achieved</u>. Solid evidence supports the statement: the target value of the indicator was not met, i.e. any institutional frameworks were established at county and landscape level. Indeed, the County policies on SLM and SFM[16] were delivered very late (June and August 2022) and the work on Inter-county MoU was not carried out in May and June 2022 and it is not, as per now, yet signed by the parties and the inter-county ecosystem forum was not established. The project failed to convert the outputs into outcomes because of several reasons. First of all, very few outputs were delivered. The project did not have any significant effects on the drivers that should have led the project contributing. The capacities of IPs, ToTs, SWAOs and WAOs were not sufficiently developed to promote learnings amongst the farming communities. In addition, the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga could not integrate the SLM strategies into their CIDPs, because they were developed at a very late stage of the implementation. The strategies did not present a level of detail that could help the county government to develop actual actions upon them. Finally, the inter-county forum to promote LSM/SFM was not established during the life span of the project, a MoU was drafted but not signed. The MoU is just a declaration of intention and was drafted at the very end of project implementation.

214. <u>Achievement of project outcomes</u> is rate as <u>Highly Unsatisfactory.</u>

1.10.3 Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

215. <u>Project objective: to increase smallholders' productivity through up-scaling of sustainable land management</u>

> Indicator 1: The average yield (production per ha) of targeted crops (maize, legumes, indigenous vegetables)
>
> Target: maize 2 t/ha; beans 0.4 t/ha, indigenous vegetables 1.5 t/ha

216. Project records report that yield per ha increased to 3.2 t/ha (maize), 0.44 t/ha (beans) and 2.5 t/ha (indigenous vegetables). However, the evaluation casts doubts on the reliability of these number (please refer to section "1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation" for details)

217. In addition, in this regard, it is important to note that the project promoted the adoption of certified seeds of maize and beans appropriate for the local conditions. Before the project started, communities in the project area were already using certified maize seeds, however, they were not suitable for the actual edaphic conditions in the ten micro-catchments. The project advised the farmers to utilize the *right* certified maize seeds for the soils and ecological condition within the project area. It was reported by all interviewees that most of the farmers are now utilizing the right seeds for their cultivation.

218. Certified beans' seeds were also promoted by the project and they were also adopted by farmers, although to a less extent. The adoption of certified beans' seeds represented a novelty for the communities in the project area as they usually used locally grown, non-certified beans.

219. The actual increase of yields of maize and beans appears to be due to two main factors: the adoption of more suitable seeds for the local conditions and the adoption of some SLM practices. Indeed, SCAOs and WAOs interviewed on the matter reported that the right

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[16] It is important to highlight that the three policies developed at county level cannot be considered as an achievement at outcome level. They already inform the indicator at output level.

choice of seeds can lead to higher yields even if SLM are not applied. These seeds are simply better suited to the local conditions. A target and control group design of project delivery would have been needed to determine if (or to what extent) increased yields could be attributed to improved SLM practices rather than different seeds.

> Indicator: Proportion increase of income from the sale of 3 target crops
>
> Target: 30%

220.   There is incomplete data available for this indicator. The project has collected data on the revenue obtained by the sales of the surplus of the agricultural production in the project area. However, as costs and the inflation rate were not taken in consideration in the M&E system, the evaluation exercise cannot make any assertive judgement on the achievement of this indicator.

> Indicator: Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation
>
> Target: 50,000 ha

221.   This target was substantially reduced to 10,000 ha (80% reduction) by the Project Steering Committee in 2018 without any formal approval process and without any budget revision or change in the workplan etc. The project reports having contributed to putting 7,628 ha under SFM practices. Neither target has been achieved.

> Indicator: Area (ha) of land put under SLM
>
> Target: 20,000 ha

222.   This target was substantially reduced to 3,913 ha (81% reduction) by the Project Steering Committee in 2018 without any formal approval process and without any budget revision or change in the workplan etc. Project records report that the project contributed to putting 4,461 ha of land under at least one SLM practice. The revised target was surpassed and the original target has not been achieved. In addition, the evaluation casts doubts on the reliability of this number (please refer to section "1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation" for details).

223.   The Achievement of <u>Likelihood of Impact</u> is rated <u>Highly Unlikely</u>

Rating for Effectiveness:	**Highly Unlikely**

1.11   Financial Management

1.11.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

224.   The budget was analysed by project component and by budget area and was appended to the UNEP-AGRA agreement. A high-level project budget by funding sources for secured and unsecured funds is available clearly indicating the core and co-financing resources.

225.   Technically the project's financial management adhered to the requirements of GEF/UNEP reporting. However, given that the targets were substantially reduced (i.e. by approx. 80%) one could reasonably expect this reduction in ambition to translate into a reduced scope of work and, therefore, require a budget revision. The UNEP Evaluation office recognises appropriate budget revisions as part of financial policies and procedures.

226.   <u>Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures </u>is rated<u> Unsatisfactory</u>

1.11.2 Completeness of Financial Information

227. The project's financial management is complete. The detailed project budget was developed in the old GEF/UNEP financial reporting template and thus reporting was only per budget lines and thus there was no reporting at outcome level.

228. Co-financing was reported in detail, both for in-kind and for cash. Additional co-financing was secured during implementation, and this was also well reported (through a final co-finance report).

229. Financial management did not have any negative influence on the actual implementation of project activities.

230. Finally, two main budget revisions were done in 2020 and 2022.

Table 6 - Expenditure by Outcome

OUTCOME	Estimated cost at design (US$1,000)	Last budget revision (2022)	Actual Cost/ expenditure (Dec 2021)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Outcome 1	1,572.2	1,458.9	Not available / Not reported	NA
Outcome 2	1,080.2	1,368.6	Not available / Not reported	NA
Outcome 3	620.2	445.0	Not available / Not reported	NA
Project Management	311.2	311.2	Not available / Not reported	NA
TOTAL	**3,583.8**	**3,583.8**	**3,263.9**	**91%**

Table 7 – Co-financing table

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US$1,000)		Government (US$1,000)		Other (US$1,000)		Total (US$1,000)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Cash	---	200	2,000	---	2,094	2,101	4,094	2,301
In-kind	200	---	5,228	7,110	382	989	5,810	8,100
Total	200	200	7,228	7,110	2,476	3,091	9,904	10,401

231. The secured co-financing exceeded the level of planned co-financing by 5%.

232. Completeness of Financial Information is rated Satisfactory

1.11.3 Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff

233. Communication between the Task Manager, AGRA, and the FMO was regular. The FMO regularly checked financial reports received from AGRA were received. He was available to clarify any financial issue that may have arisen during the implementation.

234. UNEP, both FMO and Task Manager, were proactive in raising and resolving financial issues; this positively affected project implementation as any issues that would have affected the project were resolved in a timely manner.

235. Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff is rated Satisfactory

Table 8: Financial management table

Financial management components:	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:	**U**	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules	Yes	The targets were substantially reduced (i.e. by approx. 80%). One could reasonably expect this reduction in ambition to translate into a reduced scope of work and, therefore, require a budget revision. The UNEP Evaluation Office recognises appropriate budget revisions as part of financial policies and procedures
2. Completeness of project financial information:		
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)	**S**	
A. Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	
B. Revisions to the budget	Yes	
C. All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Contracts were provided to the Evaluator
D. Proof of fund transfers	No	
E. Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	No	Only co-finance table provided to the Evaluator
F. A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual	Yes	The level of detail was enough to understand the
G. Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes	
H. Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	**S**	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.	S	Interviews did not identify any shortcoming
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.	S	Interviews did not identify any shortcoming
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.	S	Interviews did not identify any shortcoming
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.	S	Interviews did not identify any shortcoming
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process	S	Interviews did not identify any shortcoming
Overall rating	S	

Rating for Financial Management: Moderately Satisfactory

1.12 Efficiency

236. The project made use of relevant expertise available by each grantee contracted by KALRO. In terms of efficient use of resources the choice may leave room to two

interpretations. On the one hand, each partner has a specific expertise aligned with the project activities implemented. This constitutes an element of efficiency. On the other hand, the participation of so many partners that entered into contractual agreements with KALRO may have increased the administrative costs and limited the efficiency of project funds' allocation.

237.	The role of UNEP and AGRA overlapped to a great degree. In reality, AGRA became the implementing partner and KALRO the executing partner. The role of UNEP was to supervise and provide technical guidance to AGRA, who in turn supervised and provided technical guidance to KALRO. Either AGRA or UNEP were a superfluous step within the management set up of the project. UNEP participated in PSC meetings, while AGRA in both project meetings and PSC meetings. At field level, neither UNEP nor AGRA implemented any activity. The two organizations took part in field visits. There was no adherence to what was written in "Section 4: institutional framework and implementation arrangements of the ProDoc."*AGRA will be the lead executing agency for the project, through contractual arrangements with UNEP. AGRA will coordinate all the implementation arrangements as per the work plan in partnership with KALRO and other implementing entities on the ground. AGRA will provide periodic technical and financial reports to UNEP*". Although, the word "executing" in the terminology of GEF funded projects means conducting activities at field level, AGRA became an implementing agency, not an executing agency. Instead, KALRO was the lead executing agency that had the overall responsibility of coordination and field work. That responsibility is clearly demonstrated by the fact that KALRO entered into contractual agreements with eight project partners.

238.	The evaluation highlights that USD 620,020 were originally budgeted for project activities related to outcome 3 "Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land, forests and biodiversity management at county level" (as per Appendix 1 to the ProDoc). Later, the amount was reduced to USD 445,023 (budget review, 2020). The actual expenditure on the individual outcomes cannot be extracted from the financial reporting, because the budget was organized according to the old GEF/UNEP financial template and thus there was no reporting at outcome level. Thinking that the process to formulate them costs that amount of funds is not very credible because of the quality of the three county SLM/SFM strategies, the Ecosystem Valuation, and the inter-county MoU. The funds may have been diverted to other uses to the detriment of the quality of the results. Or if not diverted, they delivered very low-quality outputs (specially the SLM/SFM strategies and the inter-county MoU) for such a big investment. The same reasoning applies to the delivery of the land use plans at micro-catchment level. The budget original available was USD 180,000. Again, the evaluation cannot compare the budgets. However, the content of the 10 land use plans is almost identical. The quality and the level of detail of the 10 plans seems not to justify such an investment.

239.	There are also serious doubts about the efficiency of delivering output 1.1: Baselines for SLM, SFM and Biodiversity established at landscape level. The five reports on agro-biodiversity, on bean pollinators and virus diversity, on bee diversity and honey production, on tree agrobiodiversity and aboveground carbon stocks on ruminants and forage diversity were not utilized to monitor project progress. Indeed, the five reports were baselines and no end line report followed. The evaluation exercise did not identify any utility in the baselines for M&E purposes, and consequently on the funds spent for their delivery.

240.	The evaluation exercise recorded that the target value of the two most important original indicators at objective level, in terms of environmental benefits, i.e. *Area (ha) of land put under SLM*, was reduced from 20,000 ha to 3,913 ha and *Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)* from 50,000 ha to 10,000 ha. It is a substantial reduction, equivalent to about more than 80% of the original target values and should have been accompanied by a revised workplan and associated budget. The reduction of the

ambitions of the project is particularly surprising, given that AGRA benefited from a Project Preparation Grant from the GEF of USD 80,000.

241.   The project worked on ten micro-catchments that have a cumulative area of 21,927 ha. It would have been possible to work on more micro-catchments, so to have, at least in theory, the possibility to achieve the objective of 20,000 ha under SLM. As a matter of fact, the ProDoc had a focus on the landscape level that later during implementation translated into micro-catchment level. The equivalence between the two terms (landscape vs micro-catchment) is doubtful: average agronomists, ecologists or geographers, when reading the term landscape, think about territories larger than a micro-catchment.

242.   A review of the project documentation and associated agreements support the view that AGRA and KALRO have always considered the targeting of 100,000 smallholder farmers as the main target of the project: i) The number of 100,000 is mentioned in section "3.7 Incremental cost reasoning" of the ProDoc namely at paragraph 224 *"…The proposed additional GEF funding could reach 100,000 more farmers indirectly with SLM practices among surrounding communities bordering Kakamega and Nandi Forest…"*. However, i) in no part of the ProDoc, is the number mentioned explicitly as a target, and ii) this position is confirmed by analysing the contracts signed by KALRO and project partners. The contracts available for the evaluation exercise were signed on the following dates:

- *Anglican Development Services Western Kenya (ADS-W) - April 4th, 2018*

- *Rural Outreach Program Africa (ROP) - April 18th, 2018*

- *Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) - May 5th, 2018*

- *Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technologies (MMUST) – May, 23rd, 2018*

- *Nature Kenya - June 12th, 2018*

243.   These five contracts all refer to *"the strategic objective of the Project is that by September 2020, 100,000 will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through established learning sites and 50 farmer group trained on the appropriate technologies"*. All contracts were signed before the PSC made the decision to drastically reduce the ambitions of the project (October 18th, 2022). In brief, it appears that the Committee formalized a decision already made in those contracts. Having in mind that the objective was sensitizing 100,000 farmers, the decision to reduce the original targets of project was reasoned and fully substantiated by the reality on the ground: 21,927 ha, i.e. the total area of the 10 micro-catchments, were enough to reach that number of farmers..

244.   The objective to reach 100,000 farmers was also included, as project objective, in the Knowledge and Communication Strategic Plan of the project.

245.   In addition, it is important to report that the minutes of that PSC meeting did not present this change as a substantial reduction in targets closely associated with GEBS i.e. did not mention that the project was expected to target 100,000 ha of land under agricultural use and 50,000 ha of land under forestry use as per the appendix 13b – "GEF LD Tracking Tool_Kenya SLM FSP" to the ProDoc, and as per the section "Alignment with GEF focal areas" of the ProDoc *"…The proposed project is expected to deliver global environmental benefits through putting over100,000 ha of vulnerable productive landscapes under sustainable land and ecosystem management…"*.

246.   The evaluation finds that, although adaptive management is promoted by GEF as a means to adapt to changing circumstances, the reduction of project area and, consequently of the target levels, is not justifiable as an adaptive measure. It relies on the necessity to work

with a target of 100,000 smallholding farmers that is not considered as a target in the ProDoc and in its relevant appendices. As a matter of fact, project funds were spent to achieve less than 20% of what the ProDoc foresaw in terms of global benefits, which represent the core business of the donor.

247. The project management structure as outlined in the ProDoc resulted to be not efficient in generating the expected results. The work was supervised by AGRA and KALRO, and activities were conducted by project partners, great emphasis was given to the training of ToTs, to the establishment of the Innovation Platforms and to the empowerment of their members. ToTs and Innovation Platforms should have later acted as proximity extension services. They proved to fall short. Their capacities were not developed enough to reach out effectively to a great number of farmers and to provide them with proper technical guidance. These kinds of project arrangements resulted to be not successful in delivering the outputs and achieving the outcomes. The participation in an individual event, such an open field day, did not produce any relevant effects on farmers' capacities.

248. Finally, it is acknowledged that the management of the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 did not impede AGRA, KALRO and other partners to implement project activities. In this regard, it is important to highlight that the extension of the project was requested for two main reasons that did not have to do with delays in implementing project activities. There was the need to allow for closure processes and to make the present evaluation possible. The COVID-19 related international travel restrictions did not make the evaluation exercise possible earlier.

Rating for Efficiency: Highly Unsatisfactory

1.13   Monitoring and Reporting

1.13.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

249. The original Results Framework presented all elements that allows an effective monitoring of the project, although a well-articulated ToC was not presented.

250. The ProDoc specified that a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) tool that would have enabled farmers to participate in data collection of environmental indicators in their own fields would be used. Each farmer group would have developed a SLM action plan and a monitoring and evaluation tool with set targets and indicators to track performance of the group members in adoption of SLM technologies in their farms.

251. Appendix 7 of the ProDoc presented a costed M&E plan of USD 1,549,800 value including USD 457,800 financed by the GEF and 1,092,000 by co-financing contributions. The M&E plan is comprehensive and exhaustive.

252. Monitoring Design and Budgeting is rated as Satisfactory

1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

253. An M&E system was used to keep track of the implementation of activities. Each project partner implemented and monitored the activities under its responsibility and delivered relevant reports to KALRO, who could collate the information into its own reports. Data was routinely collected when activities were implemented, such as participants and activities implemented.

254. The work done relating to policy support, i.e. under component 3, and the work done on SFM did not entail complex monitoring efforts, as it was mainly activity related.

255. However, monitoring of the work done on SLM did require robust monitoring and was not well organized and/or carried out.

256.   A participatory monitoring and evaluation plan was adopted for the purpose of monitoring. In line with the proximity community-based extension system, information on the adoption of SLM practices was gathered through the direct involvement of end beneficiaries. Data flowed from farmers to ToTs, CFAs, Innovation Platforms, WAOs) and SCAOs, who collected inputs from beneficiaries and submitted them to project officers who then cleaned the data and submitted it for entry by their M&E focal persons. Data was then submitted to KALRO for aggregation and collation in relevant excel files. The evaluation identified some weaknesses in this kind of monitoring:

1) **Capacity of the intermediaries (ToTs, CFAs and WAOs and SCAOs):**

The capacity of ToTs and CFAs to fulfill this role were not always sufficient, as demonstrated by the evaluation field mission. Two examples: 1) a ToT reported that it was possible to visit up to 40 farms per day, and 2) another ToT was not able to explain to the Evaluator how to produce compost. During the field mission in Kenya, conflicting evidence was collected:

TOTs, SCAOs and WAOs reports:

- o Many ToTs reported that they were able to conduct up to 20 site visits per day at farm level. One TOT reported that she was able to visit 40 farms per day to provide advice to farmers on how to apply SLM practices.

- o A TOT reported repeatedly that she was visiting farms in her catchment literally every day, including on Sundays.

- o Some SCAOs and WAOs reported that a maximum of 5 visits to individual farms could be done per day during the dry season. Instead, during the long rainy season no farm visits were possible, and during the short rainy season only three visits per day could be possible.

- o Other SCAOs and WAOs reported they did not carry out any farm visits during the implementation of the project. They just gathered farmers in the learning sites and asked them questions about the situation at their farms.

- o Some SCAOs and WAOs explicitly mentioned that ToTs did not have the full capacity neither to advise farmers on SLM practices nor to apply SLM practices in their own farms.

Farmer reports:

- o Many farmers reported that they never received any visits to their farm throughout the period of project implementation.

- o Farmers living in close proximity to the learning sites reported having been visited by TOTs and other project partners many times during the project implementation period.

- o Farmers belonging to the Implementation Platforms also reported to have been visited quite regularly during the implementation of the initiative.

- o Farmers that were not aware of the existence of Implementation Platforms or live far from the learning sites, reported that they never received any person at their farms to check out the way they implemented SLM practices.

2) Flawed data collection methods:

The excel file "Table 2: Early Adopting farmers list" reports only the portion of the farm under SLM practices but not the full size of the farm and the data are not georeferenced. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the SLM practices were implemented with an appropriate degree of spatial continuity or whether they were applied in discontinuous spots within each micro-

catchment. It is also not possible to ascertain whether the proximity to a learning site had a significant role in the adoption of SLM practices. During the field mission, the proximity to a learning site appeared to be one of the key factors in having farmers apply SLM practices. This would suggest a significant limitation in the scale and duration of the effects.

In the same document "Table 2: Early Adopting farmers list", 26,319 farmers are reported to have adopted the SLM "inorganic farming"; 889 farmers who adopted a generic undefined SLM practice and 146 farmers who adopted the SLM "kitchen garden/composting". The number is equivalent to 44% of the total number of farmers (61,600) who applied SLM practices. Finally, the 889 entries related to unspecified "SLM practices" holds little weight in a project specifically focused on promoting the adoption of specific SLM practices and may even represent the incapacity of the person who collected the data to identify the actual SLM practice adopted. Furthermore, "inorganic farming" simply points out that certified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are applied, which is a questionable SLM practice. Table 2 does not specify how many times during project implementation the SLM practice was actually monitored. It is not possible to determine whether such monitoring happened once over the whole implementation period of the project or on more than an occasion. In addition, the person in charge of the monitoring visit at farm level is not specified.

3) Flawed data verification:

o The excel files "Table 1: Total Beneficiary stakeholders list final" and "Table 2: Early Adopting farmers list" report that the project trained a total of 92,296 farmers on SLM practices, and that 61,600 of those farmers adopted at least one SLM practice on their farm, while the baseline data (Table 2.1. "Demographic characteristics of the 10 landscapes" on page 9 of the "Implementation Landscapes Baselines Survey Report") reports that in all project catchments the projected population for 2018 was 177,701 people in 29,618 households (calculated as an estimated 6 people per average household). Therefore, it can be derived that most households have been reported at least twice in the project records. The feature demonstrated incoherence between the baseline study and the actual figures included in the two excel file.

4) Flawed final project impact assessment:

An 'impact assessment' was finalized in October 2022. Its results concerning the adoption of SLM practices are not considered valid by the present evaluation exercise. Specifically, the survey that targeted 184 respondents includes the following weaknesses:

- The Cochran formula[17] was used to determine the sample size which resulted to be of 184 farmers and representative of the whole population of the ten micro-catchments[18]. The actual size of the farmer population under study is not reported in any part of the report. All results of the survey are reported as percentages. The reader knows that 94.1% of the sample (i.e. 173 farmers from the sample) are applying conservation agriculture in their farms, but the actual number of farmers in the ten micro-catchment that apply such technology is not written in any part of the report.

- The way in which the 184 respondents (i.e. the farmers) were selected is not specified. The whole sampling procedure is not described. Furthermore, the reader of the assessment does not know whether these farmers are ToTs, farmers who own a demo plot, farmers who acquired knowledge from a project partner or farmers who participated to a certain type of training.

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[17] Cochran, W. G., 1977. Sampling techniques. 3rd ed. New York: John Wiley and Son.
[18] For populations that are large, Cochran (1963:75) developed the Equation 1 to yield a representative sample for proportions for population whose size is large, but not known.

- The impact assessment does not include any information related to the actual number of hectares under SLM practices, it refers only to the adoption of SLM practices by farmers.

- 184 farmers were asked what kind of SLM technology/ies applied in the farms. This question implies that farmers have the actual knowledge to answer and to evaluate if they are applying properly a SLM technology in their farms. The field visits conducted by the Evaluator during the field mission in Kenya demonstrated that many farmers are not applying SLM technologies correctly on their land (refer to section "1.10.1 Achievement of project outcomes" for details).

- <u>Individual respondent views reflected doubts about the monitoring:</u> i) a senior member of AGRA indicated the need to have conducted a "truthing field survey" by SLM experts to verify the actual adoption of SLM practice by farmers; ii) two individuals interviewed during the on-line data collection phase described the project's monitoring as 'inadequate' and iii) one individual cast serious doubt on whether the project had any capacity building effect among the vast number of farmers that the project records report, and wanted to be asked questions strictly related to the activities that they actually conducted at field level and seriously questioned the environmental benefits brought about by the project.

257.   In light of the above-mentioned considerations, the evaluation exercise cannot endorse the quality of the excel file "Table 2 Early Adopting farmers list" and the "End of Project Impact Assessment Report: October 2022" as adequate to monitor, confirm and evaluate the adoption of SLM practices, especially to validate the number of 61,600 farmers adopting at least one SLM practice as credible.

258.   The monitoring of the economic benefits (yields and income) suffered from two main problems: neither costs nor the inflation rate over last three years of project implementation period were taken into consideration. Therefore, the values related to changes in farmer income are not reliable.

259.   In addition for all four main project targets, i.e. the average yield of targeted crops; proportion increase of income from the sale of 3 target crops; land under SLM practice; and forest land under SFM practices, the data collection did not adhere to what was written in the monitoring and evaluation plan (i.e. instead of being collected regularly and consistently from the very same sample of 398 farmers, data were collected intermittently and from different sub-samples of farmers).

260.   Finally, the present evaluation highlights significant flaws that characterized the MTR report (2020): (i) the changes in project targets are not mentioned; (ii) any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and (iii) assessment of delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory at the mid-point, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary.

261.   <u>Addressing GEF Portal question:</u> Retrospectively, the project contributed to three GEF-7 core indicators: (1) Area of landscapes under improved practices (undefined number of ha, but below 4,461, under SLM practices and 7,628 under SFM). The retrospective achievement of the indicator is very low if it is considered that the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would have targeted 100,000 ha of farming land ha and 50,000 ha of forest land.

262.   <u>Monitoring of Project Implementation</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unsatisfactory</u>

1.13.3 Project Reporting

263.   The reporting mechanism follows the structure of the project, i.e. KALRO was in charge of getting the periodic reports from partners, consolidating them and sharing them with AGRA. In turn, AGRA would compile its own report and deliver it to UNEP.

264. The half-year progress reports from AGRA to UNEP were not detailed. The most important information to understand the project status were the updates on the progress of activities under the respective outputs and a table summarizing the consolidated progress in accordance with the results framework. The reports also included dedicated sections on challenges faced during the reporting period, lessons learned and planned activities for the next half year of project implementation.

265. The evaluation exercise identified elements of project reporting worthy of attention. The reports do not present a level of details deep enough to understand the project performance in its entirety. In other words, the table that summarizes the consolidated progress is suitable to show the delivery of the outputs, but it does not describe at all such delivery. In addition, sometimes there were inaccuracies.

266. Some examples from the Half yearly progress report from January to June 2022-submitted on 31st Jan 2022, are presented to better explain the previous statement are the following:

| Activity 1.1: Baselines established at landscape level | Year (Y) 1/Month (M) 3-6 | 100% | Fully achieved. Baseline characterisation for the 10 selected landscapes for project implementation was finalized and reported. The baseline line data collected was used in the revision of the result-based M&E Framework |

267. The reader does not know what the baselines are about. The term landscape is equated to micro-catchment. The evaluation exercise does not understand why the terms micro-catchment were not used to highlight the achievement. The reader has the impression the project is working at landscape level, when, instead, it is about micro-catchment level.

| Activity 1.3: Development of Integrated Land Use Plans at landscape level | Y1/M1- Y4/6 (continuous) | 100% | Fully achieved. Ten Land use plans have been developed for each of the project implementation landscapes and have been integrated into the implementation policy framework for the three target Counties (Nandi, Vihiga and Kakamega). |

268. Any reader of the Plans cannot tell what the land use plans and the policy framework are about. The adherence of the plans to what is described in the ProDoc is also not specified. Again, the term landscape is used to represent micro-catchment and the reader, therefore, understands that the project is working at landscape level, i.e. in larger areas, not in micro-catchments. Again, the evaluation exercise does not understand why the terms micro-catchment was not used to highlight the achievement. In addition, there is an inaccuracy: the land use plans are not integrated in any policy framework as policy frameworks have not, by the end of the project,been developed (or at least not made available to the Evaluator). Some elements were simply included in the draft of the Nandi County Integrated Development Plan.

269.

| Activity 1.6: Establishment of SLM/SFM learning sites | Y2/M1 | 100% | Fifty learning sites have been established under the management of the Innovation Platforms and these sites are being used to address the agronomic challenges the farmers face. |

270. The reader does not have any information about the location of the learning site (how many per micro-catchment), what is being done in the learning site, how the Innovation Platforms are managing the learning site etc.

Activity 2.2: Facilitation of farmer groups linkage to affordable finance markets	Y3/M1 – Y4/M12	99.5%	Almost all the farmers have been linked to structured markets and have realized over 53% increase in volumes sold by households during the reporting period where farmers were facilitated to access loans from microfinance institution such as through Kenya Women Finance, Step and Fly, Juhudi Kilimo Trust.

271.   The reader does not know how the 53% increase in volume was measured/calculated, what facilitation means, whether there was any variability in the increase between the different project areas. The evaluation exercise had access to two excel files related to the increase volumes of sale. From the excel file "aggregation data" it is evident that only a small portion of farmers had actual access to structured markets to sell their produces. In the excel file "table 7 End of project IPTT" a 50% increase in the volume of target crops sold by household is reported. However, the method to calculate that increase in volume and the data of individual farmers is not available. Finally, the records of the project included in the monitoring excel file "Credit" show that only 322 farmers had actual access (i.e. received loans) to finance institutions.

Activity 3.3: Capacity building of CFAs to enter into a Forest Management Agreement with KFS	Y4/M1-12	100%	KFS has been actively engaged in the project with contract deliverables that include development of participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMP)

272.   The information in this case is extremely poor. The reader has to know the contract stipulated by KALRO and KFS to understand the progress of the project.

Activity: 3.4: Support to inter-county ecosystem forum	Y4/M1-6	100%	This activity was done in May and June 2022

273.   The information is inaccurate. It omitted to specify that the MoU was not signed.

274.   This kind of reporting has also another flaw: it is not possible to understand whether the achievements are quality-wise adherent to the ProDoc. In other words, there is the necessity, to further read additional documents, i.e. the source of verification of each output delivery. The quality of the half-year progress reports is reflected in the PIRs, which present the same critical elements.

275.   Reporting is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Unsatisfactory

1.14 Sustainability

1.14.1 Socio-political Sustainability

276.   The project supported the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga to have an SLM policy in place. The officials belonging to the county institutions expressed their appreciation for the policy support work done by the project and stated that it is their interest to keep building on what the project achieved. However, the quality of these policies is very poor. Also, the MoU drafted with the support of the project is a simple declaration of intentions that has not yet been signed by the three parties. In addition, it was expected that some regulatory frameworks would have been developed as achievements of the project. This has not happened to-date.

277.   Nevertheless, the SLM policies represents a tool in the hands of county policy makers that may support their work in the future. As already mentioned in the effectiveness section,

the policies represent the legal basis that may allow the county governments to direct resources to implement SLM/SFM related activities in the three counties and to issue bills and regulations on the matter. This aspect was deemed extremely important by all stakeholders interviewed on the matter.

278.   The interests and needs of farmers, as individuals, is what may actually ensure the sustainability of the action. In the short term, it is likely that those farmers, who actually adopted SLM technologies will continue to apply them. Project records, however, are not reliable and the exact number of these farmers is not known. Instead, it is likely that ToTs and Innovation Platforms will not support effectively the work on SLM of the farmers. The evaluation field mission demonstrated there is insufficient capacity for them to do that.

279.   <u>Socio-political Sustainability</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unlikely</u>.

1.14.2 Financial Sustainability

280.   According to anecdotal evidence, the utilization of appropriate certified seeds (maize and beans) is the main element that contributed to the increase in productivity of the farmers. It is expected that farmers will keep utilizing those seeds. Throughout the evaluation field mission they stressed the great importance of these seeds for their farming activities. From this perspective, the farmers do not need to receive any external funding to keep using the certified seeds.

281.   Although not properly measured during the project implementation the level of adoption of SLM practices is likely to decrease after the end of the project due to the low capacities developed by individual farmers and the Innovation Platforms. It has been clearly mentioned by most WAOs and SCAOs that without receiving external support the level of adoption rate of SLM will decrease. A SCAO reported clearly that the "knowledge of farmers must be refreshed every now and then to make sure that they assimilate it properly". SCAOs, WAOs and the very same farmers are aware that additional capacity development activities are direly needed. WAOs and SCAOs are therefore likely to reduce their activities in the micro-catchments as the financial support of the project will no longer be there. It is likely that the counties will allocate some funds from their budgets to keep working across the project area as part of their institutional mandates. However, it is highly probable that these funds will be not enough for the WAOs and SCAOs to engage in deep collaboration with the farmers.

282.   <u>Financial Sustainability</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unlikely</u>.

1.14.3 Institutional Sustainability

283.   The SLM policies delivered by the project are of low quality and do not represent an effective instrument in the hands of public officers. They are just vague reference documents, which are needed to issue regulations and programme on SLM. They are not operational, do not contain work plans, assessments of needed resources and any other operational tools that may lead to actual implementation of activities at field level. The delivery of three SLM policies and the drafting of the MoU should have represented the contribution of the project to the establishment of a forum on SLM practices and the necessary regulatory frameworks. This did not happen by the end of the project. Consequently, the capacity of the counties to keep working on SLM issues remains substantially the same as it was before the project was implemented.

284.   As per the results of the focus group discussions, the members of the Innovation Platforms would be very keen to support the vast majority of community members residing in the ten micro-catchments. While one could imagine them acting as catalysing agents among farming communities, unfortunately, their organizational capacity is insufficient for this role. During the evaluation field mission, it was evident that there were no plans for the future, no

internal organization and no strategies to reach out to farmers. Their activities are essentially limited to their members and a few other farmers in the area, mainly neighbours and extended family members that are easily reachable. They are able to do some common sales joining efforts amongst a few farmers (up to 20/30) of maize, beans and/or vegetable, but they are not able to influence the activities of the farmer community at large.

285.   The work done with the KFS is the only tangible result of the project that is sustainable. The PFM Plans are their institutional tools for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem for the next coming years.

286.   Finally, as the project did not promote any specific gender and human rights issues, therefore the evaluation did not identify any elements of sustainability in that regard.

287.   The evaluation concludes there are no defined solid courses of action at any level after project's closure date.

288.   <u>Institutional Sustainability</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unlikely</u>.

Rating for Sustainability: Highly Unlikely

1.15 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

1.15.1 Preparation and Readiness

289.   The project design did not have any particular weakness; hence there was no need to put in place any measure to address them. Despite that, the decision to reduce project targets was taken. It did neither address any weaknesses in the project design nor respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. It appears to have been an arbitrary decision. based on the necessity to reach an objective not stated in the ProDoc.

290.   <u>Preparation and Readiness</u> is rated as <u>Highly Unsatisfactory</u>.

1.15.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

291.   The project had a Project Steering Committee (PSC) that oversaw the project implementation. PSC meetings were held in Nairobi or in the project area. In this way, the PSC members could experience first-hand the progress on the ground. However, holding PSC meetings in the project areas did not add any value to the actual implementation of the project. Working with such high number of beneficiaries would have, instead, required a strong monitoring system that would have allowed the PSC members to have a clear vision of what changes really happened at field level. Instead, the project M&E system was very weak. Finally, the proximity community-based extension system promoted by AGRA demonstrated to be ineffective in building capacity.

292.   UNEP, who received the GEF grant, supervised AGRA, who in turn supervised KALRO. KALRO sub-granted 9 organizations to implement project activities. The flow of information and of funds reflected these work arrangements: funds flowed from UNEP down to the sub-grantees through AGRA and KALRO, project information (through reports) flowed the opposite way all the way up from sub-grantees to UNEP through KALRO and AGRA. It is noted that UNEP and AGRA were having substantially the same role in the project implementation, which represents a duplication of efforts and consequent inefficiency in the overall management of project resources.

293.   The work was regulated by 11 contracts/agreements: UNEP/AGRA; AGRA/KALRO and KALRO/sub-grantees. No evidence of any significant problems in the working relationships

between project partners that could have affected negatively the implementation of the project was found.

294. The decision to formalize changes related to targeted project areas (from 150.000 to 21,927 ha) and final targets in terms of area of land under SLM and SFM practices (respectively from 20,000 ha and 50,000 ha to 3,913 ha and 10,000 ha) was not an adaptive measure. It was a misinterpretation of the ProDoc. The decision taken by the PSC is considered as arbitrary and not adaptive. The PSC was not up to its task to provide effective leadership to achieve project results.

295. The work of the implementing agency was not up to its tasks of supervising, monitoring and ensuring that the project was implemented in accordance to the ProDoc.

296. Implementing Agency is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

297. The approach proposed by AGRA resulted to be ineffective. In addition the project monitoring was not well executed both by AGRA and KALRO. Finally, the decision to include an objective different to the one included in the ProDoc in the contracts signed with project partners is considered arbitrary and not justified as an adaptive measure.

298. Executing Agencies are rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

299. Overall Quality of Project Management and Supervision is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

1.15.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

300. The participation of the field staff from the sub-counties, the communities, i.e. farmers and value chain actors engaged within the Implementation Platforms, were characterized by their genuine will to contribute to the improvement of the local conditions. Different factors contributed to the participation of farmers. The need to improve their agricultural and commercial abilities is undoubtedly the first and the most important. Participation moved from real needs of the farmers. However, the participation of farmers to project activities was not properly monitored by the project. ToTs and owners of the demo plots were deeply involved in the training sessions, while most of the farmers were counted as beneficiaries of project activities just because they took part in one training event, including field days that were characterized by the massive presence of farmers. The monitoring system does not differentiate between the different types of participation, therefore the evaluation exercise cannot assess the participation of farmers precisely.

301. Finally, the Innovation Platforms did not demonstrate a central role for the project's achievements and participation. Their capacities were not strong enough for them to act as catalysts of processes involving a substantial number of farmers. All anecdotal evidence collected through interviews and focus group discussions demonstrated that the Innovation Platforms have the capacities only to involve their members and a few other farmers. In the communities, they are not known by most of the farmers interviewed on the matter. Many of them also reported that they were not supported by any partners.

302. Project partners were in charge of the tasks included in their contracts.

303. Addressing GEF Portal question: The evaluation did not attempt to identify any progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR. The MTR is, in fact, reputed of very low quality by the present evaluation for the following three reasons:

- The changes in project targets are not mentioned;

- Any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and
- The assessment of outputs delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary.

304.   Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

1.15.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

305.   The project design did not foresee any specific action to address any issue related to human rights and gender equality. The project design also did not devote any particular attention to these issues; the mention of targeting both men and women was included in the ProDoc. No other elements related to gender, women empowerment and human rights were foreseen in the project design.

306.   Addressing GEF Portal question: in the CEO Endorsement request the gender dimension was limited to gender targeted[19] indicators. As a matter of fact, no gender responsive/transformative measures were included in any part of project design.

307.   The project design, as per its results' framework, and implementation were gender-targeted. Specific attention was devoted to target women in project activities. No adviser or specialist on gender and human rights was, however, employed by AGRA, KALRO and their partners to provide gender specific advice on the implementation of project's activities. What the women involvement in project activities entails for their actual overall benefit was neither studied nor monitored.

308.   The Innovation Platforms acted as a democratic place for farmers and value chain actors to meet and discuss problems and solutions for their economic activities. From this perspective, the evaluation acknowledges the creation of open spaces for debates as a tool that promote the respect for each person's perspective within her/his community. However, Innovation Platforms did/do not have the capacity to involve any significant number of farmers in their activities.

309.   Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity is rated as Unsatisfactory.

1.15.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

310.   Addressing GEF Portal question: no safeguards plan was submitted at CEO approval as it was not a compulsory requirement.

1.15.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

311.   With the exception of KFS, which will utilize the PFM plans for its institutional work, no organizations have built on the few project achievements. The ownership of project achievements is low because the project neither delivered the expected outputs satisfactorily nor achieved its outcomes.

312.   The evaluation acknowledges that ToTs and owners of the learning sites showed a great enthusiasm about their increased knowledge and skills to apply SLM practice. Their number is, however, insignificant in term of project performance.

313.   Country Ownership and Driven-ness is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

1.15.7 Communication and Public Awareness

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[19] With the expression "Gender targeted", the Evaluator refers to activities and results focused on women, men and7or marginalized population that were targeted as per the United Nations Development Programme Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.

314.　The project had a Knowledge and Communication Strategic Plan as the main tool to create public awareness about the project objective. Its main objectives were: (1) to create knowledge and awareness in the three selected counties and nationally about the SLM project; (2) to mobilize and sensitize farmers and other partners to embrace SLM technologies and practices; (3) to generate support for the SLM project from partnering stakeholders; (4) to document and disseminate best practices and exchange of ideas generated through the project and from ongoing research work at universities as widely as possible; (5) and to develop a method for monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of the project communication plan.

315.　The project objective stated in the Strategic Plan referred to the sensitizazion of 100,000 farmers across the project area, not to the project targets as per the ProDOc.

316.　The Strategic Plan targeted institutions and farmers operating in the project area. It entailed various communication channels such as radio-based extension services, IEC materials (newspaper, briefs on SLM, project briefs, newsletters and T-shirt with SLM branding) field days, trade fairs, TV documentaries, websites and SMS, which have been used as knowledge dissemination channels to various stakeholders.

317.　AGRA and KALRO created an additional component ('component 4') in their reporting system, to cater for the knowledge communication strategies which was missing in the ProDoc. Outputs in relation to knowledge communication as found in the GEF project document were pulled out and enlarged under a new component 4 in the AGRA project document. UNEP did not approve the change and does not support introducing new outcomes into an approved document.

318.　Addressing GEF Portal question: due to the large number of farmers that the project aimed at targeting, the communication strategy was very important to promote the actual adoption of SLM and SFM practices throughout the project area. The communication strategy, however, did not have any significant effects on the capacities of the farmers. In fact, the project proved not to be effective in promoting SLM practices within the farmers.

319.　Communication and Public Awareness is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Highly Unsatisfactory

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.16　Conclusions

320.　During the implementation, the project turned to be completely different in comparison to what was described in the ProDoc. The project was implemented in an area of 21,927 ha of farming and forest land, while the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would target 100,000 ha of farming land ha and 50,000 ha of forest land. In addition, the targets of the most relevant indicators for GEF were substantially reduced. The indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha, and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" from 20,000 to 3,913 ha. According to GEF guidance, such a reduction in the scope of the project (reductions of approx. 80% in targets for environmental benefits), would be considered 'major' and should have been submitted for GEF approval. Instead the change was inconsistently recorded in the PIR

reports. Such a substantial reduction in the targets should have been accompanied by a review of the work plan and associated budget.

321.   AGRA and KALRO considered that the strategic objective of the project was *100,000 farmers will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through the establishment of learning sites and the training of 50 farmer groups as reported in the contracts with project partners*. In accordance with this decision, the project was implemented in an area of 21,927 ha, which was considered enough to reach 100,000 farmers. The evaluation considers the decision to reduce the project area not as an adaptive decision based on changes occurring between the project formulation and the start of the project and/or during its implementation. Instead, it was an arbitrarya decision based on the apparent intention to achieve a target (100,000 farmers sensitized on SLM) that is never stated as such in the project document.

322.   The evaluation also identified a lot of discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment). Any technical specialist reading the ProDoc, would not interpret the term 'landscape' to mean that the project would be conducted at micro-catchment level.

323.   The AGRA strategy to upscale SLM practices needed an "intensity" of work (demonstrated by the density of learning sites, i.e. one every 438.5 ha of land) that was not clear at all in the ProDoc. The decision to reduce the project area (from landscapes to micro-catchment) was coherent with the AGRA approach, the so-called proximity community-based extension system, but incompatible with the requirements of the GEF in terms of results.

324.   The project M&E system had serious deficiencies. Conflicting evidence to support the previous statement have been collected throughout the evaluation field mission in Kenya. As a consequence, the evaluation exercise does not endorse the project records as reliable sources of data to measure or understand its actual performance in terms of achievements at outcome and objective level.

325.   The effectiveness of the project was very low. Two solid pieces of evidence support the statement. The reduction of the project area nullified the chances of the project contributing to the original targets of the project. In other words, the ambitions in terms of relevant results for GEF were given up from its early stages of implementation. Secondly, at output level, the project did not deliver most of its outputs and did not achieve any of its outcomes even if its "revised" targets were considered as valid. The proximity community-based extension system approach proved to be not effective to promote the adoption of SLM and SFM practices at scale.

326.   Project records report that 92,296 farmers were targeted by the project and participated at least in one training activities. The number represents 92% of the "revised" target. They also report that 61,600 farmers applied at least one SLM practice/technology in their farm across the ten project micro-catchment covering a total area of 4,461 ha, exceeding the revised target of 3,913 (+12%). The number represents 67% of targeted farmers applying SLM practices in their farms, i.e. 13% less of the target. The evaluation exercise also casts serious doubt about the validity of these numbers.

327.   The project contributed to put under SFM practices 7,628 ha (76% of the revised target). However, the number refers to the extension of the forest covered by the 5 PFM plans formulated with the support of the project. The plans are expected to be implemented after project closure.

328.   The achievements against the original targets are equal to 4% (ha under SLM practices) and 15% (ha under SFM practices).

329.   The work done at policy level in supporting the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga was of very poor quality and did not justify the investment foreseen in the original project budget. The forum for coordinating the implementation of inter county nature-based solutions was not established, although it was regarded, in the ProDoc, as a key element to support the scaling-up of SLM practices. In addition, outputs related to the policies level did not contribute to any further outcome.

330.   The AGRA strategy based on the establishment of Innovation Platforms in every micro-catchment was ineffective. The aspiration to sensitize 100,000 on SLM practices was too ambitious. The target was not achieved. Project records report that 92,296 farmers were sensitized/ trained on at least one SLM related topic. The evaluation casts serious doubts on the validity of this number. Within this large numbers of farmers, however, capacities were not homogenously built. ToTs, who participated in an intense training programme, and demo plot owners, who had the chance to attend a wide variety of training events in their farms, have far better capacities to apply SLM practices than other farmers.

331.   As per the achievements against revised and original targets, the evaluation concludes that the AGRA approach to scale up SLM practices proved to be very little and doubtfully effective.

332.   The utilization of certified seeds was identified as the key element that contributed to the increase of productivity at farm level. These seeds lead to greater crop production than those previously planted by the targeted farmers. The evaluation exercise considers that the agronomic performances of the certified seeds overshadow the low capacities of farmers to apply other SLM practices. In other words, the increase in agricultural productivity is mainly due to the adoption of these seeds rather than to the actual adoption of SLM practices at farm level.

333.   AGRA's progress reports were characterized by omissions and/or incorrect information about the delivery of outputs. Such flaws were reflected in the UNEP PIRs, as well.

334.   The changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project very low in relevance for GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management and their strategic priorities LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services. The evaluation considers that if the ProDoc had been written coherently with how it was implemented, the project would not have been considered eligible to access GEF funds.

335.   Due to the very low level of output provision and outcome achievements both in terms of quantity and quality, the evaluation exercise concludes that country ownership and sustainability of the initiative is very low. The support to KFS to formulate the PFM plans represents the sole output with a high degree of sustainability, being their institutional guiding document for their activities. Capacity of farmers to implement SLM practises and institutional capacities

336.   Although UNEP acknowledges that gender-responsive approaches makes environmental interventions longer-lasting and more transformative, no gender assessment or study was conducted. The intervention resulted in simply recording data disaggregated by gender.

Table 9. Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	The project is not relevant for the GEF, UNEP and its end-beneficiaries, the farmers	**Moderately Satisfactory**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Although in principle the project design was aligned to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities, its poor performance in delivery outputs and achieving outcomes made the project not relevant for UNEP.	Moderately Unsatisfactory
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	Although in principle the project design was aligned to UNEP/Donor/Partner strategic priorities, its poor performance in delivery outputs and achieving outcomes made the project not relevant for UNEP and the GEF. The evaluation exercise even casts serious doubts about the eligibility of the project to GEF funds, if the actual terminology (i.e. micro-catchment instead of landscape) was used, actual project area and the revised targets were included in the actual proposal for approval.	Moderately Unsatisfactory
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project was very little relevant as per its deliveries and achievements both for institutional beneficiaries (the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga) and the end beneficiaries, i.e. the farmers residing in the project area.	Satisfactory
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Complementarities were not sought. The project was implemented as a standalone initiative.	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Quality of Project Design	Project design did not have any significant flaws.	**Satisfactory**
Nature of External Context	The COVID-19 pandemic made unfeasible to carry out two field days with farmers as large gatherings were forbidden by health restrictions put in place to limit the pandemic. No other mayor changes in the political, legal, economic and institutional context happened that could have an impact on the smooth implementation of project activities.	**Favourable**
Effectiveness	The project did not delivery some of its outputs and did not achieve any of its outcomes.	**Highly Unsatisfactory**
1. Availability of outputs	The quality of outputs delivered was very poor. In addition, due to the reduction in the geographical scope of the project, the evaluation considers most of the outputs as not delivered.	Highly Unsatisfactory
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Any outcome was achieved.	Highly Unsatisfactory
3. Likelihood of impact	The project did not have a significant impact in terms of SLM and SFM practice adoption. The economic impact, instead, is likely to be due to the adoption of certified seeds rather than the adoption of SLM/SFM practices. Finally, the evaluation casts doubts on the reliability of the project records.	Highly Unlikely
Financial Management	No major flaws have been identified by the evaluation exercise.	Moderately Satisfactory
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The project's financial management adhered to the requirements of GEF/UNEP reporting	Unsatisfactory
2. Completeness of project financial information	The project's financial management is as complete. Co-financing was reported in detail, both for in-kind and for cash. Additional co-financing was secured during implementation, and this was also well reported	Satisfactory

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Communication between the Task Manager, AGRA, and the FMO was regular and smooth.	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Project arrangements resulted to be not successful in delivering the outputs and achieving the outcomes. In addition, with a decision that was not adaptive i.e. not part of a formal revision and approval process consistent with the magnitude of the change), but rather arbitrary the objective of the project was changed in the course of the implementation. The tasks of UNEP and AGRA were largely overlapping. Funds were devoted to the formulation of three county SLM policies, a MoU and 10 land use plans, which ultimately resulted to be poor in quality and usefulness. Finally, baseline studies were conducted, but not followed by respective end lines.	**Highly Unsatisfactory**
Monitoring and Reporting	The monitoring and reporting of the project was characterized by a broad and diverse variety of shortcomings.	**Unsatisfactory**
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The original Results Framework presented all elements that allows an effective monitoring of the project, although a well-articulate ToC was not presented.	Satisfactory
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The monitoring of the project was confused and incoherent. Project records are unreliable.	Highly Unsatisfactory
3. Project reporting	Reporting was neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. In included some incorrect information and omitted significant elements (for example, the fact the inter-county MoU was not signed).	Highly Unsatisfactory
Sustainability	Since outcome were not achieve, the level of sustainability is limited to the sustainability of one output.	**Highly Unlikely**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The quality of County SLM policies is very poor and the MoU drafted with the support of the project is a simple declaration intents that has not yet been signed by the three Counties. In addition, it was expected that some regulatory frameworks would have been built on the achievement of the project. This did not happen.	Highly Unlikely
2. Financial sustainability	Although not properly measured during the project implementation, in the midterm, the level of adoption of SLM practices is, instead, likely to decrease due to the low capacities developed by individual farmers and the Innovation Platforms. WAOs and SCAOs will reduce their activities in the micro-catchments as the financial support of the project will be not there any longer.	Highly Unlikely

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
3. Institutional sustainability	The capacity of the counties to keep working on SLM issues remained substantially the same as it was before the project was implemented. The Innovation Platforms demonstrated to have no plans for the future, no internal organization and no strategies to reach out farmers. Their activities are basically limited to their members and few other farmers in the area, mainly neighbours and extended family members that are easily reachable. The work done with the KFS is the only tangible result of the project that is sustainable. The PFM Plans are their institutional tools for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem for the next coming years.	Highly Unlikely
Factors Affecting Performance		**Highly Unsatisfactory**
1. Preparation and readiness	The decision to reduce project targets did neither address any weaknesses in the project design nor respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. It was based on the necessity to reach an objective not stated in the ProDoc.	Highly Unsatisfactory
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project did not prove to be successful. Holding PSC in project areas did not add any value to the actual implementation of the project. Working with such high number of beneficiaries would have, instead, required a strong monitoring system, which was not the case. The decision taken by the PSC to reduce project targets is considered as arbitrary and not adaptive. The PSC was not up to its task to provide an effective leadership to achieve project results.	Highly Unsatisfactory
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Different factors contributed to the participation of farmers. The need to improve their agricultural and commercial abilities is undoubtedly the first and the most important. Participation moved from real needs of the farmers. However, the participation of farmers to project activities was not properly monitored by the project. ToTs and owners of the demo plots were deeply involved in the training sessions, while most of the farmers were counted as beneficiaries of project activities just because they took part to one training event, including field days that were characterized by the massive presence of farmers. The Innovation Platforms did not result to have a central role for the project's achievements and participation. Their capacities were not strong enough for them to act as catalyst of processes involving a substantial numbers of farmers.	Highly Unsatisfactory
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Project results' framework, and implementation were gender-targeted. Any specialist on gender and human rights was, however, employed by any organizations working for the project to provide gender specific advice What the women involvement in project activities entailed for their actual overall benefit was neither studied nor monitored. Innovation Platforms, are democratic places open for discussion, but did/do not have the capacities to involve in their activities any significant number of farmers.	Unsatisfactory

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
5. Environmental and social safeguards	Safeguards plan was not submitted at CEO approval as it was not a compulsory requirement	N/A
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	The ownership of project achievements is low because of the project neither delivered satisfactorily the expected outputs nor achieved its outcomes.	Highly Unsatisfactory
7. Communication and public awareness	The communication strategy, however, did not have any significant effects on the capacities of the farmers. In fact, the project proved not to be effective in promoting SLM practices within the farmers.	Highly Unsatisfactory
Overall Project Performance Rating		**Highly Unsatisfactory**

1.17 Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1: Role of UNEP within the PSC	During the PSC meetings, it is vital to avoid failures that UNEP makes clear to all members what are the objectives of the project, why these objectives are important for its and donor's institutional mandates. The presentation of the objectives, in terms of scope and size, must be clear and cannot be delegated to the executing agency. The objectives as stated in the project document and their targets, specifically in the results framework, must be clearly reported in the PSC minutes. The global environmental benefits expected to be achieved by the project should be as well highlighted. A special focus should be given to their importance for the donor. The alignment to the priorities of UNEP and the donor must be amongst the primary concerns of the staff of UNEP who participate in the PSC meetings.
Context/comment:	The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP. It stems from the conclusion that the changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project largely insignificant for the GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management.

| **Lesson Learned #2: UNEP monitoring** | UNEP project monitoring cannot be regarded as solely based on participation in PSC meetings, reading progress reports, and field visits. The monitoring must focus on the adherence of the implementation to the project document both for evident accountability issues and for the pursuit of the objectives related to global environment benefits, i.e. the reason why the GEF finances projects. In order to ensure the adherence to the project document, it is paramount reading through all project deliverables, compare the quality of deliverables and outputs against the expected quality as per the original project document. Deviations from the ProDoc can, and sometimes should, occur. They must be well justified and rooted in changes that have occurred in the context of the project implementation itself. They must be adaptive.

Is the project pursuing its objectives? Does the deliverable serve project purposes? Are partners aware of the project objectives? Does the overall quality of the deliverables/outputs justify the project funds spent on their delivery? Has the external context changed? These and others are the questions, that one should ask one-self while monitoring the implementation of project activities. The simple reading of progress reports does not represent a solid way of monitoring any project with the aim of verifying its likelihood of achieving its objective and its alignment to UNEP's and donor's institutional mandates. |
|---|---|
| **Context/comment:** | The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP. It originates from the all set of conclusions. It is, in fact, astonishing that UNEP did not identify the problems affecting the overall implementation of the project, reflected in very negative evaluation ratings, starting from the change of project objective and targets, to the low quality of delivery of outputs and the lack of achievement of outcomes. It also reflects inadequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms followed by AGRA and KALRO. |

Lesson Learned #3: Executing Agency and Reporting	Accurate project reporting is an essential requisite for good project management aiming at achieving project results and comply with high standards of accountability. Executing agencies, working in partnership with UNEP, must submit progress reports that are comprehensive, i.e. detailed enough for a person (who does not know deeply the project) to understand what the project is about, have the outputs broken down by geographical areas or gender or any other relevant category, have the deliverables described so to understand whether or not they comply with expectations of the ProDoc (if there are discrepancies between the delivery and expectations, such discrepancies should be spelt out and well explained and justified). The quality of progress reports from executing partners is later reflected in the quality of the PIRs.
Context/comment:	The lesson learned applies to any kind of project implemented by UNEP.

It is anchored upon the conclusions that there are significant discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment), and that AGRA's progress reports were characterized by omissions and/or incorrect information about the delivery of outputs. |

1.18   Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	UNEP should review all its engagements with AGRA and KALRO as executing partners to confirm that any ongoing projects are being implemented to expected standards and in accordance with the project document.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The inclusion of the statement *"the strategic objective of the Project is that by September 2020, 100,000 will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through established learning sites and 50 farmer group trained on the appropriate technologies"* in the contracts between KALRO and project partners is considered a serious and arbitrary deviation from the original document which led to the reformulation of the project targets with the partners during a PSC official meeting. In addition, there was already an objective in their issued contracts that did not correspond to the actual objectives of the project as per its project document, approved by the donor and by UNEP itself.

In addition, AGRA's approach based the proximity community-based extension system resulted to be doubtfully effective in promoting the adoption and the scaling up of SLM practices and technologies. The approach did not support UNEP in pursuing its institutional mandate. |
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Any ongoing projects in the future.

337.   Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Efficiency
- Paragraphs: 242, 243, 244, and 245

- Section: Monitoring and Reporting
- Sub-section: Monitoring of Project Implementation
- Paragraph: 291

Recommendation #2:	To take appropriate actions to ensure that project partners put adequate emphasis on gender and human rights issues both in the formulation of the ProDoc and in the actual implementation of any project that relates to the agricultural sector.
	Contracts with executing partners should have a dedicated section on the issues and the employment by project partners of a gender specialist should be suggested or required.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The role of women in the agriculture sector is worldwide recognized as a critical element for the successful development of rural communities. Fully understanding the needs and interests should be the starting point for the promotion of their participation in development projects. A blind approach to the dimension of an intervention may lead to problems that were not previously identified.
	Promotion of gender issues is a crucial aspect of UNEP mandate. Merely recording gender disaggregated data for activities is not enough to fulfil its organizational mandate. UNEP has institutional obligations to pursue gender responsive and transformative actions.
	The project recorded participation by gender butthe gender dimension of the project was not analysed and no actions implemented
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	During the formulation and implementation of any project.

338.   Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section: Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues
- Sub-section: Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity
- Paragraphs: 305, 306, and 307

ANNEX I.   RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not fully reconciled within the report or accepted by the evaluator/Evaluation Office.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
		UNEP (combined Task Manager and Portfolio Manager comments)	
	Page 9, key findings No.6	It is not clear how the consultant calculated the targets to come 10,000 ha and 3,913 ha respectively. • The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha (i.e. 80% reduction) and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" was reduced from 20,000 to 3,913 ha (i.e. 80% reduction).	The target figures (10,000 ha forest land; 3,913 ha agricultural land) have <u>not been calculated</u> by the consultant. They are End of Project targets reported in the PIRs (see pg 25, para 70 – End of Projects Targets as Recorded in PIR Reports). <u>Edit report:</u> *Add title to table.*
	Finding 9: the UNEP Evaluation Office noted that the above-mentioned reduction of targets is a point in case raised in the recommendations made by the Audit of the Ecosystems Division of UNEP, 2022	The point raised in the Audit report is not how it is defined in the terminal evaluation. The audit report diagnosis that in a few projects the Steering committee made a unilateral decision to reduce the project target without UNEP's involvement and requested that UNEP should strengthen monitoring role. UNEP's management response is to ensure proposed changes require UNEP's consent. This is not the similar case therefore, this audit comment cannot be used as a similar case.	The Audit text, quoted in the evaluation report and copied below, is specifically referring to UNEP's role when targets or outputs are significantly reduced. This evaluation report raises concerns that key targets were substantially reduced without proper justification (nor approval) and without considering the implications for the project design and budget. *Strengthen monitoring and accountability for project implementation by ensuring that it [UNEP] plays its full role in the Project Steering Committees to <u>assure that project targets or outputs, when significantly reduced, provide proper justification with appropriate reduction in the related budget/expenditure</u> (OIOS Audit Report, Executive Summary)*
	Page 10 par 13	I agree with this statement but that is how the project was designed.	Noted that UNEP acknowledges the roles were duplicated.
	Para 13. The role of UNEP and AGRA overlapped to a great degree. In	The consultant seems not understood the difference between the implementing agency and the executing agency. As explained him in previous interviews: Implementing agencies:	Para 13 clearly explains the duplication in roles and shows an appropriate understanding of the GEF terms and the roles played by UNEP, AGRA and KALRO.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
		6. GEF Agencies are responsible for the implementation of the p "entails oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is be accordance with agreed standards and requirements".[70] GEF Agencie GEF Council for their GEF-financed activities[71] and are responsible fo management services and corporate activities. GEF Agency Fees cove providing these services. Executing agency: Execution implies accountability for intended and appropriate use of funds, for procurement and contracting of goods and services, and for timely delivery of inputs and outputs. This is the function that AGRA fulfilled, not UNEP.	
	Recommendation #2: on page 13	There was a lot of gender reporting in the PIR reports. The consultant needed to have read those PIR sections on gender before coming to such a conclusion	This is a recommendation to UNEP project teams to ensure the appropriate emphasis is put on gender in the formulation of the ProDoc and in project implementation. No
	Table on Page 25 par 70	Forest land under SLM: My mind tells me that these were targets per year which if added together make up 37,826ha/50,000. Area (ha) of land put under SLM: My mind tells me that these were targets per year which if added together make up 35,544ha out of 20,000ha	The 2022 PIR clearly shows the recorded land affected by the project and converts it to a % of the (reduced) targets. These are clearly cumulative (end of project) figures.
	Table 4 on page 26 and 27	I don't understand the message this table is trying to convey	Table 4 is 'Expenditure by Outcome'. This table is presented in this section of the report to show what the funding envelope, broken down by outcome, was for this project. As a Terminal Evaluation requires a report on financial expenditure disaggregated by component or outcome etc. it is

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
			most helpful if the expenditure is shown next to the budget. In this case, while the *budgeted* figures were provided at the Outcome level, the *expenditure* was only provided as a total figure. This table therefore shows that the project spent 91% of its planned budget but we do not know which outcome(s) either over or under spent.
	Par 80 on page 30	If the UNEP criterion ratings matrix does not explicitly address substantial reductions in targets, then why and how does the evaluator have to extrapolate this dimension from the HS and S levels into the unsatisfactory range? This is a bit contradictory	Actions in relation to reducing targets are governed by UNEP/GEF policies and procedures. They are expected to be addressed through UNEPs' supervision mechanism and the Evaluation Office does not expect to have to make provision for unapproved, major amendments in its assessment of criteria on a regular basis and therefore such a scenario is not referred to specifically in the Ratings Criteria Matrix.

Here it is the case that the contribution that the project was expected, at CEO Endorsement, to make to the MTS was made impossible by the 80% reduction in SLM targets, so the evaluation report has taken that into consideration and reflected it in the performance rating. |
| | Section 1.11: Financial Management | The consultant was very mean with marks. How do you rate this section as moderately satisfactory when all the boxes were satisfactory | There are 3 sub-categories to financial management, rated as follows: Adherence to financial policies and procedures (Unsatisfactory); Completeness of financial information (Satisfactory) and Communication between financial and project management staff (Satisfactory). This aggregates to Moderately Satisfactory.

Under 'Adherence' it notes that, given the 80% reduction in targets, one would have expected a process to review the budget and either a) revise it or b) seek donor approval to continue with the same budget with a much lower level of results. This goes against standard project management policies and procedures. |
| | Overall | Overall, I don't agree with the overall assessment by the consultant. For him to base on one issue of reduction | We appreciate this concern and recognize that a lot of work was carried out. That work is fully acknowledged within the report. |

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
		of the catchment and use it to judge all other factors is unfair. There is a lot that the project achieved but has been put underground because of one element of reducing the catchment. Even then, the catchment was for a few activities like practicing SLM in farms and restoration of catchment including tree planting. The micro-catchments were used for these activities and that was correct. It is the other activities that were supposed to cover the whole landscape and they did.	An evaluation serves the purposes of accountability and learning. A project evaluation is intended to: a) assess what a project achieved *(evidence-based results)* as compared to what it committed to do *(formally approved intentions)* and b) identify the extent to which expected results can be attributed to the project's work *(confirmation of causality)*. Describing what the project did is therefore only part of assigning a rating for the performance of the project against specific criteria.
	7. The evaluation finds this reduction in targets Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle F *change in project design or implementation t objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF* amendment this reduction in targets should h involving UNEP and the GEF and would most l workplan and budget.	The evaluator don't know the GEF rules and policies. There is not any written UNEP policy regarding communicating changes in outcome targets. According to the GEF policy, the changes in outcome targets are minor changes are note considered as major amendment. As quoted by the evaluator the major amendment means a change in project design or implementation that has a significant impact on the project's objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF Project Financing of more than five percent. None of the two was observed in this project. The objective stayed the same, and there is no increase in GEF funding. All that were changed was outcome targets. The core indicators have become a monitoring tool after GEF6. For any projects before GEF6 cycle, the changes were communicated through the PIRs, and as the PIRs are submitted by the coordination office to GEF, the changes were shared with the GEF. We suggest evaluation office confirms UNEP's policy with the GEF coordination office. Most of the comments and lessons is based on this premise that the reduction in pilot target is a major concern. We don't agree this assumption, therefore don't agree on any comments or lessons, which take this premise as the basis.	The GEF policies <u>do</u> provide guidance on i) major and minor amendments and also on ii) the use of a Tracking Tool prior to GEF 6. As the amendments <u>are</u> considered major (see below – there were objective level indicators) and were <u>not</u> approved as per GEF guidance, the project design still in force at the time of the evaluation is that described in the CEO Endorsement, along with the targets in the approved Tracking Tool, annex to the CEO Endorsement. <u>The project's performance has therefore been assessed against this commitment made by UNEP and partners.</u> GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy 2017, pg 4: *Major amendment means a <u>change in project design or implementation that has a</u> <u>significant impact on the project's objectives or scope</u>, or an increase of the GEF project financing of more than 5%.* And, pg 58, para 5, outlines the Procedures for Major Amendment: *'If the changes do not include an increase in GEF financing, but <u>changes in project objectives or scope (i.e. downgrade GEB),</u> the amendment follows the Agencies' policies before sending the amendment to the Secretariat.'* 2) TRACKING TOOL

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
			This project is a Full Sized, GEF-5 project. For that GEF Phase the Tracking Tool was in use and an FSP was supposed to update the Tracking Tool 3 times, including at the end of the project. (see GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, 2020, pg 14, para 6). In the GEF Guidelines on Conducting Terminal 6. Until GEF-5, projects used tracking tools to monitor progress in a standardized way. The GEF phase of project approval determines whether a project must use Core Indicators. In addition to GEF-7 projects, GEF-6 projects must also use Core Indicators at the next opportunity in the project's life cycle—endorsement / approval, mid-term review or terminal evaluation, as Evaluations for Full Sized Projects, evaluators are advised to: *'include an assessment of the level of achievement of the GEF corporate results targets to which the project contributes and will also incorporate data from the focal area tracking tool'*, pg 7 , para 12. 2) TRACKING
	Page 11: "was not recorded as an adaptive measure to "adapt" to changes",	The evaluator states on the same page that the revision was approved by the Project SC. This has also been recorded and reported through PIR. We don't see any records issue. This statement needs clarification.	The point being made is that, in addition to not following the procedure for a major amendment, no reason for making the reduction in SLM targets is given based on any external and/or unexpected factor, nor as part of any adaptive management plan. There is no justification for the reduction. The only 'reason' implied is that the baseline figures showed that the original targets were unrealistic. While this might raise a concern about the need to make a reduction, such a substantive change needed to be approved by the GEF Secretariat. Also, see response above in terms of the nature of the 'records issue': − the PSC minutes do not make the substantive nature of the reduction in targets apparent − the PIR subsequent to the Oct 2018 PSC meeting also does not describe the reduction in targets in terms of their magnitude/nature

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
			− the fact that this was a major amendment is therefore neither made clear by the PSC and PIR, nor is it acted upon as per GEF Policy − UNEP's role as Implementing Agency means it has a responsibility, over and above the PSC, to uphold GEF policies
	Page 11: poor performance in delivery of outputs and achieving outcomes made the project not relevant for UNEP and the GEF	This is a biased statement. The author looks at outcome achievements in a reductive manner. The overall success and achievements of objectives are neglected. We don't agree with this statement.	The UNEP Evaluation Office approach to assessing Effectiveness is long-standing, standarised and consistent with both GEF and OECD-DAC practices. The elements assessed are: - Availability of outputs - Achievement of outcomes - Likelihood of impact A project objective encompasses all the above and is therefore assessed through an assessment of project Effectiveness. The evaluation consultant has presented all the evidence and analysis in the report and is not presenting biased findings. To try and discredit the consultant's intentions, when the purpose of the work was to meet UNEP's commitment to accountability and learning, contravenes the UN's principles of professionalism and is not supported by the Evaluation Office.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	20. The utilization of certified seeds was identified as the key element that contributed to the increase of productivity at farm level. These seeds are able to produce more than those previously planted by the targeted farmers. The evaluation exercise considers that the agronomic performances of the certified seeds overshadow the low capacities of farmers to apply SLM practices. In other words, the increase in agricultural productivity is mainly due to the adoption of these seeds rather than to the actual adoption of SLM practices at farm level.	The consultant argues that improved seed is not SLM practice which is also wrong – SLM is about improving communities income and increasing productivity of land – so new seed varieties surely speaks to SLM practices. Please see below the SLM database where improved seed is considered as a SLM methodology. https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/approaches/view/approaches_2594/	The paragraph is not trying to make the point that introducing improved seeds is not an SLM practice. One of the aspects of an evaluation is to question how any achievements came about so that they can either be attributed to the project and/or contribute to learning. In this case the project was designed around four pillars: (CEO Endorsement, pg 35 para 125). *The overall strategy to solve the prevailing problem will be supported by four pillars: (1) Capacity building of farmers and stakeholders in SLM/SFM; (2) Strengthening farmer linkage to agricultural inputs and outputs markets; (3) Support to enabling policy and institutional framework at local level; and (4) Knowledge management and dissemination.* The evaluation consultant, based on all the information provided and the field visits etc., concludes that the positive effects of introducing certified seeds, outweighs those of the other pillars. Edit: Add the word 'other' before 'SLM practices'
	22. The changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project very low in relevance for GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management and their strategic priorities LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services. The	Again the consultant bases the whole argument of eligibility to access to funding or achievements of outcomes to achieving initial target. The Project has achieved: • Increased incomes amongst farmer households attributed to improved yields for consumption from the 3 targeted crops and for sale through structured markets. • 77% of 92,296 (46934m,45362f) smallholders have applied at least one SLM technologies on their farms • 5hotspots conserved (2 in Nandi and 2 Kakamega and 1 in Vihiga county) to reduce area under degradation. A total of 363,800 tree seedlings have been planted both in the hotspots and on farms. • Cost-benefit analysis conducted by the project showed that for each dollar invested in maize, beans and indigenous vegetables coupled with Sustainable	The evaluation report does not omit any of the project's work or results. The report also provides insight into the quality, utility and results of that work. This report does, however, call into question some of the project's monitoring methods/depth and the nature/depth of some of its effects. While a project report may focus on recording what was done, how it was done and what effects have been observed, an evaluation is fundamentally comparative – what was achieved in relation to what was intended and what was committed to.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	evaluation considers that if the ProDoc had been written coherently with how it was implemented, the project may well not have been considered eligible to access GEF funds.	Land Management practices, 2 more dollars were gained as actual benefits to the farmers which showed the viability of technologies. More results about the project has been documented in PIR2022 report.	
	Lesson Learned #1: Role of UNEP within the PSC Lesson Learned #2: UNEP monitoring	We only agree that UNEP staff's main concern should UNEP's and donor's priorities, which the staff member did by participating in the PSC meetings, site visits and reviewing progress. All the rest comments are based on the wrong assumption on the achievement of targets.	The Evaluation Office finds that the lesson has value to others implementing projects in a similar context or of a similar nature and therefore maintains the lesson.
	Finally, the present evaluation highlights significant flaws that characterized the MTR report (2020): (i) the changes in project targets are not mentioned; (ii) any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and (iii) assessment of delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary. The MTR is, in fact, reputed of very low quality by the present evaluation for the following three reasons: • The changes in project targets are not mentioned; • Any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and • The assessment of outputs delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary.	We found the consultant's assessment of the MTR very biased. Since the MTR has concluded differently, the consultant considers the MTR low quality. The MTR evaluator is experienced evaluator and is knowledgeable on the subject. We share the MTR reports with the GEFSEC and also the evaluation office. So now a few years later to say the MTR is not of quality is not professional.	The Terminal Evaluation consultant has set out clearly the three main weaknesses he detected in the Mid Term Review report. The Evaluation Office only receives MTR reports if a UNEP staff member chooses to share it with them. The Office does not review nor validate MTR reports. The Evaluation Office notes, however, that on item iii it may be that evidence available at the end of the project was not available or apparent at mid-point. The quality of the monitoring and data collection should have been reviewed at the mid-point. Edit on item iii: Iii) assessment of delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory at the mid-point, while the present evaluation at the project end demonstrated the contrary.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	Ratings	The only argument that the consultant basis the project success on target reduction, which paralyzes the evaluation's mult-iobjective and multi criteria nature. Therefore we don't accept the ratings.	The UNEP Evaluation Office assesses project performance against a set of clearly articulated and discrete evaluation criteria. A Ratings Matrix sets out what each rating 'looks like' in a project context. The performance against each criterion and its sub-categories is weighted to arrive at an overall project performance rating.

The central issue that has affected the performance ratings for this project is the fact that its performance has been assessed against the approved CEO Endorsement and annexes and not against the unapproved and major amendment made at the level of the project's intended environmental benefits. |
| | Nevertheless, no evidence was provided to the evaluation to suggest that the implementation sought any kind of complementarity or synergy with the initiatives in question. All the evidence suggests this has been implemented as a standalone project. The rating under this sub-category takes into account that no duplication of effort was evidenced in the implementation area and there was passive knowledge of the named interventions, as well as other projects implemented by AGRA. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory. | Here is an example, we have never seen in the past evaluation reports such a basis for a 'moderately unsatisfactory' rating. Could the evaluation unit provide us other evaluation reports' ratings as an evidence that the evaluator follows a standard norm without a biased view. | The Evaluation Office provides guidance on assigning ratings through its Ratings Criteria Matrix. Below is the guidance on Complementarity, which the consultant has followed: |

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	1.10.1 Availability of Outputs The evaluator notes the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance to consider timeliness; quality; utility to, and ownership by, the intended users in assessing the availability of outputs. The Evaluation Office requires that weight is given to those outputs that are of most importance in achieving outcomes. The evaluation considers this output as <u>not delivered</u>. Output 1.2 was formally delivered. However, the baseline referred to an area that was much smaller that the area identified in the ProDoc. The evaluation considers the output as <u>not delivered</u>.	7 of the outputs have been marked as not delivered. The PIR report states these are completed outputs. There is a difference here. We don't really understand why this output is considered as not delivered. Output 1.2. is confirmed as delivered but because of the target it is considered not delivered. Again this shows that the report is based on a single assumption and to defend this assumption all achievements have been nulled. All other outputs are similarly rated, which we consider unacceptable.	The description of what the project delivered at output level is provided in detail within the report and nothing has been omitted. The reasons behind the performance ratings are also in the report. The UNEP Evaluation Office asks consultants to consider whether outputs have been delivered so as to <u>fulfill their intended purpose,</u> as they are critical starting point for the causal pathways the project intends to initiate and support. This includes consideration of their <u>timeliness, utility/quality and ownership by/value</u> to the beneficiaries. The reasons why the 7 outputs were not considered delivered is explained within the report and summarized here: - 1.1 The baselines, even though they were carried out before the PSC reduced the land coverage targets, did not cover an area commensurate with the project targets. They could not, therefore, fulfill their purpose. - 1.2 Similarly, the capacity needs assessments were carried out before the PSC reduced the land coverage targets yet covered a much smaller areas. They could not, therefore, fulfill their purpose. - 1.3 The 10 landscape plans were not determined to have been delivered because they were all the same on key points, which undermines their quality and utility. - 2.2 The number of farmers trained was not verified as reported because of the flawed data collection methods outlined in section 1.13.2 of this report - 2.4 The reported value of farmers trained in post harvest management was not verified because the figures made available do not support the claims - 3.1 Only one out of 3 county policy assessment was completed - 3.4 The inter county MoU provided to the evaluation was not signed and therefore could not be verified as an agreement.
	Technically the project's financial management adhered to the requirements of GEF/UNEP reporting. However, given that the targets were	We cannot understand why the rating of "Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures" is Unsatisfactory, although the evaluator considers that project's financial	The evaluation consultant has set out the point clearly. The Evaluation Office provides guidance on assigning ratings against each criterion. Budget revisions are some of the items considered:

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	substantially reduced (i.e. by approx. 80%) one could reasonably expect this reduction in ambition to translate into a reduced scope of work and, therefore, require a budget revision. The UNEP Evaluation office recognises appropriate budget revisions as part of financial policies and procedures.	management adhered to the requirements of GEF/UNEP reporting.	• Expenditure is within the approved annual budget (or a timely revision submitted/approved) • Regular budget revisions made when relevant and for expenditure variations of 10% and above Edit: Text added to the ratings table in the Conclusions: Given that there was a substantive reduction (80%) in targets, the lack of a budget review or revision is considered a serious oversight.
		AGRA AND KALRO	
1	Key findings Nos 6-8; pages 9 -10: Also, findings 221, 222 & 240-245 on page 45, 48 & 49 Evaluator's Comment: *With a decision taken by the Project Steering Committee on October 12th, 2018, the project substantially scaled down in its ambitions. The target values of the indicators at objective level of relevance for the GEF were reduced by approx. 80%. Specifically,*20 • *The target value of the indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha*	(i) It is not correct for the evaluator to state that the Project Steering Committee (PSC) at their meeting of 12th Oct 2018 arbitrarily reduced the project targets by 80% in terms of area to be put under PFMP and SLM. There were valid reasons which were exhaustively discussed that led to the PSC in exercising its mandate and role of guiding the project implementation as provided for under Article 240 of the Prodoc on page 65. The targets initially given as 50,000 ha and 10,000 ha under PFMP and SLM practices respectively were based on the initial baseline report that covered the entire area of the three Counties of Vihiga, Nandi and Kakamega counties (please refer to the folder of UNEP GEF SLM Kenya Appendices which also contains appendices 1 to 13c, Project Supervision Plan, UNEP GEF SLM Baseline Report and UNEP GEF SLM PPG	1)The role of an evaluation is to assess the project's achievements against what was agreed. The CEO Endorsement represents the contractual agreement between the GEF and its Implementing Agency, UNEP. 2)The targets of 50,000 ha (forest) and 10,000 ha (land) appear in Annex A of the CEO Endorsement and in Annex 13b, GEF Tracking Tool, of the ProDoc. 3) The GEF guidance is clear (cited in para 7 of the Evaluation report) that any major amendment needs to be approved through a formal process. The Evaluation Office of UNEP has confirmed that an 80% reduction in targets, especially those at objective level and of an environmental nature core to the intentions of the project, constitute a major amendment. The sentence in the PSC minutes and PIR reports do not meet the GEF requirements for a major amendment:

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20 See also Changes in Design During Implementation section for details of entries in the Project Implementation Review reports.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	(i.e. 80% reduction)and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" was reduced from 20,000 to 3,913 ha (i.e. 80% reduction). • *In addition, the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would target 100,000 ha of farming land and 50,000 forest land (i.e. not the 21,917 ha as actually happened) (i.e. 86% reduction)*	Report). These are crucial documents that we believe UNEP provided to the Evaluator). (ii) However, article 155 of the Prodoc guides the project implementers on their scope of work which was limited to 10 landscapes at sub catchment level, which were highly degraded and which we needed to rehabilitate through afforestation (article 244 which in our case the 10 sub-catchments are referred to as micro-catchment to differentiate them from the entire Kakamega-Nandi forest water catchment area). The implementation budget was based on these 10 sub-catchments (micro-catchments) based on implementation scope but not on the entire area of the three Counties as stated by the Evaluator. In addition, as per the project's problem statement, the Kakamega-Nandi forest area was being threatened by the farming communities surrounding the forest and living within a radius of 5 kilometers from the forest edge. These are the households that we needed to target and empower through SLM interventions to ensure that they have increased food production and domestication of forest products on their farms so that they do not continue encroaching on the endangered Kakamega-Nandi forest ecosystem. With these conditions in the Prodoc it was prudent for UNEP, AGRA & KALRO to conduct a new baseline survey for every targeted micro catchments and this was done in 2018. The baseline report provided scenarios of specific micro catchments where the actual project activities would take place to facilitate tracking of changes attributed to the project activities as given in the Results Framework (the AGRA-KALRO project team provided the evaluator with the 2018 baseline report which can also be accessed at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/Ee 22J0bd_6xBi9PijVFfp1sBhK5WkFSRl2LmuHi4Vsu2Mg? e=BazkBA. Therefore, the project could not target to cover 50,000 ha for PFMP and 10,000 ha under SLM. Based on the 2018 baseline study report, the PSC meeting of Oct 2018 rectified this anomaly to ensure	Example, PSC minutes: *'The project implementation unit met and revised project targets based and the same were approved by the Project Steering Committee on 12th Oct 2018. We therefore request GEF to adjust the same in the project document'. Risk rated as 'low', pg 15.* Neither the PSC minutes, the PIR reports nor the MTR report provide any further explanation of any 'anomaly', nor do they refer to any baseline report. 4) The target of 100,000 ha is in the Tracking Tool.

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		effective and efficient delivery of the project results, this being part of their mandate. As per the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the PSC and as explained to the Evaluator in his Interview with AGRA Program officers, the PSC was made up of decision-making organizations including UNEP, Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, GEF Country Focal Person, CEOs of key implementing agencies including KALRO and AGRA and their decisions should not be termed by the Evaluator as '*arbitrary*'. The logic for clarification of the targets at the PSC meeting of 2018 was based on a baseline study and therefore it was valid and not arbitrary. The clarified targets were always stated in the Project Interim Review (PIR) Reports that were compiled by KALRO & AGRA and submitted to UNEP for onward submission to GEF. The entire project deliverables should therefore not be summarily dismissed by the Evaluator on the basis of clarified or revised targets that were based on a baseline study. We have noted that all the comments given by the Evaluator as failures or under-performance of the SLM project was based on this observation which the Evaluator terms as 'a major revision' which was not communicated to GEF. (iii) On the 2ⁿᵈ bullet of the evaluator's comment, we cannot trace the target of 100,000 ha as targets for farmland in the Prodoc as stated by the Evaluator.	
2	Key finding No. 9. Page 10 Evaluator's comment: *During the review of this draft evaluation report, the UNEP Evaluation Office noted that the above-mentioned reduction of targets is a point in case raised in the recommendations made by the Audit of the Ecosystems Division of UNEP, 2022, which covered the period Jan 2020 – Dec 2021*	The SLM project team at AGRA & KALRO was not given a copy of the referenced audit report and hence not aware of this recommendation	The Evaluation Report makes it clear that this is information that was provided to the evaluator during a review of the draft report. It is of relevance for UNEP and any institutional response that is required as a result of this evaluation.
3	Key findings Nos 10 and 11 on pages 10	There was no confusion for the project management unit at AGRA & KALRO on the difference between the	The significance of the use of the terms 'landscape' and 'micro-catchment' is one of expected scale of effect. In the

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	Evaluator's comments: • *The evaluation also identified discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment). Any technical specialist reading the ProDoc, would not interpret the term 'landscape' to mean that the project would be conducted at micro-catchment level.* • *Although, in principle the project design was aligned to UNEP/Donor/Partner strategic priorities, its poor performance in delivery of outputs and achieving outcomes made the project not relevant for UNEP and the GEF. The evaluation exercise raises questions on whether GEF funds would have been secured, if the actual terminology (i.e. micro-catchment instead of landscape) had been used, and if the actual project area and revised targets had either been included in the actual proposal for approval or had been subject to a formal review process, as appropriate for a 'major' revision.*	terminologies of "landscape" and "micro-catchment". A landscape is a general term that depicts an area of land but with no definite size or boundaries (That is Kakamega-Nandi ecosystem as stated under the Development Objective of the project on page ii of the Prodoc). By fixing boundaries of a specific landscape then the terminology can change based on whether the fixed boundaries are along administrative consideration or geography. In our case we were guided by the term sub-catchment as given in the Prodoc (article 244) and thus selected micro-catchment as our unit landscape for project implementation. We could have chosen to go higher to a watershed level bringing together more than the 10 micro catchments but this would have returned the project implementation sites being thinly spread which would have been contrary to the project reasoning as detailed in the Prodoc (article 124) as of *proposed intervention is to move the lessons learned in the piecemeal projects from pilot sites to the wider productive landscapes and to strengthen the effective coordination, shifting towards a more programmatic approach to SLM/SFM.* We viewed the micro-catchment approach as an effective way of galvanizing the efforts of the diverse stakeholders including rural communities, extension and other stakeholders to view land degradation at a higher level of landscape and linking interventions to tackle upstream/midstream/ downstream land degradation issues for an effective protection and conservation of the entire catchment. The implementation budget was costed to cater for sub catchment level interventions and not on the entire area of the three counties.	documents used in the agreement between the GEF and UNEP, the overall impression (based on the terminology 'landscapes' and high targets) is that a more substantial environmental effect would be achieved through the approved project than the implementation approach then indicates (micro-catchment plus substantially reduced targets). This scale is reflected in the original targets of land coverage in the CEO Endorsement and Tracking Tool and is consistent with the mainstream understanding of 'landscape' rather than 'micro-catchment'.
4	Key Findings No 12 & 256 on page 10, 51-53 Evaluator's comment: *The project neither delivered its expected outputs nor achieved its outcomes. The capacities of Implementing Partners, Trainers of Trainers (TOTs), Sub-county*	The evaluator has acknowledged the very cordial and useful interactions with the target beneficiaries at different levels. However, at reporting stage he has a negative perception of the project impact to the different cadre of beneficiaries. We believe the Evaluator's conclusions of his negative perception on the project impacts at different stakeholder levels was based on the information given to him by the target beneficiaries. It is	The evaluator has assessed whether the capacity of the target beneficiaries was sufficiently developed by the project to fulfil the role in the causal pathway of the Theory of Change. The consultant used various methods to assess this, i.e. interviews, focus group discussions and site visits. He interviewed farmers: ToTs and the owners of the learning sites were knowledgeable on how to implement SLM practice. He also interviewed representatives of the Innovation Platforms. The

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	Agricultural Officers (SWAOs) and Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs) resulted to be not sufficiently developed to promote learnings amongst the farming communities. *In addition, the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga could not integrate the SLM strategies into their County Integrated Development Plan (CIDPs), because they were developed at a very late stage of the project's implementation period. The strategies did not present a level of detail that could help the county government to develop actual actions upon them. Finally, the inter-county forum to promote LSM/SFM was not established during the life span of the project, a MoU was drafted but not signed. The MoU is just a declaration of intention and was drafted at the very end of project implementation.*	our humble request for the Evaluator, without referring to any personality, to give us summary quotations obtained from the different cadre of beneficiaries whom he interacted with that can justify his negative conclusions. This is important if we have to believe his inferences to be evidence-based and factual but not theoretical. A quick rejoinder we have received from the grass root level beneficiaries was that the evaluator was very concerned with their level of knowledge of appropriate SLM practices as impacted by the project which was physically showcased on their farms and at one stage he made the accusations to the project frontline staff that the selections of farmers he interacted with was biased yet he was given a list of potential farmer, ward level, sub county and county level respondents well in advance. Under this scenario we wonder and question his basis for concluding differently from what the farmers and other stakeholders told him. These would form a very good compilation of lessons learnt from this project for future references. His comment on late development of project implementation strategies is unclear. Within the first year of project implementation, a working County and sub–County Technical Committees had been established and were active both at the supervisory responsibilities and steering committee, a consortium of eleven organisations was functional with signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) albeit a few pending due to administrative problems, functional 10 innovation platforms managing the learning sites within selected 10 micro-catchments and at farm level had been established. By year 3 of the project, the land use plans for all the 10 micro catchments had been developed and Nandi County took the lead in integrating the findings in their reviewed County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). It is important for the Evaluator to informed that the CIDPs are a 5-years development plans and the fact that the other two counties had not reviewed their plans should not be construed to project failures. The Inter-County	farms of these respondents were nicely cultivated. However, in some cases there were technical mistakes also from their side. The compost was in many cases not properly managed. With representatives of Innovation Platform the answers on how the work was done and about the economic performance was very positive. When the consultant asked who was involved in the IP activities, the answer was always "the members of the IPs and few other persons". All IPs managed to involve a very small numbers of farmers, in some cases only the members of the IPs. In addition, they do not have a vision or plans on how to engage with large numbers of people. The Evaluation Office finds that there is sufficient detail within the report to justify the evaluators finding that insufficient capacity was developed to drive the causal pathway. Paragraphs 204, 213, 247, 281 and 301 shows the different capacities developed by farmers. We will not be sharing quotations for ethical reasons. The evaluator notes that the CIDPs were developed a) late and b) lack the detail required to fulfil their role in the causal pathway of the TOC and c) that the inter-county forum was not established during the project's life. According to ProDoc, the inter-county forum was expected to be established by the end of the project. The IP managed the learning sites, but they do not have capacities to involve farmers. The MoU has not been signed. The fact that it was not signed is not explicitly reported in any report. The land use plans were not included in the CIDP and if this is a results indicator and it is not achieved that is poor project performance. In addition, the low quality of the land use plans does not allow them to be effectively integrated in any kind of documents. *The project will also support the inter-county forum between Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga counties to discuss the management of trans- boundary ecosystems and natural resources for mutual benefit. The forum could also explore opportunities for creating an economic zone for agricultural*

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		Ecosystem Management Plan was by its very nature the concluding output for the project since it brought together all the lessons from the previous results and formulated for the future implementation outside the project timeframe. We therefore do not agree with the Evaluator's comment that we failed in establishing the Inter- County Forums in the last months of the project. We provided relevant documents in the shared folder shared with us by UNEP.	*commodity trading that could create a huge market of about 3 million people.* The above is an extract from the ProDoc article 191: no major activities have been done in this regard. The 3 SLM policies were delivered in June/August 2022. It goes without saying that these could therefore not be integrated in the CIDPs.
5	Key Findings No 13 on page 11 Evaluator's comment: *The role of UNEP and AGRA overlapped to a great degree. In reality, AGRA became the implementing partner and KALRO the executing partner. The expected role of UNEP was to supervise and provide technical guidance to AGRA, who in turn supervised and provided technical guidance to KALRO. Either AGRA or UNEP were a superfluous step within the management set up of the project. Although, the word "executing" in the terminology of GEF funded projects means conducting activities at field level, AGRA became an implementing agency, not an executing agency.*	In the ProDoc, Section 4: institutional framework and implementation arrangements and in Article 239 on page 65 states the roles of UNEP, AGRA & KALRO in the implementation of the SLM Project. Paragraph 5 stipulates as follows "AGRA will be the lead executing agency for the project, through contractual arrangements with UNEP. AGRA will coordinate all the implementation arrangements as per the workplan in partnership with KALRO and other implementing entities on the ground. AGRA will provide periodic technical and financial reports to UNEP". We, therefore, do not agree with the Evaluator's comment that the roles of UNEP, AGRA and KALRO were overlapping and superfluous. AGRA provided to the Evaluator the contractual agreements between UNEP & AGRA, AGRA & KALRO and KALRO & the other implanting entities as stated in the ProDoc on page 64.	The roles of Executing and Implementing Agencies are made very clear by the GEF. Rather than play a co- executing role, the evaluation finds that Agra played a role, in relation to KALRO, that more closely meets the description of an 'implementing' agency and that UNEP's role as Implementing Agency was diminished and inefficiency increased. Implementing Agency: "entails oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and requirements". Executing Agency: "undertake the execution of projects, which implies the ability to manage and administer the day-to-day activities of a project"…. "reports and is responsible to the agency that carries out project implementation".
6	Key Findings No 14, 256 on Page 11, 51. Evaluator's comment *A participatory monitoring and evaluation plan was adopted for the purpose of monitoring. The evaluation identified some weaknesses in this kind of monitoring: the capacity of the ToTs, Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and WAOs and SCAOs was not*	WAOs and SCAOs are well trained government extension service staff to diploma and graduate level and are instrumental in managing other County level projects funded by other donors. The AGRA & KALRO project team explained to the Evaluator that in Kenya, County Governments and private sector partners do not have enough staff on the ground to ensure effective last mile delivery of services to farmers. Thus, the reason why the SLM project proposed to use Trainers of Trainers (ToTs), and	Details of the weakness in the monitoring system are found on pages 47,48 and 49 of the report. The capacity of TOTs, SCAOs and WAOs as well as farmers are clearly set out on page 47. It is standard practice that evaluators travel to the field and carry out their interviews without accompaniment by head office staff. The staff members provided from the field office were more than adequately equipped to support the logistics of the evaluator's field visit and to introduce him to the respondents as necessary.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	developed enough to promote learning amongst farmers; and data collection methods, data verification and the final project impact assessment were flawed. The records produced by the project M&E system are therefore not deemed reliable	Innovation Platform (IP) players within the 10 micro-catchments and the 50 learning sites. The IPs constituted of private sector players who are meant to sustain the SLM results. CFAs are recognized by the Kenya Government and are used to ensure new technologies, linkages to partners are achieved. Worldwide, landscape restoration activities are community driven to enhance ownership and sustainability. Same approach used here. Of course it takes time given various factors including policy, institutional arrangements etc. There was no concrete recommendation given by evaluator on alternative approaches or what needs to be beefed up. In addition, it would be helpful to the project team if the Evaluator made references to the flawed data used to compute the M&E results. It is therefore, not clear to the AGRA & KALRO project team how the adoption of Participatory Monitoring of the SLM project process led to the evaluators finding that *the capacity of the ToTs, Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and WAOs and SCAOs was not developed enough to promote learning amongst farmers.*	It is standard practice that consultants are only accompanied by someone who can support the logistics of site visits and that these project people do not take part in interviews etc. In this case, AGRA and KALRO requested to accompany the consultant on the mission and to hold daily de-briefs on site. This is outside UNEP's ethical practices.
		In the cases quoted by the evaluator on page 51 (findings 256), the Evaluator lacked clarification that ToTs and farmers are at different levels within and outside their groups in terms of education levels, financial capacity, skills and understanding capacity thus training or discussions have to be well facilitated. Trainings and technologies are geography specific and need to avoid blanket recommendations thus in some areas manure might be a focus to some ToTs and not to some even in the same locality. Skill and knowledge acquired over time and this should be appreciated given the difference amongst the farmers. The ToT cannot answer on manure if that was not in his/her interest. Again, these components need to be regularly taught as these are ordinary African farmers and require follow up trainings. We would have clarified these issues to the evaluator but he refused to meet us on the ground. It is	

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		important for the UNEP's Evaluation office to refer to the Evaluator's email of *Mon 10/17/2022 1:14 PM* where he categorically refused to meet the AGRA, KALRO Project team on the sites in Western Kenya. This would have helped him to seek clarification of many the issues that the evaluator did not understand.	
7	Key Findings No 15, 276-288 on Page 11, 55-57. Evaluator's comment: *The sustainability of the project is not evidenced. Capacities were not well developed at all levels. The work done with the KFS is the only tangible result of the project that is sustainable. The Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans are their institutional tools for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem for the next coming years.*	The Evaluator's comment is quite generalized. The project had different levels of capacity building -PhD level to better understand systems and issues which were realized, county staff on SLM practices (as noted by the evaluator, its only a few who were not clear). Farmers' capacity were also built as realized by adoption and yield increases (the evaluator casts doubt on this) but during his group discussions with the respondents he mentions this as a positive thing. We agree with the Evaluator's comment that the PFM plans will be used by KFS as tools for sustainable management and conservation of the ecosystem. We also want to bring to his attention that the project developed over 25 knowledge products including 3 policy documents to mainstream adoption of SLM technologies across the 3 focus counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga. These documents were shared with the Evaluator and they can also be accessed at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/EiQRSWb8yqZNtdeiv4OoUo8Bc0fPZZ6tl7ejzMalAgl3hg?e=KT21jz	The review of monitoring methods and data are clearly set out within the report and the reasons why the monitoring has not been validated by the evaluation, are given. No evaluation consultant is expected to share their findings in the field as this would be a) unprofessional and b) premature as it would be prior to complete analysis. The cooperation of people in the field is always appreciated as they have given their time to the evaluation. The evaluator confirms he had access to the three policy documents and that the policy documents related to outputs 3.2. These products are criticized in a reasoned way on page 38. The three docs are almost identical, in fact the 3 documents are a copy and paste exercise, with minor changes. The report reads: *The content of the three reports is almost identical, there are no substantial differences between them. The core of the policy is represented by the chapter related to SLM and SFM issues which includes sub-chapters; in each sub-chapter issues there are the description of the main problems to address, a list of challenges and a list of policy statements. Each policy also has a chapter on the implementation framework, monitoring and evaluation of the policy, which is very general. No timelines, objectives or needed resources are identified. Who is in charge of what is not described, there is simply a mention of other important actors who can collaborate with the counties, i.e. national institutions, NGOs, and international donors.* The evaluator also had access on the shared folder to: 1. MODELLING CARBON BENEFITS TO SUPPORT THE SCALING UP OF SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN MAKUCHI MICRO-CATCHMENT, VIHIGA COUNTY. 2. Conservation agriculture uploaded in the WOCAT database 3. RECOMMENDED LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN WESTERN

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
			KENYA It is not clear if these belong to the 25 knowledge management products being mentioned but they have nothing to do with demonstrating the sustainability of the project. He also received 13 articles by email: they do not demonstrate either the validity of the approach of AGRA or its sustainability
8	Key Findings No 16, 285-288 on Page 11 & 57 Evaluator's comment: *Finally, as the project did not promote any specific gender and human rights issues, therefore the evaluation did not identify any elements of sustainability in that regard.*	In all the reports compiled by AGRA & KALRO and shared with UNEP, there was a section on how gender issues were mainstreamed in the project. In addition, the project's data was disaggregated by gender at all levels. These reports were also shared with the Evaluator for his reference.	The project did not promote any specific gender and human rights issue and nothing was found in the most recent (cumulative) progress report that supported a claim to have achieved gender issues mainstreaming. The project was gender-targeted but the gender dimension of the project was not analysed and no actions implemented.
9	Conclusion section Findings No 17 – 23 on pages 11 & 12	We have provided our responses in earlier related findings. Additional responses from us are as follows: • Finding No 17 (page 11): M&E having serious deficiencies. Our response is that AGRA has a robust M&E system referred to as AMIS (AGRA Management Information System) where M&E tools such as the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) is used to track project performance. KALRO and the implementing entities that assisted in the implementation of the SLM project used this tool and reported the same in AMIS. The data reported in AMIS is reviewed by the AGRA's Project Manager, M&E officer and Grants Officer. None of these officers detected such deficiencies alleged by the Evaluator. In addition, UNEP Commissioned an Independent Consultant who reviewed the project at its mid-Term period from May to September 2020 and the mid-term evaluator did not detect such deficiencies. The MTR report was shared with the Terminal Project Evaluator, and it can be accessed at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/EiQRSWb8yqZNtdeiv4OoUo8Bc0fPZZ6tI7ejzMalAgl3hg?e=KT21jz	The deficiencies found in the methods used to collect data and generalise to a wider population are described in detail in the section 1.13.2 on Monitoring within the report. With all due respect to the people mentioned in the respondents' comments, none of them were tasked with verifying the quality of the data presented to them. On the other hand, this is the duty of an evaluator.

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		• In addition, in 2021, AGRA engaged an independent journalist from the African Management Institute to investigate and document about the achievements of the SLM project. The report of the independent journalist did not detect such data deficiencies pointed out by the Terminal Project Evaluator. This independent case study which was also shared with the Terminal Evaluator can be accessed at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/ESrS4oaastpFoiu_glfoHV8BiT097FexScvYKcoioZ03Tg?e=sPdleH • In addition, a Joint mission trip by the Kenya's Ministry of Environment (GEF's Focal Operation office), AGRA, KALRO & other partners visited with the 3 SLM-focus counties in western Kenya to get their perspectives of the project as it came to an end. None of the senior and junior County Government officers pointed to deficiencies of data or failure of the project to achieve its intended goal and objectives. This mission joint report was also shared with the Terminal Evaluator and it can be accessed at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/EYKmbGF0wa5Jm9EkHcCGQKEBvmOj79et3VCTIgyqVSDPeg?e=Pibi5B • In addition, an independent consulting firm known as Centre for Sustainable Development Initiative (CSDI) was hired by AGRA in April 2020 to collect and analyze key data resulting in development of seven knowledge products as follows: A survey report on value chains and gender, 2 conference manuscripts, 2 Policy Briefs, a journal manuscript and a Poster that was presented in the World Vegetable Summit in Arusha that took place on 25 -29th Jan 2021. The Consultant did not detect any data deficiency or detect failures of the project to achieve its intended goal and objectives. All these knowledge products were shared with Terminal SLM Project Evaluator, and they can be	

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			accessed at the link: https://1drv.ms/u/s!AmqoM4oQw-Avo0ioxX71L0LX0WGQ?e=NwxePe In addition, several other knowledge products were developed by independent writers and they did not point to the serious data deficiencies alleged by the Terminal Project Evaluator. These knowledge products were shared with the Evaluator and they can be accessed at the following links: ➤ https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/KS-SLM-Project.pdf ➤ https://agrilinks.org/post/sustainable-land-use-project-kenya-seeks-reverse-biodiversity-loss ➤ https://1drv.ms/u/s!AmqoM4oQw-Avo0ioxX71L0LX0WGQ?e=oq1UiW ➤ https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/running-low-bushmeat-and-timber ➤ https://www.unep.org/zh-hans/node/26584 ➤ https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/technologies/view/techn • Finding No 18 (page 11.) Landscape terminology is a wide , broad definition as in the case of Kakamega -Nandi ecosystem. In terms of implementation, this is firmed up in geographies where implementation takes place and varies from village level to several villages to communities which in our SLM project was defined as Micro catchments. Projects are dynamic and innovative . • On findings No. 20 (page 11) and also on the Evaluator's comments on page 44 of his report, our response is that for sustained yield increases of crops, you need $1/3$ improved seed, $1/3$ health soil and $1/3$ good agronomic practices supported by sufficient, effective and functional extension system. Good seeds alone without the other components do not result in significant yield increases. The learning sites brought	

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
		this out where we had farmer practice compared with other SLM practices. • Systemic issues, changes take much longer to realize and sometimes much longer than the project life. Looking at the itinerary of the evaluator, there was no engagement at field level with top county officers to gauge their capacities and views (CEC, CO, directors of agriculture who have a better institutional view than SCAOs and WAOs).	
11	Finding 168 on page 39 Last sentence Evaluator's comment: *The last PIR (2021) reported that most farmers have been linked with markets and have realized over 53% increase in volumes sold by household between April and March 2021. However, the project records report, (included in the excel file "Aggregation data"), that farmer groups sold their production of maize and beans on two occasions during project implementation, in a self-organized way, for a total value of 7,757,800 Kenyan Shillings. Given the indicator's target (i.e. 80% of 100,000 "sensitized" farmers, namely 80,000 farmers) it can be calculated that each individual farmer belonging to the target has sold part of his/her produce through structured markets for a value of 97 Kenyan Shillings each, i.e. less than 1 USD.*	The amount sold using structured markets should be based on the farmers who used this system and should not be extrapolated to other farmers. This is what reduces the amount to less than US$1. The evaluator should use the figures that show what the farmers who participated in this activity actually earned. In Africa, there is a lot of informal markets that exist, and farm produce sold through such. The program did not control all sales but only tracked sales that were done via the structured system promoted by the project.	The evaluator has assessed the report in the 2021 PIR that *most farmers have been linked with markets and have realised over 53% increase etc.* This represents a claim by the project that their work has had a substantive and significant effect yet this claim is not supported by the data available. He used the consolidated data at project level to assess whether the claim of over 53% increase could be validated.
12	Finding 169 on page 40 Last sentence Evaluator's comment: *Actually, the Innovation Platforms, established by*	Contrary to his observation, IPs have capacity to reach out to many more farmers given the nature of members. Farmers belong to farmer groups whose existence goes on beyond the SLM project, these	The evaluator assessed the capacity of the Innovation Platforms based on interviews and focus group discussion with farmers belonging to IPs and common farmers. IP members said clearly that their activities involved mainly IP

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	the project in each micro-catchment, do not have the capacity to reach out to many farmers.	farmer structures remain in the communities and serve many farmers and households.	members. All farmers belong to some farmer group, however, they did not participate in any relevant activity. The capacity of individual farmers, farmers groups and IPs to reach out to people is very limited. If you ask what the task of Ips are, everyone would answer (to promote SLM, to discuss, to raise awareness and to do common purchases/sales). Then if you narrow down the questions, the meaning is clearer: Common purchase/sales is about having the members of the IPs coming together. They do not know how to organize 100 people together, they can do it with 10, 20 or 30 farmers maximum. They also did events in learning sites where the attendance was about 20/30 people: attendance is insignificant if we consider the claim to have reached more than 60,000 people.
13	Finding 203 on Pg 42: Evaluator's comment: *According to project records, 92,296 farmers were targeted through at least one capacity development activity and 61,600 of these adopted SLM practices, i.e., 67% of targeted farmers used at least one appropriate SLM practice. However, the evaluation exercise casts doubt on the quality of the monitoring of the adoption of the SLM practices at farm level (refer to section "1.13.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation" for details).*	The evaluator should provide counter facts and figures to this effect as what was provided is accountable (farmers name, lists). Farmer numbers are based on list of farmers that benefit from the project out of the targeted 100,000 farmers. Did the evaluator conduct any verification based on the lists to check if farmers did not benefit from project interventions? If yes it will be helpful to see the sample farmers contacted from the beneficiary lists.	Considerable detail on the weaknesses of the monitoring system, which then cast doubt on the data used to assert the magnitude and depth of the project's effect, is provided in section 1.13.2 of the TE report.
14	Finding 205 on page 43 Last sentence Evaluator's comment: *In addition: distancing between and within the lines of maize is not always respected; maize and bean lines should be perpendicular to the slope line of the course to prevent erosion, (this was is not always the case); farmers reported different utilization of*	Adoption of new technologies takes time and you will find some farmers still using some of the practices mentioned by the evaluator. But majority have adopted and it takes time for all to adopt especially those far away from the 5km radius. Fertilizer use/rates depend on various factors including level/status of the soil, type of fertilizer to be used. The affordability will make farmers buy much lower amounts than what is recommended. Of course SLM is offered as a combination of various practices including improved seed and fertilizer).	The evaluator went to the field and interviewed farmers who had been involved in the project. The itinerary is provided in Annex V. It encompassed sufficient sites and provided sufficient quality engagement between the evaluator and the farming communities targeted by the project, for the evaluator to arrive at well-informed findings.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	fertilizers, (amongst farmers, there is no common understand on how much fertilizer should be used); and amongst the SCAOs and WAOs there was confusion on what should be considered an SLM practice (for example, a few of them told the Evaluator that fertilizers and certified seeds were the most important SLM practices applied by the farmers in the project areas).	GAP –takes two to three seasons to change farmers behaviour and adopt to some of these changes.	
15	Findings on Financial Management Nos 224 -232 on pages 45-46	The comments provided by the Evaluator are contradictory: For instance, in finding No. 226 on Page 45 is not deduced from the Evaluator's positive finding under Nos 224 & 225. In addition, findings No. 226 (unsatisfactory rating) contradicts the Evaluator's findings under No. 232 where completeness of financial information is rated Satisfactory based on the findings on Nos. 227 -231.	The rating is on a six-point scale. This means that the Unsatisfactory rating for following procedures has a value of 2, while the other two Satisfactory ratings for Completeness of Financial Information and Communication between Project and Finance Staff, have values of 5. The sum is therefore 12 and, divided by the 3 rated items, gives an average score under Financial Management of 4. This equates to a rating of Moderately Satisfactory on a six-point scale. This is consistent with the TE report rating.
16	Finding 257 on page 53 Last sentence Evaluator's comment: *The excel file "Table 2: Early Adopting farmers list" reports only the portion of the farm under SLM practices but not the full size of the farm and the data are not georeferenced. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the SLM practices were implemented with an appropriate degree of spatial continuity or whether they were applied in discontinuous spots within each micro-catchment. It is also not possible to ascertain whether the proximity to a learning site had a significant role in the adoption of SLM practices. During the field mission, the proximity to a learning site appeared to*	Farmers try on their own on small pieces of land then scale out when they see the practices is beneficial. Again, due to scarcity of resources, farmers rationalize where to apply e.g. manure to reap huge benefits. Some manure might be utilized on kitchen gardening due to labour constraints by women, proximity and value chains grown in the kitchen garden. It would have been good for the evaluator to have established these during the focus group discussion especially on continuity and adoption.	An evaluation assesses what a project achieved against what it agreed to do in the approved project design. The intention of the project was to 'go beyond the demo' and the evaluation report sets out evidence that this was not achieved.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	be one of the key factors in having farmers apply SLM practices. This would suggest a significant limitation in the scale and duration of the effects.		
17	Finding 260 on page 53 Last sentence Evaluator's comment: *Finally, the present evaluation highlights significant flaws that characterized the MTR report (2020): (i) the changes in project targets are not mentioned; (ii) any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and (iii) assessment of delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary*	The MTR final report of Nov 2020 (accessible at the link: https://agragreen-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/akiwia_agra_org/EiQRSWb8yqZNtdeiv4OoUo8Bc0fPZZ6tI7ejzMalAgl3hg?e=KT21jz Was accepted by all SLM project partners and stakeholders and it was used to provide crucial guidelines that shaped the implementation of the SLM project in the 2nd half of its Term. The recommendations given in the MTR were discussed by UNEP, AGRA, KALRO, National and the 3 focus County Government officials and the Project Steering Committee members and were used to devise corrective measures in failures pointed out in the 1st half of the SLM project. The fact that the Terminal Evaluator did not use the MTR report to know the directions provided by it raises serious questions on whether he was objective in his Terminal Evaluation. It is inconceivable that a project with a steering committee comprising relevant stakeholders under the technical oversight of GEF-focal officers at UNEP and the Kenya's Ministry of Environment can have been allowed to run full steam all these six years pointing in the wrong direction.	Mid Term Reviews are, as a standard, management led, formative processes. The Evaluation Office does not, however, validate MTR reports and cannot comment on *why* the MTR had weaknesses that were not addressed by those involved in managing the process. As a summative process the Terminal Evaluation has reviewed all the information presented and has justified its findings.
18	Finding 268 on page 56 Evaluator's comment: *Any reader of the Plans cannot tell what the land use plans and the policy framework are about. The adherence of the plans to what is described in the ProDoc is also not specified. Again, the term landscape is used to represent micro-catchment and the reader, therefore, understands that the project is working at landscape level, i.e. in larger areas, not in micro-catchments.*	Reading, most of the findings given by the Terminal Evaluator, the AGRA & KALRO project Team finds several evidences, as indicated in earlier sections of this documents, that the Evaluator did not understand fully the SLM project structure, institutional arrangements, its scope and mandate and this is the reason why he dismisses all the reports compiled by the project team, consultants, independent evaluator's as in the case of the MTR report.	This paragraph will be edited to make it clearer that the evaluator is referring to the 'reader' as any reader of the report. The sentence "does not understand why the terms of micro-catchment…" is a diplomatic way to say that the terms used to highlight the achievement was the same as the term used in the ProDoc, i.e. "Landsape", i.e. the used of the term "micro-catchment" was avoided. It is evident that the reporting was ambiguous: through the reading of the achievement, any geographer or agronomist would have understood landscapes (as per the ProDoc). Instead, the project reality, as per the

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
	Again, the evaluation exercise does not understand why the terms micro-catchment was not used to highlight the achievement. In addition, there is an inaccuracy: the land use plans are not integrated in any policy framework as policy frameworks have not, by the end of the project,been developed (or at least not made available to the Evaluator). Some elements were simply included in the draft of the Nandi County Integrated Development Plan		actual implementation, is that the achievements refer to micro-catchments. The two terms are different in meaning.
19	Finding 278 on page 56 *The interests and needs of farmers, as individuals, is what may actually ensure the sustainability of the action. In the short term, it is likely that those farmers, who actually adopted SLM technologies will continue to apply them. Project records, however, are not reliable and the exact number of these farmers is not known. Instead, it is likely that ToTs and Innovation Platforms will not support effectively the work on SLM of the farmers. The evaluation field mission demonstrated there is insufficient capacity for them to do that.*	As indicated earlier, ToTs and IPs have big potential to sustain and scale out the practices given scarce personnel from the Ministry. It is also important to note that County Government continue working with farmers and providing extension beyond the project. The trainings done by the SLM project staff builds on existing National and County Government extension systems. Individual farmers alone cannot sustain landscape level activities individually. They need to be connected to other players e.g., offtakers. You need many farmers for such a service to happen. Yields may increase on individual farms but need to be aggregated. So, sustainability takes different forms at different levels –linkages with private sector is key.	The evaluation report, in paras 276-279, sets out the reasoning behind the finding of a low likelihood of sustainability at the socio-political level. The comments do not provide a strong argument or new evidence to challenge that finding.
20	Concluding remarks from the AGRA, KALRO project staff	The tone of the evaluator's report could simply be misconstrued to imply that he had a fixed mind and had developed a *hypothesis* that the project had failed even before he started the evaluation exercise and he had simply set his mission to prove the hypothesis. His findings are mixed: he acknowledges receipt of reports to show the delivery of specific outputs, e.g., available baseline report, available needs assessment report, available training manuals, available evidence of 50 learning sites established, available evidence CFAs and	The evaluation report sets out clearly the grounds for the findings and performance assessment.

	Place in text	Comments	Combined UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluator Responses
		farmer groups trained and all across the different outputs. But despite all these evidences he has quickly concluded that the project failed. Additionally, the evaluator has failed to grasp the systematic approach adopted by the project of bringing on board all stakeholders right from the project preparation stage, project launch, PSC meetings, County and sub county level supervisory engagements extensive community sensitization and the empowerment of farmers and CFAs to learn by doing at the established learning sites. All the key-project outputs are hinged on the adopted participatory approach and without understanding this then linkages between the outputs cannot be made clear to the Evaluator. In conclusion we recommend that the current draft report is inaccurate and should be treated so at all levels of discussion.	

ANNEX II.   EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
Criterion A: Strategic Relevance			
A.1. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities			
1. To what extent the project was aligned to the MTS and POW under which the it was approved?	Extent to which the project was aligned to the MTS (2014_2017) and POW (2016-2017).	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
2. To what extent the project was aligned to the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building?	Extent to which the project was aligned to to the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building.	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
3. To what extent the project was aligned to the UNEP Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation?	Extent to which the project was aligned to the UNEP Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation?	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
A.2. Alignment to GEF Priorities			
4. To what extent which is the project suited to, or responding to, donor priorities?	Extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities.	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs	- Desk review - Triangulation
A.3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities			
5. To what extent is the project aligned with the global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030?	Extent the project is suited, or responding to, the environmental concerns and needs of the Kenya	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, National policies and programmes, UNEP staff, project staff, public officers, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
6. To what extent is the project suited, or responding to the environmental concerns and needs of the Kenya?	Extent the project is suited, or responding to, the environmental concerns and needs of the Kenya	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, National policies and programmes, public officers, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
A.4. Complementarity with existing interventions			
7. To what extent has the project explored and built complementarity with other existing initiatives that address similar needs of the same target groups and are implemented by UNEP, national entities or other organizations?	Evidence and extent of complementarities	Doc, Progress Reports, PIRs, National policies and programmes, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
Criterion B. Quality of Project Design			
See quality of design matrix in the Inception Report (available from UNEP Evaluation Office)			
Criterion C: Nature of External Context			

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
8. Was the implementation of the project responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country occurred during its implementation period? (The question include also the COVID-19 implications on the project)	Identification of political, legal, economic, institutional changes in the country and extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to them	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, National policies and programmes, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
Criterion D: Effectiveness			
D1. Availability of Outputs			
9. Was the project successful in delivering its outputs as per its Results Framework included in the ProDoc?	Indicators included in the Results Framework at output level	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, source of verification (such as technical reports, training attendance sheets, meeting notes and other) public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Field visits - Triangulation
10. Did the outputs delivered met expected quality standards?	Level of satisfaction of stakeholders involved in the delivery of outputs	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Field visits - Triangulation
11. How successful was the project in delivering the planned outputs and in a timely manner? In case of delays, what were the reasons behind?	Identification of delays	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
12. What were the reasons behind any failures/successes of the project in delivering its outputs?	Identification of reasons for failures/successes	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
13. Were stakeholders appropriately involved in delivering programmed outputs?	Extent of stakeholders participation	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
D2. Achievement of Project Outcomes			
14. To what extent have the targets of outcome indicators been achieved?	Indicators included in the Results Framework at outcome level	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Field visits - Triangulation

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
15. What are the areas in which the project had the greatest and fewest achievements? And what were the contributing/hindering factors?	Identification of contributing and hindering factors	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Field visits - Triangulation
D3. Likelihood of impact			
16. Are there evidence that the smallholder farmer productivity has increased or is likely to be increased?	Identification of evidence	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
17. Are there evidence that food security and incomes of smallholder farmers are enhanced or are likely to be enhanced?	Identification of evidence	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
18. Are there evidence that land and ecosystem degradation is reduced or is likely to be reduced?	Identification of evidence	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
19. Are there evidence that farmers have enhanced or are likely to have enhanced capacity to adapt and be more resilient against climate change?	Identification of evidence	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
Criterion E: Financial Management			
E.1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures			
20. How did the financial reporting and management adhere to the policies and procedures of UNEP?	Extent of adherence of financial reporting and management adhere to the policies and procedures of UNEP	Contracts, financial reports, UNEP staff, project staff.	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
E.2. Completeness of financial information			
21. What is the level of completeness of financial information?	Level of completeness of financial information	Contracts, financial reports, UNEP staff, project staff.	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
22. How sound was the budget planning and execution? Did expenditures match the approved budget / work-plan? What were the reasons for under/overspent budget, if any?	Identification of difference between planned and executed budget and identification of reasons behind	Contracts, financial reports, UNEP staff, project staff.	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
23. To what extent did the financial management issues affect the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance?	Identification of elements of financial management issues that affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance	Contracts, financial reports, UNEP staff, project staff.	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
24. What levels of co-financing did the project obtain (percent of planned)?	Evidence of co-financing and identification of reasons behind discrepancies obtained vs planned	ProDoc, Progress Reports, PIRs, co-financing documents, public officers, project staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
E.3. Communication between financial and project management staff			
25. To what extent did the communication issues between financial and project management staff affect the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance?	Identification of elements of communication issues that affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance	Contracts, financial reports, UNEP staff, project staff.	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
Criterion F: Efficiency			
26. Was the use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes of efficient and economical?	Extent to which there was an efficient and economical use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes	Contracts, financial reports, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
27. Was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?	Extent to which the project management structure as outlined in the project document was efficient in generating the expected results	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
28. Were project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?	Extent to which project funds and activities were delivered in a timely manner	Contracts, financial reports, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
29. Were there any cost-effectiveness strategies in place to deliver project funds and activities?	Identification of cost-effectiveness strategies	Contracts, financial reports, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
30. Was the project extension necessary?	Extent to which a project extension could have been avoided (if any was approved) and identification of reason supporting the need for extensions.	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
Criterion G: Monitoring and Reporting			
G.1. Monitoring Design and Budgeting			

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
31. Was an M&E system in place for project monitoring?	Identification of M&E tools and procedures and assessment of their appropriateness	M&E system, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
32. Were M&E activities organized and budgeted in a conducive way to achieve project's results?	Extent to which the organization and the budgeting of monitoring activities were conducive to achieve project's results and identification of budget gaps	M&E system, financial reports, Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
G.2. Monitoring of Project Implementation			
33. Was the M&E system effectively used to guide project implementation?	Identification of evidence	M&E system, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
34. Was the M&E budget spent in accordance with M&E needs?	Identification of evidence	M&E system, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
35. What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? *(For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided).*	Core Indicator Targets identified retrospectively	M&E system, Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
G.3. Project reporting			
36. To what extent UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled?	Extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled	M&E system, financial reports, Progress Reports, PIRs	- Desk review - Interviews - Triangulation
Criterion H: Sustainability			
H.1. Socio-political sustainability			
37. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impact?	Identification of social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impact	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
38. What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership and capacities will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?	Identification of the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership and capacities will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
39. Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?	Identification of stakeholders' interest and perception of it.	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
40. Is there sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?	Extent to which public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project exist	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
H.2. Financial sustainability			
41. To what extent project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained?	Extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
42. What is the likelihood that financial resources will be available once the GEF assistance ends to support the continuation of benefits?	Evidence of the likelihood that financial resources will be available once the GEF assistance ends to support the continuation of benefits	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
H.3. Institutional sustainability			
43. To what extent has the project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure?	Extent to which project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
44. To what extent has the project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?	Extent to which project developed appropriate institutional capacity that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
45. Has the project achieved stakeholders' (including government stakeholders') consensus regarding courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date?	Identification of defined courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
46. What is the likelihood that gender and human rights issues promoted by the project will be supported after the project's closure date?	Identification of gender and human rights issues promoted by the project and identification of evidence of likelihood of support after project's closure date	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
I. Factors Affecting Project Performance (x-cutting)			
I.1. Preparation and readiness (included in design)			

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
47. Were appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation?	Evidence of appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation	UNEP staff	- Interviews
48. What was the extent and quality of engagement of the project team with all the relevant stakeholder groups?	Quality and extent to which project team engage effectively with all relevant stakeholder groups	Progress Reports, PIRs, ublic officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
I.2. Quality of Project Management and Supervision			
49. To which extent the flow of information within project staff, PSC, project partners and farmers conducive to achieve project results?	Extent to which the flow of information within project staff, PSC, project partners and farmers conducive to achieve project results	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
50. Did PSC provide effective leadership to achieve project results?	Evidence of PSC leadership	Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
51. Were adaptive management measures necessary and appropriate to achieve project results?	Identification of adaptive management measures	Progress Reports, PIRs, UNEP staff, project staff, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
52. To which extent was the management response appropriate to respond to MTR recommendations?	Extent to which the management response was appropriate to respond to MTR recommendations	Progress Reports, PIRs, MTR and Management Response, UNEP staff, project staff, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
I.3. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation			
53. To which extent the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to achieve project results?	Extent to which the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to achieve project results	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
54. To which extent the project developed local and national government stakeholders supported the objectives of the project?	Extent to which the project developed local and national government stakeholders supported the objectives of the project.	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
55. What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? (This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)	Identification of progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR	Progress Reports, PIRs, MTR and Management Response public officers, UNEP staff, project staff	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
I.4. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity			
56. To which extent cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality were adequately considered in project design and implementation?	Extent to which cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality were adequately considered in project design and implementation	Progress Reports, PIRs, MTR, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
57. Were specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups taken in consideration during the implementation of the project	Identification of vulnerability and evidence of how they were considered/addressed during project implementation	Progress Reports, PIRs, MTR, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
58. What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)	Identification of gender-responsive measures and gender result areas	Progress Reports, PIRs, MTR, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
I.5. Environmental and social safeguards			
59. To what extent did the project adhere to the environmental and social safeguards laid out in UNEP policy?	Extent to which project adhered to the environmental and social safeguards laid out in UNEP policy	ProDoc, PIRs, MTR, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	
60. What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. (Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)	Identification of measures implemented against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval.	PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers, PSC	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Source of Data	Methods
*I.6. Country ownership and drivenness/championship*		
61. Have project partners and/or other relevant parties been building on project achievements?	Evidence of activities that build on project achievement	PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
62. Has the project identified and involved champions who promoted the achievement and sustainability of project results?	Identification of champions	Progress Reports, PIRs, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
*I.7. Communication and Public Awareness*		
63. Where project communication and public awareness tools relevant and effective to support the achievement of project results?	Evidence of relevance and effectiveness of project communication and public awareness tools	PIRs, communication and public awareness tools, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
64. To what extent did the communication and public awareness affect project delivery or the quality of its performance?	Extent to which the the communication and public awareness affected project delivery or the quality of its performance	PIRs, communication and public awareness tools, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation
65. What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? (This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).	Identification of challenges and outcomes	PIRs, communication and public awareness tools, public officers, private sector, NGOs, UNEP staff, project staff, farmers	- Desk review - Interviews - Focus group discussions - Triangulation

ANNEX III.   PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

#	Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
1	KALRO	George Ayaga	Project Coordinator	Man
2	KALRO	Kennedy Were	Research Scientist	Man
3	ROP	Dorice Anjawa	Field Coordinator	Woman
4	KALRO	Ruth Orlale	Community Participation Officer	Woman
5	ADS	Judith Kenyi	Project M&E Officer	Woman
6	AGRA	Abed Kiwia	SLM Project Coordinator	Man
7	AGRA	Nyasha Mhosva	M&E officer	Man
8	AGRA	Qureish Noordin	SLM Extension officer	Man
9	KALRO	Victor Wasike	Director of Genetic Resources Research Institute at KALRO, and PSC member	Man
10	Vihiga County	Margaret Lidambiza	Vihiga County Director of Agriculture	Woman
11	Kakamega County	Josephine Wanyama	Kakamega County Department Agriculture M&E Officer	Woman
12	KFS – Kakamega	Maurice Wanyiri	Ecosystem Conservator	Man
13	KALRO	John Waindaba	Accountant KALRO Alupe	Man
14	KALRO	Mageria Muriithi	Accountant KALRO Head Quarters	Man
15	UNEP	Jane Nimpamya	Task Manager	Woman
16	AGRA	Damary Juma	Finance Officer	Woman
17	AGRA	Leah Mugambi	Senior Finance Officer	Woman
18	UNEP	George Saddimbah	Finance Management Officer	Man
19	UNEP	Weldon Lemein	Finance Assistant	Man
20	MMUST	Prof. Francis Muyekho	Professor of Forage Agronomy	Man
21	KEFRI	Dr. David Langat	Chief Scientist	Man
22	Kakamega County	Dr. Ismael Oduor	Former County Director of Irrigation	Man
23	KEFRI	Dr. John Otuoma	Researcher	Man
24	Nandi County	Dr. James Meli	Nandi County Director of Environment	Man
25	AGRA	Assan Ngombe	SLM Project Technical Lead	Man
26	AGRA	John Macharia	Country Manager & PSC Member	Man
27	Nature Kenya	Leonard Muhanga	Extension Officer	Man
28	ADWS	Sam Koile	Agronomist – Field Officer	Man
29	Nandi County	Silah Kimaru Too	Agriculture Officer and Value Chain Coordinator	Man
30	MMUST	Jared Ngurwe	PhD Student	Man
31	KFS – Nandi	Ken Muskotin	Ecosystem Conservator	Man
32	KFS	Oscar Simanto	Principal Conservator of forests in-charge of county liaison and education	Man
33	ROP	Prof. Ruth Oniang'o	Founder and Director	Woman
34	Vihiga County	Alfred Indeche	County Executive Committee Member	Man
35	Vihiga County	Haggai Kasasi	Development Officer	Man
36	MMUST	Prof. Judith Achoka	Professor of Education, Administration/ Management and Policy Studies	Woman
37	AGRA	Prof. Jean Jacques	Regional Lead for East Africa	Man
38	UNEP	Johan Robinson	Chief of the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit in Ecosystem Division.	Man
39	UNEP	Elizabeth Goro	Financing Budget Assistant	Woman

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- End of Project Impact Assessment Report: October 2022
- Half yearly progress reports
  - from Jan to June 2022 - submitted on 30th July 2022
  - from July to Dec 2021 - submitted on 31st Jan 2022
  - from Jan to June 2021 - submitted on 30th July 2021
  - from July to Dec 2020 - submitted on 29th Jan 2021
  - from Jan to June 2020 - submitted on July 30-2020
- Knowledge and Communication Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Draft)
- Minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings
  - 27 Jan 2022
  - 10 February 2021
  - 5 December 2019
  - 6 August 2019
  - 4 July 2019
  - 24 January 2019
  - 12 October 2018
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation plan
- Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) 2018, 2019 , 2020 and 2021

Project outputs – Overall
Excel file – "Table 1 Total Beneficiaries stakeholders list final"

Project outputs work package 1 - Outcome 1
Excel file – "Table 2 Early Adopting farmers list"

Output 1.1

- Implementation Landscapes Baselines Survey Report (September, 2018)
- Status of Crop agrobiodiversity in Shamiloli (Kakamega), Cheboite (Nandi) and Makuchi (Vihiga) Counties (April, 2019)
- Status of Bean Pollinators and Virus Diversity in Shamiloli (Kakamega), Cheboite (Nandi) and Makuchi (Vihiga) Counties (April, 2019)
- Bee diversity, their sources of floral resources for pollination and honey production in the Kakamega forest ecosystem (June, 2019)
- Report on Status of tree agrobiodiversity and aboveground carbon stocks in Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga Counties (June, 2019)
- Report on above ground biodiversity – Assessment of ruminant livestock and forage diversity in Kakamega forest-ecosystem (June, 2019)

Output 1.2

- A Training Need Assessment Study report of Stakeholders in Nandi, Kakamega, and Vihiga Counties, Kenya (August, 2018)
- SLM/SFM Manual (December, 2018)

- SLM/SFM Training Plan (December, 2018)

Output 1.3

- Draft Land Use Management Plans
  - Nandy County
    - Cheibote Micro-Catchment
    - Chepsui Micro-Catchment
    - Chepturer Micro-Catchment
    - Kurgung Micro-Catchment
  - Kakamega County
    - Indangalasia Micro-Catchment
    - Mahiakalo Micro-Catchment
    - Nambirima Micro-Catchment
    - Shiamiloli Micro-Catchment
  - Vihiga County
    - Makuchi Micro-Catchment
    - Shiru Micro-Catchment

Output 1.7

- Technical report – Establishment and management of the SLM Demonstration Farms across the Kakamaga-Nandi Forest Landscape (December 2019)

Output 1.9

- Kakamega Participatory Forest Management Plan (2022/2027)
- Kibiri Participatory Forest Management Plan (2022/2027)
- Kimondi Participatory Forest Management Plan (2022/2026)
- Kobujoi Participatory Forest Management Plan (2022/2026)
- Malava Participatory Forest Management Plan (2022/2027)

Output 1.11

- Report on Recommended Land Management Practices for Sustainable Agricultural Production in Western Kenya (January 2018)
- Summary of the technology "Conservation agriculture for maize-legume systems with velvet bean as a dense cover crop (Kenya)" extract from the WOCAT on-line database (https://qcat.wocat.net/en/wocat/technologies/view/technologies_5775/)

Project outputs work package 2 – Outcome 2

Output 2.1

- Cheibote Micro-Catchment – Community-Led Value Chain Analyisis Report (June 2018)
- Makuchi Micro-Catchment – Community-Led Value Chain Analyisis Report (June 2018)
- Shamiloli Micro-Catchment – Community-Led Value Chain Analyisis Report (June 2018)

Output 2.2

- Excel file "Input linkage"

- Excel file "Aggregation data"
- Excel file "Credit linkages"

Project outputs work package 3 – Outcome 3
Output 3.2

- The Kakamega County Sustainable Land and Forest Management Policy (June, 2022)
- The Nandi County Sustainable Land and Forest Management Policy (August, 2022)
- The Vihiga County Sustainable Land and Forest Management Policy (June, 2022)

Output 3.3

- Report of Focus Group Discussions Undertaken in Catchments Areas (March, 2019)
- Draft Report on Ecosystem Services Valuation for the Kakamega Nandi North and Nandi South and Kibiri Forest Ecosystems (January, 2020)

Output 3.4

- Strategic Shared Vision – Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Trans-boundary Inter County Forest Ecosystem between the County Governments of Nandi, Vihiga and Kakamega

Previous evaluations

- Mid Term Evaluation (2020)

Reference documents

- Project Document
- Request for CEO Endorsement

ANNEX V. FIELD MISSION'S ITINERARY

Sunday, October 23, 2022
Arrival of the Evaluator in Kisumu

Monday, October 24, 2022
Vihiga County – Shiru micro-catchment
Venue: Search and See Church
Focus group discussion with 4 farmers (4 women) from Makuchi micro-catchment and 1 farmer (man) from Shiru micro-catchment
Focus group discussion with 4 members (2 men and 2 women) of the Innovation Platforms of Makuchi (1 CFA member and 1 farmer engaged in NWFP activities) and of Shiru (1 trader and 1 ToT)
Group interview with 1 Ward Agricultural Officer (1 woman) and 2 Sub-county Agricultural Officers (1 man and 1 woman)
Vihiga County – Makuchi micro-catchment
Site visits to:
2 learning sites and interviews with two farmers (2 women)
1 agroforestry farm and interview with a farmer (1 man)
CFA tree nursery and interview with a farmer (1 man)

Tuesday, October 25, 2022
Kakamega County – Mahiakalo micro-catchment
Venue: Ichina Friends Church
Focus group discussion with 8 farmers (5 women and 3 men) from Mahiakalo and Nambirima micro-catchments
Focus group discussion with 9 members (5 women and 4 men) of the Innovation Platforms of Mahiakalo (2 traders and 3 ToT) and Nambirima (1 bee keeper, 1 member of a VSLA, and 1 trader and a ToT)
Group interview with 2 Ward Agricultural Officers (1 woman and 1 man) and 2 Sub-county Agricultural Officers (1 woman and 1 man)
Site visits to:
Rehabilitated hotspot – 56 ha of reforestation and interview with 1 CFA member (1 man)
1 farm with the SLM technologies applied (composting, agroforestry and terracing) and interview with a farmer (1 woman)
Kakamega County - Nambirima micro-catchment
Site visits to:
1 farm under SLM owned by a bee keeping farmer (1 man) and interview
1 learning site and interview with a farmer (1 woman)

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Kakamega County – Indingalasia micro-catchment

Venue: Ichina Friends Church

Focus group discussion with with 9 farmers (6 women and 3 men) from Indingalasia and Shiamiloli micro-catchments

Focus group discussion with 9 members (4 women and 5 men) of the Innovation Platforms of Indingalasia (1 transporter, 1 member of a VSLA, 1 TOT also engaged in NWFP and 1 Bee keeper) and Shiamioli (1 ToT, 1 processor, 1 transporter, 1 farmer and 1 trader)

Interview with a Ward Agricultural Officer (1 woman)

Kakamega County - Indingalasia micro-catchment

Site visits to:

> 1 farm with the SLM technologies applied (composting, agroforestry and terracing) and interview with a farmer (1 woman)
> IP aggregation centre
> 1 farm with the SLM technologies applied (composting, agroforestry and terracing) and interview with a farmer (1 man)

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Nandi County - Cheibote micro-catchment

Venue: Kaimosi Hotel

Focus group discussion with 7 farmers (1 women and 6 men) from Cheibote and Chepsui micro-catchments

Focus group discussion with 9 members (4 women and 5 men) of the Innovation Platforms of Cheibote (1 transporter, 1 member of a VSLA, 1 TOT, and 1 processor) also engaged in NWFP and 1 Bee keeper) and Chepsui (2 TOTs, 1 engaged in NWFP, 1 transporter, 1 member of a VSLA,)

Interview with 2 Sub-county Agricultural Officers (1 woman and 1 man) and 2 Ward Agricultural Officer (2 men)

Site visits to:

> 1 farm with the SLM technologies applied (intercropping and terracing) and interview with a farmer (1 woman)
> 1 rehabilitated hotspot accompanied by a WAO

Nandi County - Chepsui micro-catchment

Site visits to:

> 1 farm with the SLM technologies applied (composting and terracing) and interview with a farmer (1 woman)

Friday, October 28, 2022

Nandi County – Kurgun micro-catchment

Venue: Kleez Shades Hotel

Focus group discussion with 7 farmers (1 women and 6 men) from Kurgun micro-catchment

Focus group discussion with 12 members (6 women and 6 men) of the Innovation Platforms of Kurgun (3 traders, 3 ToTs, 3 transporters, and 2 farmers)

Group interview with 1 Ward Agricultural Officer (1 man) and 3 Sub-county Agricultural Officers (3 men)

Departure of the Evaluator from Kisumu (end of the mission)

ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Giacomo Morelli
Profession	Independent Consultant (Evaluator)
Nationality	Italian and Swiss
Country experience	• Europe: Italy and Switzerland • Africa: Algeria, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Zimbabwe • America: Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay • Asia: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Georgia, Indonesia, Laos, Lebanon, Jordan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine
Education	• MSc in Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (University of Florence, Italy) • Certificate of Advanced Studies in Evaluation (University of Bern, Italy)

Short biography

Giacomo Morelli is a professional with proven experience in the development sector in the thematic areas of agriculture, biodiversity, climate change, environment, food security, livelihoods, natural resource management, rural development and resilience. He, holding an MSc in Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Certificate of Advanced Studies in Evaluation, has vast experience in evaluation, which he has accrued first-hand by conducting more than 30 evaluation assignments and by attending formal trainings. Since 2012, he has been engaging mainly with evaluations and had the opportunity to carry out evaluations for United Nations entities and international NGOs. He has a broad experience in evaluating GEF and EU funded projects. Prior to his work as Evaluator, work as consultant for a broad spectrum of organizations such as UN agencies, private companies, research institutes and international NGOs.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

Results-oriented Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation Expert with 20+ years' experience providing data driven solutions driving agriculture, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable land and water management, biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, sustainable value chain development, and rural development initiatives for key donor institutions and non-rofit organizations globally. Highly regarded for analytical, problem-solving and interpersonal skills with ability to effectively engage with, communicate, and motivate donors, governments, stakeholders, clients, and communities.

Selected assignments and experiences

1. JANUARY/MARCH 2022 - UNOPS - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR

Terminal evaluation of a UNDP/UNOPS project in Mexico. Project: "the Sixth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Mexico". Donor: GEF.

2. AUGUST/NOVEMBER 2021 – UNDP - INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR

Terminal evaluation in South Africa. Project: "Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale". Donor: GEF.

3. MAY/AUGUST 2021 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR

MTR in Colombia. Project: "Connectivity and Biodiversity Conservation in the Colombian Amazon". Donor: GEF

4. APRIL/JUNE 2021 – UNDP - INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR

Terminal Evaluation in Uruguay. Project: "The integration of the adaptation approach in cities, infrastructure and local planning in Uruguay". Donor: GCF.

5. *APRIL/JUNE 2021 – UNDP - INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Terminal Evaluation in Lebanon. Project: "Sustainable Land Management in the Qaraoun Catchment, Lebanon". Donor: GEF.

6. *OCTOBER/DECEMBER 2020 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Paraguay. Project: "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management into Production Practices in all Bioregions and Biomes"). Donor: GEF.

7. *JULY/NOVEMBER 2020 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Mexico. Project: "Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Resilience of Protected Areas to Safeguard Biodiversity Threatened by Climate Change". Donor: GEF.

8. *DECEMBER 2019/MARCH 2020 – UNDP - INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Mid-term review in South Africa. Project: "Securing Multiple Ecosystems Benefit through Sustainable Land Management in the Productive but Degraded Landscapes of South Africa"). Donor:GEF

9. *NOVEMBER 2019/MARCH 2020 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Terminal evaluation in Colombia. Project: "Vulnerability and Risk Reduction towards Climate Change in the Momposina Depression in Colombia") Donor: AF.

10. *JULY/OCTOBER 2019 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

MTR in Indonesia. Project: "Capacity Development for Implementing Rio Conventions through Enhancing Incentive Mechanism for Sustainable Watershed/ Land Management". Donor: GEF.

11. *MAY/JUNE 2019 – Caritas Czech Republic - EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Mongolia. Project "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations-Local Authorities Partnership in the Agriculture Sector in Khentii Province". Donor: EU and Czech Development Agency.

12. *APRIL/MAY 2019 – Action Against Hunger - EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Jordan. "Improvement of Solid Waste Management for host communities and Syrian Refugees in Azraq Town, Zarqa Governorate, Jordan". Donor: Taiwan ICDF

13. *AUGUST/OCTOBER 2018 – Movimento Africa 70 - EVALUATOR*

Mid-term evaluation in Algeria (Saharawi camps). Project: "Food and Work: Self-production with Dignity. Donor: Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

14. *MARCH/APRIL 2018 – UNDP - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Mid-term review in Argentina. Project: "Sustainable land use management in the drylands of North-west of Argentina". Donor: GEF

15. *MAY/JULY 2017 – The Brooke - EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Jordan. Project "the Brooke Jordan programme" Donor: the Brooke (self-financed).

16. *MARCH/APRIL 2017 – General Consulting and Training/UNDP - EVALUATION TEAM LEADER*

Final evaluation in Palestine. Project: "Enhancing the Capacities of the Palestinian Authority in Mainstreaming Environment and Climate Change". Donor: Government of Belgium

17. *MAY/SEPTEMBER 2016 – UNCCD Secretariat - LEAD INTERNATIONAL EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation of multi-country project implemented in Ecuador, Guatemala, Laos, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania. Project: "Integrating Climate Change Finance into Sustainable Land Management Investment Strategies". Donor: EU.

18. *NOVEMBER 2015 /JANUARY 2016 – Blue Ventures - EVALUATOR*

Final evaluation in Madagascar. Project: "Improving the profitability and ecological sustainability of octopus fisheries in southwest Madagascar"). Donor: DFID.

19. AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2013 – Secours Catholique/Caritas France - EVALUATOR
Final evaluation in Mongolia. Project "Food Security and Sustainable Farming Approaches in Mongolia". Donor: EU.

20. OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2012 - Oxfam Solidarité - EVALUATION TEAM LEADER
Final evaluation in Palestine. Project: "Improving livelihoods of vulnerable populations through rehabilitation of factors of production in Gaza Strip and West Bank" Donor: Government of Belgium. Project's components: food

ANNEX VII. TORS OF THE EVALUATION (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project

Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya (GEF ID 5272)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

GEF Project ID:		5272		
Implementing Agency:		UNEP	**Executing Agencies:**	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO).
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):		SDG 1: 1.1; SDG 2:2.4; SDG 11:11.4; SDG 14:14.2, 14c; SDG 15:15.1, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7; SDG 16: 16b; SDG 17:17.6, 17,7, 17.11 and 17.14		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7[21])		This is a GEF6 project - GEF Core indicators were not included in project design – technical project team to identify retrospectively.		
Sub-programme:		Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	EAa (i,iii) and EAb (i,ii)
UNEP approval date:		15 June 2016	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	2018-2019 PoW and the 2018-2021 MTS
GEF approval date:		12 July 2016	**Project type:**	FSP
GEF Operational Programme #:		GEF 6	**Focal Area(s):**	Multi-Focal
GEF Strategic Priority:		*LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape* *BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors* *SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services*		
***Expected* start date:**		24 Nov 2016	**Actual start date:**	24 Nov 2016
***Planned* operational completion date:**		June 2021	**Actual operational completion date:**	31 July 2022

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[21] This does not apply for Enabling Activities

Planned project budget at approval:		USD 13,488,205	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 Dec 2021**	USD 3,263,940.27
GEF grant allocation:		USD 3,383,800	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021:**	USD 3,172,573
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:		USD 80,000	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	NIL
Expected Full-Size Project co-financing:		USD 9,904,405 (USD 4,294,097 cash; 5,610,308 in-kind)	**Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:**	USD 8,670,705
Date of first disbursement:		27 Dec 2016	**Planned date of financial closure:**	31 Dec 2022
No. of formal project revisions:		none	**Date of last approved project revision:**	none
No. of Steering Committee meetings:		??	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	Last: **??** / Next: **??**
**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (*planned date):*		Jan 2019	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	Oct 2020
**Terminal Evaluation (*planned date):*		June 2021	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	April – Oct 2022
Coverage - Country(ies):		Kenya	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:		??	**Status of future project phases:**	??

Project Rationale

A new constitution came into force in Kenya from 2013 after a general election. Under the new constitutional dispensation, county governments were created with devolved functions which included mandate on agriculture, land and natural resources. The areas that the county governments identified as critical for support included enabling policy framework for agriculture and SLM at county level. The county governments already have some resources to invest in agriculture and SLM but are limited in terms of policy frameworks and technical knowledge to guide their investments.

Recent frameworks that support this initiative include: Agricultural Sector Development Program (ASDSP) that seeks to increase agricultural productivity in small scale agriculture; Draft Forest and Act (2014), the Policy and Act envisages the empowerment of stakeholders in the participatory management of forests; Access and Benefit Sharing Bill which will outline the benefit sharing of ecosystems goods and services to the target communities. During the project design period, the UNDAF programme for 2014-2018 was also formulated with a strong component on environment and natural resources management.

This project was designed to support the hypothesis that the increased productivity and profitability, as well as access and benefit sharing mechanism, derived from pilot Sustainable Land Management (SLM)/ Sustainable Farm Management (SFM) sites would create incentives for accelerated uptake of SLM/SFM technologies across the landscape. The existing barrier which the proposed project sought

to address was how to scale-out from the successful, but often fragmented and localized, SLM/SFM initiatives, to programmes that are fully integrated within the county development plans and budgets and hence are both institutionally and financially sustainable.

The reasoning for the proposed intervention was to move the lessons learned in the piecemeal projects from the pilot sites to the wider productive landscapes and to strengthen the effective coordination, shifting towards a more programmatic approach to SLM/SFM in line with the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa's (AGRA) initiative of "Going beyond demos".

Project Results Framework

The project's objective was stated as 'to promote the adoption and adaptation of sustainable land and forest ecosystem management (SLEM) practices across the productive landscape of the Kakamega-Nandi ecosystem' (CEO Endorsement Request, 2016).

Despite being approved in 2016, the project documents do not contain a Theory of Change (TOC). This means that the TOC will need to be reconstructed during the evaluation process.

It is noted that the formulation of outcomes in results framework does not meet evaluability requirements: they do not reflect the uptake or application of outputs ('enhanced capacity' and 'increased access').The third outcome has no verb to identify its intended level of ambition.

The project was delivered through three components with associated outcomes as follows:

Table 2: Results statements (CEO Endorsement, June 2016)

Component 1: Capacity building of stakeholders on SLM /SFM and biodiversity conservation within Kakamega forest ecosystem	
Outcome 1:	1.0 Enhanced capacity of smallholder farmers to implement and upscale sustainable land, Forest and biodiversity management practices at landscape level
Outputs	1.1 Baselines established for Sustainable Land & Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation at landscape level
	1.2 Capacity needs assessment for key stakeholders conducted
	1.3 Development of Integrated Land Use Plans for Sustainable Land & Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation at Landscape Level
	1.4 Support to conservation of biodiversity hot spots
	1.5 Conduct training of trainers (ToT) for FFS
	1.6 Facilitation of FFS
	1.7 Establishment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity learning sites for farmer groups
	1.8 Facilitation of farmer open and field-days
	1.9 Support to implementation Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Plans
	1.10 Capacity building of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) for biodiversity conservation
	1.11 Documentation of SLM, SFM and biodiversity conservation best practices
Component 2: Mainstreaming Value Chain Approach to Smallholder Producers	
Outcome 2:	2.0 Increased farmers' access to profitable input and output markets of targeted crops and forest products
Outputs	2.1 Value chain analysis of target crops undertaken
	2.2 Farmer groups linkage to affordable finance markets
	2.3 Support to establishment and strengthening of Community Based Seed producers
	2.4 Support to post-harvest management at household level
	2.5 Support to women and youth groups in small scale agricultural enterprises (SMAEs)
	2.6 Support to development and commercialization of Non-wood forest products and services (NWFPS)
Component 3: Enabling Policy and Institutional Framework	

Outcome 3:	3.0: Enabling policy and institutional framework for up scaling sustainable land and forests management at county level
Outputs	3.1 Assessment of SLM/SFM and biodiversity related policies and strategies at county level
	3.2 Support to development of county level SLM/SFM and biodiversity Management frameworks
	3.3 Support to Ecosystem valuation and assessment
	3.4 Support to inter-county ecosystem forum

Executing Arrangements

UNEP is the Implementing Agency for this project. The work was managed within the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, which is part of the Biodiversity and Land Branch of the Ecosystems Division. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) are named as the Executing Agencies.

Project Cost and Financing

Table 3: Project Financing at Design (CEO Endorsement, June 2016)

Item	GEF Financing	Co-Financing	TOTAL
Component 1: Capacity Building	**1,572,200**	**4,199,185**	**5,771,385**
Component 2: Mainstreaming Value Chain Approach	**1,080,200**	**3,692,305**	**4,772,505**
Component 3: Enabling Framework	**620,200**	**1,662,915**	**2,283,115**
Total Project Costs	**3,272,600**	**9,554,405**	**12,827,005**

Implementation Issues

The project did carry out a Mid Term Review.

The original intended operational completion date appears to have been exceeded by one year, apparently due to delays in signing agreements.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Objective of the Evaluation

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy22 and the UNEP Programme Manual23, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, GEF and the main project partners. Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

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[22] *https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies*
[23] *https://wecollaborate.unep.org*

Key Evaluation Principles

Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

The "Why?" Question. As this is a Terminal Evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "why?" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to attribute any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Communicating evaluation results. A key aim of the Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant(s) should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the Main Evaluation Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an Evaluation Brief or interactive presentation.

Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will contribute to addressing the strategic questions listed in the first box below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included, further down, are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE.

The first set of questions outlined in the box below are intended to support a review of UNEP's portfolio of Sustainable Land Management projects. As this project (GEF 5272) is part of this SLM Portfolio, the evaluation consultant will be expected to: read a 30pg background document on UNEP's SLM work to-date; discuss these questions in a short online meeting; review/contribute to a draft SLM Portfolio TOC; collect data against these questions during the project evaluation and review/contribute to a draft SLM Portfolio brief (both in writing and during a half-day online meeting).

.   **Level of continuity, integrative learning and growth of SLM projects at design phase.**
    a.   Why did UNEP choose this project?
    b.   Were learnings from Terminal Evaluations of previous projects absorbed into this project's design?

- **Level of sharing of project results and learnings among the UNEP project teams (within the LD Unit, but even across the Sub-programmes, if relevant) of technically relevant projects**[24] **being implemented at the same time.**

  a. Were the task manager and the project team at UNEP (of the project you are evaluating) aware of the other SLM projects being implemented at the same time? If yes, were there any opportunities to share information?

- **The extent to which project teams (UNEP and Executing Agencies) are working within a common technical framework towards SLM.**

  a. What was the level/nature of practitioner-scientist interface?

  b. Were (a) tools or methodologies previously developed by UNEP used/upscaled, or (b) were UNEP tools and methodologies developed that could be used in other SLM work (within or beyond UNEP)?

  c. Are there any particular innovations and best practices coming from the project and how is UNEP sharing these (was the project connected to any networks (e.g. WOCAT[25]) and knowledge management platforms for sharing)? (Were there any gaps or potentials in innovation not realized?)

  d. To what extent did the success of the project depend on gender equity and/or considerations of gender roles[26]? Were there any particular innovations the project was able to achieve in addressing gender equity?

  e. Did the project address human rights and human wellbeing (e.g. access to land and resources, human health, rights to healthy environment)?

- **Project contributions to a common vision for SLM based on the global strategic priorities for land degradation neutrality.**

  a. Did the project focus on the most degraded areas or areas of high value (in terms of its global importance and human dependence)? How much of the degraded land has been improved (was it measured in ha)?[27]

  b. How were project partners who stood out as champions supported and empowered? Were the best partnerships leveraged (and also sustained, both in terms of the project, and in terms of UNEP's network toward SLM)?

  c. In what ways did the project ensure that increased scientific evidence/knowledge or capacity led to changed behaviour/decision-making (if at all)? Were the most appropriate stakeholders targeted?

  d. How much of the success of the project depended on production and consumption cycles and the economic system and how much influence did the project have on this? (decoupling economic growth from land and ecosystem degradation)

  e. How did the project address it's **key** assumptions/drivers (included at design or noted by the evaluator at TE)?

  f. Are there any **key** factors that contributed to the sustainability of project results and impacts (any highlighted examples of transformative effects, innovation and social uptake, championship and changed behaviour, financial and institutional commitments)?

- **Are there any other considerations coming from the Terminal Evaluation of this project that you would like to highlight for the portfolio review?**

<u>Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:</u>

Under **Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation**:

What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[28]).

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[24] For instance, between the five projects that were all coming to completion in 2021 and are part of this review, or any UNEP projects relevant to the specific project under evaluation.

[25] WOCAT is a global network on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) that promotes the documentation, sharing and use of knowledge to support adaptation, innovation and decision-making in SLM. https://www.wocat.net/en/

[26] Considering the significance of gender issues in SLM, especially at the land-use level.

[27] Please provide your comment also on the quality of improvement (e.g. actual rehabilitation or restoration, or at land use plan level?)

[28] *This is not applicable for Enabling Activities*

Under **Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation**:

What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Under **Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality**:

What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

Under **Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards**:

What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Under **Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness**:

What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Evaluation Criteria

All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria. A weightings table in excel format will be provided by the Evaluation Manager to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The Evaluation Consultant(s) can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

Strategic Relevance

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy[29] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[30] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies

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[29] *UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents*
[30] *http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm*

and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor, including GEF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. GEF priorities are specified in published programming priorities and focal area strategies. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

The Evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[31]

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[32], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*
> Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
> Country ownership and driven-ness

Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[33] should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):*
> Stakeholders participation and cooperation
> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

Nature of External Context

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[31] *This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.*
[32] *A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.*
[33] *In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.*

At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval34). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs[35]

The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*
> Preparation and readiness
> Quality of project management and supervision[36]

Achievement of Project Outcomes[37]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[38] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*
> Quality of project management and supervision
> Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
> Communication and public awareness

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[34] *Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.*

[35] *Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)*

[36] *In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.*

[37] *Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)*

[38] *All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.*

Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC *(i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact),* the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The Evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionally affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[39] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*
>
> Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
>
> Stakeholders participation and cooperation
>
> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
>
> Country ownership and driven-ness
>
> Communication and public awareness

Financial Management

Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management

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[39] The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

> Preparation and readiness

> Quality of project management and supervision

Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[40] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

> Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)

> Quality of project management and supervision

> Stakeholders participation and cooperation

Monitoring and Reporting

The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[41] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities.. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

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[40] *Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.*
[41] *SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.*

Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities) in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

The performance at project completion against Core Indicator Targets should be reviewed. For projects approved under GEF-6, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system (Anubis) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

> _Factors affecting this criterion may include:_
>
> Quality of project management and supervision
>
> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g disaggregated indicators and data)

Sustainability

Sustainability[42] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

Socio-political Sustainability

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

Financial Sustainability

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Evaluation will assess the extent

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[42] _As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)_

to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. <u>Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.</u>

Institutional Sustainability

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

> *Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

> Stakeholders participation and cooperation

> Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)

> Communication and public awareness

> Country ownership and driven-ness

Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the evaluation criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the evaluated project should be given.)

Preparation and Readiness

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects[43], it may refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

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[43] *For GEF funded projects, a rating will be provided for the Project Management and Supervision of each of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. The two ratings will be aggregated to provided an overall rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision*

Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the Executing Agency. The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval).*

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[44].

In particular the Evaluation will consider to what extent project-implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent).

Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[45] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and r*eport* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

The Evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project <u>minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.</u>

Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

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[44]*The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y*
[45] *For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.*

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long-lasting impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gendered and marginalised groups.

Communication and Public Awareness

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

The project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the Evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

A **desk review** of:

Relevant background documentation;
Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
Project deliverables: [TM to list notable items];
Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project *(where appropriate)*;
Evaluations/reviews of similar projects *(where appropriate).*

Interviews (individual or in group) with: (TM to complete)

UNEP Task Manager (TM); (CHECK FOR PREVIOUS TMS)
Project management team, including the Project Manager within the Executing Agency, where appropriate;

UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
Project partners, including [list];
Relevant resource persons;
Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

Surveys [provide details, where appropriate]

Field visits [provide details, where appropriate]

Other data collection tools [provide details, where appropriate]

Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Evaluation Team will prepare:

Inception Report: (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

Preliminary Findings Note: typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.

Draft and Final Evaluation Report: containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

An **SLM Portfolio Brief** will be prepared to bring together key findings across a number of UNEP projects addressing SLM and reaching operational completion over a period of 3-4 years (2019 – 2022). This will be prepared for wider dissemination throughout UNEP. The final details of this Brief, and the contribution to be made by this project evaluation process, will be agreed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

Review of the Draft Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Consultant(s) will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Task Manager and Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward the revised draft report (corrected by the Evaluation Consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the Evaluation Consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the Evaluation Consultants and the internal consistency othe report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the Main Evaluation Report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the Evaluation Consultant(s). The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 12 months.

The Evaluation Consultant

For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of an Evaluation Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, **Janet Wildish**, in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager, **Jane Nimpamya**, Fund Management Officer, **George Saddimbah**, and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Health and Productive Ecosystems Sub-programmes, **Marieta Sakalian**. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible

The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 6 months (18 July 2022 to 31 Jan 2023) and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 5 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of Sustainable Land Management is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office of UNEP for overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The consultant will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

FOR SINGLE CONSULTANTS

In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

- o preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- o draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- o prepare the evaluation framework;
- o develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- o draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- o develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- o plan the evaluation schedule;
- o prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- o conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- o (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.

- o regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- o keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

- o draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- o liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- o prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- o (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

- o maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- o communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

Schedule of the Evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	
Inception Report	
Evaluation Mission (where appropriate and feasible)	
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	
Final Report	
Final Report shared with all respondents	

Contractual Arrangements

Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP /UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document #9)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document #10)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g PIMS, Anubis, Sharepoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX VIII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Evaluation Report, either as copied or summarised text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarised.

Table II: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[46], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[47]).
Response: Retrospectively, the project contributed to three GEF-7 core indicators: (1) Area of landscapes under improved practices (undefined number of ha, but below 4,461, under SLM practices and 7,628 under SFM). The retrospective achievement of the indicator is very low if it is considered that the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would have targeted 100,000 ha of farming land ha and 50,000 ha of forest land.
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: The evaluation did not attempt to identify any progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR. The MTR is, in fact, reputed of very low quality by the present evaluation for the following three reasons: • The changes in project targets are not mentioned; • Any flaws in the project monitoring system were identified, and • The assessment of outputs delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes is considered as satisfactory, while the present evaluation demonstrated the contrary.
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: In the CEO Endorsement request the gender dimension was limited to gender targeted[48] indicators. As a matter of fact, no gender responsive/transformative measures were included in any part of project design. The project design, as per its results' framework, and implementation were gender-targeted. Specific attention was devoted to target women in project activities. No adviser or specialist on gender and human rights was, however, employed by AGRA, KALRO and their partners to provide gender specific advice on the implementation of project's activities. What the women involvement in project activities entails for their actual overall benefit was neither studied nor monitored. The Innovation Platforms acted as a democratic place for farmers and value chain actors to meet and discuss problems and solutions for their economic activities. From this perspective, the evaluation acknowledges the creation of open spaces for debates as a tool that promote the respect

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[46] The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. .(i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

[47] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

[48] With the expression "Gender targeted", the Evaluator refers to activities and results focused on women, men and7or marginalized population that were targeted as per the United Nations Development Programme Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.

for each person's perspective within her/his community. However, Innovation Platforms did/do not have the capacity to involve any significant number of farmers in their activities.
Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
Response: No safeguards plan was submitted at CEO approval as it was not a compulsory requirement.
Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: Due to the large number of farmers that the project aimed at targeting, the communication strategy was very important to promote the actual adoption of SLM and SFM practices throughout the project area. The communication strategy, however, did not have any significant effects on the capacities of the farmers. In fact, the project proved not to be effective in promoting SLM practices within the farmers.
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response: During the implementation, the project turned to be completely different in comparison to what was described in the ProDoc. The project was implemented in an area of 21,927 ha of farming and forest land, while the GEF tracking tool on land degradation attached to the ProDoc (Appendix 13b) reports that the project would target 100,000 ha of farming land ha and 50,000 ha of forest land. In addition, the targets of the most relevant indicators for GEF were substantially reduced. The indicator "Area (ha) of forest land under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) with biodiversity conservation" was reduced from 50,000 to 10,000 ha, and the indicator "Area (ha) of land put under SLM" from 20,000 to 3,913 ha. According to GEF guidance, such a reduction in the scope of the project (reductions of approx. 80% in targets for environmental benefits), would be considered 'major' and should have been submitted for GEF approval. Instead the change was inconsistently recorded in the PIR reports. Such a substantial reduction in the targets should have been accompanied by a review of the work plan and associated budget. AGRA and KALRO considered that the strategic objective of the project was 100,000 farmers will have been sensitized on SLM technologies through the establishment of learning sites and the training of 50 farmer groups as reported in the contracts with project partners. In accordance with this decision, the project was implemented in an area of 21,927 ha, which was considered enough to reach 100,000 farmers. The evaluation considers the decision to reduce the project area not as an adaptive decision based on changes occurring between the project formulation and the start of the project and/or during its implementation. Instead, it was an arbitrarya decision based on the apparent intention to achieve a target (100,000 farmers sensitized on SLM) that is never stated as such in the project document. The evaluation also identified a lot of discrepancies between the wording utilized in the ProDoc (landscape) and their translation at implementation stage (micro-catchment). Any technical specialist reading the ProDoc, would not interpret the term 'landscape' to mean that the project would be conducted at micro-catchment level. The AGRA strategy to upscale SLM practices needed an "intensity" of work (demonstrated by the density of learning sites, i.e. one every 438.5 ha of land) that was not clear at all in the ProDoc. The decision to reduce the project area (from landscapes to micro-catchment) was coherent with the AGRA approach, the so-called proximity community-based extension system, but incompatible with the requirements of the GEF in terms of results.

The project M&E system had serious deficiencies. Conflicting evidence to support the previous statement have been collected throughout the evaluation field mission in Kenya. As a consequence, the evaluation exercise does not endorse the project records as reliable sources of data to measure or understand its actual performance in terms of achievements at outcome and objective level.

The effectiveness of the project was very low. Two solid pieces of evidence support the statement. The reduction of the project area nullified the chances of the project contributing to the original targets of the project. In other words, the ambitions in terms of relevant results for GEF were given up from its early stages of implementation. Secondly, at output level, the project did not deliver most of its outputs and did not achieve any of its outcomes even if its "revised" targets were considered as valid. The proximity community-based extension system approach proved to be not effective to promote the adoption of SLM and SFM practices at scale.

Project records report that 92,296 farmers were targeted by the project and participated at least in one training activities. The number represents 92% of the "revised" target. They also report that 61,600 farmers applied at least one SLM practice/technology in their farm across the ten project micro-catchment covering a total area of 4,461 ha, exceeding the revised target of 3,913 (+12%). The number represents 67% of targeted farmers applying SLM practices in their farms, i.e. 13% less of the target. The evaluation exercise also casts serious doubt about the validity of these numbers.

The project contributed to put under SFM practices 7,628 ha (76% of the revised target). However, the number refers to the extension of the forest covered by the 5 PFM plans formulated with the support of the project. The plans are expected to be implemented after project closure.

The achievements against the original targets are equal to 4% (ha under SLM practices) and 15% (ha under SFM practices).

The work done at policy level in supporting the counties of Kakamega, Nandi and Vihiga was of very poor quality and did not justify the investment foreseen in the original project budget. The forum for coordinating the implementation of inter county nature-based solutions was not established, although it was regarded, in the ProDoc, as a key element to support the scaling-up of SLM practices. In addition, outputs related to the policies level did not contribute to any further outcome.

The AGRA strategy based on the establishment of Innovation Platforms in every micro-catchment was ineffective. The aspiration to sensitize 100,000 on SLM practices was too ambitious. The target was not achieved. Project records report that 92,296 farmers were sensitized/ trained on at least one SLM related topic. The evaluation casts serious doubts on the validity of this number. Within this large numbers of farmers, however, capacities were not homogenously built. ToTs, who participated in an intense training programme, and demo plot owners, who had the chance to attend a wide variety of training events in their farms, have far better capacities to apply SLM practices than other farmers.

As per the achievements against revised and original targets, the evaluation concludes that the AGRA approach to scale up SLM practices proved to be very little and doubtfully effective.

The utilization of certified seeds was identified as the key element that contributed to the increase of productivity at farm level. These seeds lead to greater crop production than those previously planted by the targeted farmers. The evaluation exercise considers that the agronomic performances of the certified seeds overshadow the low capacities of farmers to apply other SLM practices. In other words, the increase in agricultural productivity is mainly due to the adoption of these seeds rather than to the actual adoption of SLM practices at farm level.

AGRA's progress reports were characterized by omissions and/or incorrect information about the delivery of outputs. Such flaws were reflected in the UNEP PIRs, as well.

The changes in project targets and the actual achievements at outcome level made the project very low in relevance for GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity and sustainable forest management and their strategic priorities LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, SFM-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and Generate Sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.

The evaluation considers that if the ProDoc had been written coherently with how it was implemented, the project would not have been considered eligible to access GEF funds.

Due to the very low level of output provision and outcome achievements both in terms of quantity and quality, the evaluation exercise concludes that country ownership and sustainability of the initiative is very low. The support to KFS to formulate the PFM plans represents the sole output with a high degree of sustainability, being their institutional guiding document for their activities. Capacity of farmers to implement SLM practises and institutional capacities

Although UNEP acknowledges that gender-responsive approaches makes environmental interventions longer-lasting and more transformative, no gender assessment or study was conducted. The intervention resulted in simply recording data disaggregated by gender.

ANNEX IX.   QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluand Title:

Scaling Up Sustainable Land Management and Agro-Biodiversity Conservation to Reduce Environmental Degradation in Small-Scale Agriculture in Western Kenya" GEF PROJECT ID: 5272

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary: The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report: The Executive Summary presents the main findings of the report, details about the evaluand are presented in table 1 and in the Introduction. This report reflects a challenging evaluation of the project's performance, primarily due to the substantial reduction in the project's main target, which was not formalised. The draft report attracted a large volume of comments from the project team and **Annex I** shows these, along with the responses from the evaluator and the UNEP Evaluation Office.	**5**
I. Introduction A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.) Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?	Final report: All elements are covered in a clear and concise way.	**5.5**
II. Evaluation Methods A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.). Efforts to include the voices of different groups, e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) should be described. Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.	Final report: Evaluation approach is well described. The inclusion of different voices was achieved through community-level site visits, reflected in Table 2 as beneficiaries and in para 46.	**5.5**

The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described. It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome. Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected, and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. *'Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.*		
III. The Project This section should include: *Context:* Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). *Results framework*: Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) *Stakeholders:* Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics *Project implementation structure and partners:* A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners *Changes in design during implementation:* Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order *Project financing:* Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	Final report: All elements are covered in a clear and concise way.	**5.5**
IV. Theory of Change The *TOC at Evaluation* should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors. This section should include a description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[49] was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the *TOC at Evaluation. The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'. This table may have initially*	Final report: The Theory of Change is presented diagrammatically and assumptions/drivers are detailed. There is no narrative of the causal pathways nor description of how the TOC at Evaluation was arrived at, although this was detailed in the Inception Report (available from the Evaluation Office). This is an oversight on the part of the UNEP Evaluation Office to have not had this included in the final report.	**3**

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[49] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.		
V. Key Findings Findings Statements: The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual evaluation criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report: At the time of this report, the Evaluation Office had not finalised its guidance on including 'Findings' in its reports.	**N/A**
A. Strategic relevance: This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[50]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed: 　i.　Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities 　ii.　Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities 　iii.　Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities 　iv.　Complementarity with Existing Interventions	Final report: Sufficient detail is provided in this section against each of the 4 sub-categories.	**5.5**
B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?	Final report: Strengths and weaknesses in the project design are appropriately summarised.	**5.5**
C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[51]), and how they affected performance, should be described.	Final report: Section is appropriately covered.	**5.5**
D. Effectiveness **(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes:** How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention? The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.	Final report: Considerable detail is provided on the availability of outputs and this provides the rationale for the HU rating. Similarly, clear reasons are given for the HU rating at Outcome level. Comments from the project team are reflected in Annex I with the response from the evaluator and UNEP Evaluation Office.	**5.5**

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[50] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project <u>implementation</u> is considered under Efficiency, see below.

[51] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.	Final report: A relevant and detailed discussion of the project's likelihood of impact is provided. Whether assumptions held and/or drivers were realised is not discussed.	**4.5**
E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *Adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *communication* between financial and project management staff	Final report: All required aspects of financial management are addressed and supported by Table 8 within the text.	**5.5**
F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including: • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report: A substantial discussion of efficiency is provided and provides the rationale for the HU rating.	**5.5**
G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess: • Monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • Monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • Project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)*	Final report: A detailed analysis of the features of the monitoring of the project is provided, which provides the rationale for the Unsatisfactory rating.	**5**
H. Sustainability How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including: • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability	Final report: All 3 sub-categories are adequately and appropriately discussed.	**5**
I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are **integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate**. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes: • Preparation and readiness • Quality of project management and supervision[52]	Final report: Insights on all the sub categories are summarised. This section also provides inputs to the GEF Portal questions, summarised in the Annex.	**5**

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[52] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing

• Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • Environmental and social safeguards • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness		
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations **i) Quality of the conclusions:** Conclusions should be summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during an evaluation process. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.	Final report: The Conclusion summaries the performance of the project in a summative narrative.	**5**
ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.	Final report: Relevant lessons are presented.	**5**
iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations: To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when. At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The	Final report: Two recommendations are presented. Further recommendations may be extracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office from the lessons and presented to the wider organisation of UNEP (i.e. beyond this project team).	**4**

the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.		
Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.		
VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality		
i) **Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report: Guidelines are followed and Annexes are complete.	**5.5**
ii) **Quality of writing and formatting:** Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?	Final report: A clear and concise style of writing that was effective in presenting a complex and challenging evaluation process and findings.	**5.5**
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5**

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. <u>The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.</u>