Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Project GCP/LAO/022/LDF

GEF ID - 5489

Climate Change adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR

Final Report

MTR conducted in August 2020

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Lao PDR, March 2021

Contents

Acknowledgements

The MTR team comprised one independent international consultant, Mr. Jochem (Joost) Foppes as lead consultant covering project evaluation, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, institution building and capacity development and one national consultant, Mr. Yhoksamay Lathsavong, who covered rural extension, fisheries, livestock and agriculture and land and water management.

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MTR team

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- *Mr. Yhoksamay Lathsavong, National consultant*

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- *Ms. Geneviève Braun*
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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AWP/B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BH	Budget Holder
BKN	Beung Kiat Ngong Wetland
CAM	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Methodology
CAWA	Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas
CBNA	Capacity Building Needs Analysis
CC	Climate change
CEO	Chief Executing Officer (GEF)
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCAI	Climate Change Adaptation Initiative
CPS	Champasak Province
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DEQP	Department of Environment and Quality Promotion
DLM	Department of Land Management
DM	Disaster Management
DMC	Disaster Management Committees
DONRE	District Office of Natural Resources and the Environment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EBA	Ecosystem Based Adaptation
EP	Executing Partner
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO-GEF CU	GEF Coordination Unit of FAO
FLO	Funding Liaison Officer (FAO)
FE	Final Evaluation
FPMIS	Field Project Management Information System
GEBs	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	GEF Secretariat
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRAS	Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LNMC	Lao National Mekong Committee
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
LUP	Land Use Planning
LWU	Lao Women's Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mines
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment

MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MR	Management Response
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MWD	Mekong Water Dialogue
NAFRI	National Agriculture and Forestry Research institute
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	National Disaster Committee
NEC	National Environment Committee
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NSCCC	National Steering Committee on Climate Change
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
NSEDP	National Social and Economic Development Plan
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PIF	Project Identification Form (GEF)
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMCU	Project Management and Coordination Unit
PONRE	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and the Environment
PPG	Project Preparation Grant (GEF)
PPR	Project Progress Report
PRC	Provincial Ramsar Committee
PRODOC	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTF	Project Task Force
PY	Project Year
RBC	River Basin Committee
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RM	Mid-Term Review Manager
SO	FAO Strategic Objective
SAFREC	Southern Agriculture and Forestry Research Centre
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
SVK	Savannakhet Province
TCI	Investment Centre Division (FAO)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	United States Dollar
VDRA	Vulnerability and Disaster Risk Assessment
WB	World Bank
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

Executive summary

Introduction

1. This document describes the results of the mid-term review (MTR) of the project on Climate Change in Wetlands Adaptations (CAWA) carried out in July 2020. The project is funded by GEF and implemented by FAO and executed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) of the Lao PDR with technical support from FAO. The purpose of the MTR was to assess progress towards expected outcomes and identify areas in need of improvement and/or corrective actions in order to achieve its target results.

2. The main MTR questions were:

A: Relevance

1) Are the project outcomes congruent with country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, and indigenous peoples, if relevant)?
2) Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programs that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals? If so, are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?

B: Effectiveness of project results

3) To what extent has the project achieved improved understanding among stakeholders on risks of climate change and disaster mitigation of targeted wetlands?
4) What is the progress of implementation of project activities towards work plans?
5) How do recipients experience project interventions with regards to their livelihoods and their living environment?
6) Is there any evidence of impact on wetland management, water management and wetland-dependent livelihoods?
7) Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the achievement of the project's longer-term objectives? What can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impacts from the project? To what extent can the progress towards long-term impacts be attributed to the project?

C: Efficiency

8) Did they intervention deliver results in a timely and cost-effective manner? How were inputs converted to outputs, outcomes and impacts in a cost-effective way? Were inputs delivered within the intended time-frame?

D: Sustainability:

9) Can beneficiaries sustain benefits over time? Has the project contributed to more resilience against risks of climate change?
10) Is there any evidence of replication or scaling up of project results? What factors would enhance replication?

E: Factors affecting performance

11) How is the approach of the project received by project partners? How are stakeholders engaged in all steps of project planning, implementation and monitoring?
12) How does the project approach enhance partner's capacities?
13) Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes?
14) Is there a clear Theory of Change, how well is it understood/shared by stakeholders? If not, what would be a suitable Theory of Change to all stakeholders?
15) How are project implementing partners discharging their roles and responsibilities? What changes might be needed to improve delivery over the latter half of the project?
16) What are the financial management challenges? To what extent have co-financing pledges been delivered?

G: Cross-cutting issues

17) To what extent are gender and other equity considerations taken into account in the design and execution of the project?
18) To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and execution of the project?

3. The MTR was implemented from 10 to 28 August 2020, with field visits to the two sites from 13-22 August 2020.

Main findings

4. Relevance is highly satisfactory: The CAWA project is highly relevant relative to development needs of target communities. For GEF, the project is aligned with CAA-1 Outcomes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and CCA-2 outcome 2.1. For FAO, the project contributes to its strategic objective no 5: Increased resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. The

project is also highly relevant to a number of Lao Government policy priorities: the RAMSAR convention acceded by Lao PDR in 2010, the NAPA 2009, the National Climate Change Strategy 2010 and the National Water Resources Strategy 2010. The 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan mentions preparation of wetland management plans and also prioritizes income generation from sustainable fisheries, NTFPs and tourism in and around wetlands. The main issue to be addressed is the lack of consensus between stakeholders on main objectives and the approach to wetland management. International parties focus on the impact of climate change on wetland biodiversity. Local communities focus on the economic role of wetland for livelihoods. Some Government agencies see floods as a problem that needs disaster management. Others agencies regard floods as a source of water for dry-season rice farming. There is also confusion on mandates over wetland management between ministries.

5. Effectiveness in unsatisfactory. The project focused too much on studies in the beginning, causing a delay of more than two years before field operations took off. As a result, very few of the output targets have been met so far. Achievements under component 1 were moderately satisfactory. A wide range of studies were implemented but they did little to build capacity of stakeholders to develop wetland management plans or think about climate change adaptive measures.

6. There is a wide range of such measures being tested under component 2, they look promising but this has only just started in 2020, it will take more time for these activities to become good models for replication. This is by far the most important component which will require more attention. There are not many achievements under component 3, which was about integrating project results in wetland management policies.

7. Efficiency is moderately satisfactory. The main weakness of the project was in timeliness of delivery of implementation and execution. Timeliness has improved but still could be improved. The project is reasonably cost-effective, compared to similar projects in Laos.

8. Sustainability is moderately likely. The main risks are lack of institutions at all levels to implement management plans and the lack of good models for climate change adaptation measures.

9. Achievements on factors affecting performance are moderately unsatisfactory. The project design lacked a good theory of change and did not have a strong institution-building strategy. The quality of implementation has much improved by using the tool of LoAs to support project implementation by a wider range of partners, especially at province and district level. Oversight by FAO was strict, but was not able to prevent the delays in field implementation to build up over almost three years. Good financial management allows for investments to be used where they are needed: capacity building at village, district and province levels. Only 27% of the projected co-financing potential was reached so far. This limits the potential for scaling-up project results.

10. The partnerships with MONRE, IUCN and IWMI and individual consultants delivered a range of 26 technical reports of good quality. The weakness is that the accumulated knowledge did not help partners at district and village level much to become more effective in CC adaptations or in developing wetland management plans. Partnerships with province and district partners have improved since these partners were given LoA contracts as of 2019. The partnership with the central Government partners is cordial but has not resulted in key outputs foreseen at strategic level (e.g. National RAMSAR guidelines). The project has been effective in communicating the need for climate resilient wetland management through a range of channels. The project had designed a good M&E system since 2017, did not follow it. Socio-economic baseline data were only collected in 4 villages in 2018 and little data oh impact as the logical framework did not provide clear measurable indicators. This makes monitoring of impact very difficult.

11. Cross-cutting issues were addressed moderately unsatisfactory. There is no sufficient focus on empowering women in wetland management, no clear strategy for involving them. There are no poverty-segregated data on who are the poor, medium or rich households. The project is addressing environmental management, but still weak on social standards. Vulnerability assessments were done but did not help local communities to better understand, plan or implement resilient wetlands management.

12. The MTR gave overall ratings on achievements as follows (see also table v below):

- Progress towards achieving the project's development objective(s): **Moderately Unsatisfactory**
- Overall progress on implementation: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**
- Overall risk rating : **Moderately Likely** to achieve Sustainability

13. Progress, challenge and outcomes in stakeholder engagement: the project engages a range of national, province, district and community-level stakeholders. The project has started to engage local communities in wetland management and they are working well together with district environmental authorities. The problem remains on

province and national level. There is no overall wetland management strategy or management plan yet. Wetlands are not delineated as separate entities in Land Use Plans. They are sometimes put under agricultural land, sometimes under forest land. This causes ambiguity as to who has the authority to manage them. Also, the national institutional mechanisms for RAMSAR have only been partially developed so far. There is a national focus point (MONRE) and there is a province wetland management committee, but they have not met regularly. There are no active committees yet on Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) or on Scientific Technical Review (STRP). It is also not clear how MONRE can effectively deal with claims on authority over wetlands from other Ministries (e.g. Agriculture). Lack of budgets is another issue limiting effectiveness of institutional development.

14. Progress on gender-responsive measures: Women are the primary users of wetlands, but remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies and processes regarding wetlands. The project should develop gender-responsive measures to address this issue.

15. Knowledge activities and products: the project has produced a number of 26 consultancy reports, guidelines and it has disseminated the need for climate change resilient wetland management in various national platforms. They include participatory and gender-sensitive vulnerability and disaster risk assessment (VDRA), participatory climate change adaptation planning, wetland management training for community and government site managers, fish conservation zones, native fish catch monitoring, small-scale native fish hatcheries, wetlands demarcation, community-led wetland clearing, community-based ecotourism development[1]. Project field staff and government counterparts and village representatives use their mobile phones to report news in the form of self-edited videos, many of which are featured on the news of the Lao National Television and other channels. The project collects and documents lessons learned through LoA reports on activities submitted by 12 implementing partners.

16. The project is considered moderately likely to have sustainable results. The mains risks are the two factors described above: not having a common policy and institutional framework and not having good models for CC adaptation and wetland management plans delivered on-time so there is a chance for them to be scaled up.

III Conclusions

17. The CAWA project scores high on relevance (highly satisfactory). It is considered highly relevant to a large group of beneficiary communities whose livelihoods depend on resilient wetlands and adapting sustainable climate-change adaptations. The project is also considered highly coherent with key Government policies on poverty reduction and environmental management.

18. There is still a lack of agreement among stakeholders on the project framework and a strategy for institution-building. For the remainder of the project period, the TA team should focus on facilitating processes that will deliver a uniform concept agreed upon by all stakeholders.

19. After a very slow start, the project has made good steps towards improving its effectiveness, but progress remains unsatisfactory so far. Most of its key targets for outputs remain to be met. The project will need to be given an extension of at least one year to achieve its outputs, which should be possible with the remaining budget. The TA team should be given ample time in the field to ensure that outputs will be achieved and be of good quality.

20. The CAWA project is managed in a cost-effective manner, but timeliness of delivery remains unsatisfactory. Overall efficiency is therefore considered moderately unsatisfactory. FAO should review timeliness of its decision-making processes.

21. The CAWA project scores moderately unsatisfactory on factors affecting performance. The project scores well on the development of partnerships and the design of its M&E system, but is still weak in addressing shortcomings in the design of the project, oversight by FAO, implementation of its M&E system (poor baseline) and influencing central Government agencies to move forward with wetland policy development.

22. Also the performance on cross-cutting issues is deemed moderately unsatisfactory. Women are the primary users of wetlands, but remain underrepresented in bodies and processes for decision-making on wetlands management.

23. Overall, the conclusion of the MTR is that CAWA project had a poor start. It is improving steadily but it's on the performance is still moderately unsatisfactory. It is a highly relevant project so it is important to try to achieve its

[1] Resources such as reports and videos can be found at http://www.fao.org/in-action/climate-adaptation-in-wetland-areas-in-lao-pdr-cawa/publications/en/.

expected outputs. The project is moving in the right direction, but should be given time to address the issues identified in this MTR.

Recommendations

A: Strategic relevance

A.1 Review ToC with stakeholders to create consensus through a series of target network actions and events Project team before Jan 2021 (GEF, FAO_GEF-CU, FAO-RAP, RAMSAR, MONRE, PONRE, DONRE, affected communities)

A.2 Hire an International Short-Term Institution Building Specialist to prepare a strategy and roadmap towards an institutional framework for wetlands management in Lao PDR. Strategy ready by Feb 2021 (FAO Laos)

A.3 Revise the capacity building strategy in the light of the new institutional strategy and roadmap by May 2021 (FAO TA team)

B: Effectiveness

B.1 Project partners should agree on a budget-neutral extension of at least one year, to be agreed before May 2021. GEF/FAO/MONRE)

B.2 Project should focus on establishing good models in inner core villages first, before scaling up to outer core villages and district. No scaling up until Sep. 2021 (FAO TA team)

B.3 Project should do a participatory evaluation of CCA measures to improve quality and chances of replication before end 2020 (FAO TA team)

B.4 Project should have good models on the ground for conservation of flooded forests by reforestation with native species established before June 2021 (FAO TA team)

B.5 Project could support NTFP management in forests adjacent to wetlands to create synergy in community management of natural resources (e.g. malva nuts in XBN) by end of 2021 (FAO TA team)

B.6 Project should focus on rice, livestock and tourism. Not to start new value chains for handicrafts or NTFPs (FAO TA team)

B.7 Project should strengthen flood warning systems, communication and rapid response capacity among communities by end of 2021 (FAO TA team_

B.8 Project should include a step of revising village level management plans in the process of developing district-level wetland management plans ready by December 2021 (FAO TA team)

B.9 Project should have a formal agreement to collaborate and coordinate with the WCS project, to integrate land use plans/ maps into wetland management planning, formal agreement before December 2020 (FAO Laos & TA team)

B.10 Project should complete demarcation of core zones, using good quality markers before end of 2020 (FAO TA team)

C: Efficiency

C.1 New FAO Operations Specialist should relieve CTA of most administrative function, so that CT can spend more time on institutional development. Country Office should agree on revised TORs before Dec 2020 (FAO Laos)

C.2 FAO should review its procedures for approving activity plans and budgets to speed up delivery of project results. Operations Specialist should follow this up before February 2021 (FAO_GEF-CU, FAO-RAP, FAO-Laos).

C.3 Project team should review cost-effectiveness and look for ways to improve quality and quantity of outputs before March 2021 (FAO Laos, FAO TA team)

D: Sustainability and catalysis/replication

D.1 Main risks (lack of institutional framework and lack of CC adaptation models that could be scaled up) can be addressed through recommendations under A and B above.

E: Factors affecting performance

E.1 Project should develop an exit strategy to assist partners in finding new sources of funding and capacity to carry on not later than one year before the end of the project. (FAO Laos, FAO TA team)

E.2 Project should establish a baseline for all the revised indicators in its theory of change before March 2021 (FAO TA team)

F: Cross-cutting dimensions

F.1 Project should review its gender strategy and develop interventions to improve women's participation in wetland management before August 2021, (FAO TA team)

F.2 Project should develop a few simple but effective activities to improve community waste management by August 2021 (FAO TA team). There are good examples e.g. in Laos e.g. by the French INGO GRET.

1.1.1 V Summary GEF rating table (see appendix 8 for the extensive version)

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Comments
A Strategic relevance	HS	Project is considered highly relevant to needs of local beneficiaries and coherent with national and local policy goals for wetland management.
B Overall assessment of project results	MU	Project experienced a delay of almost two years in field implementation. Very few output targets have been reached so far. Many promising activities have been started recently (2020) but will require an extension of the project period to bear results.
C Efficiency	MS	Project disbursement mechanisms through LoAs are working well. There are still some delays in delivery of services due to complicated budget approval procedures within the FAO system.
D Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Pilot measures tested by the project at local level have a good chance of being sustainable, if more time can be allowed to build experience and capacity to maintain them. It is less clear to what extent the project will be able to influence policy making on wetland management at national level.
E. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MU	Project has built strong partnerships but still falls short in monitoring of indicators, as many baseline data remain to be recorded.
F1. Cross-cutting issues	MU	Project is likely to achieve environmental benefits through improved wetland management. Capacities of wetland user groups are still limited and there has been little visible attempt at promoting participation of women in wetland management bodies.
Overall project rating	MU	The project has reached very few of its output targets. After a slow start, the project is now starting to become effective. An extension of at least a year will be needed for the project to reach its goals.

(HS=Highly Satisfactory, MS=Moderately Satisfactory, ML=Moderately Likely, MU= Moderately Unsatisfactory)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the MTR

1 This MTR was called for in the project document under Section 4-Implementation and Management Arrangements. Terms of Reference (ToR) for the MTR follow the FAO-GEF Guide for Planning and Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of FAO-GEF Projects and Programmes (2020).

2 The scope of the MTR covers the period of project implementation from June 2016 to June 2020. The MTR conducted field visits in the two project areas (Se Champhone wetlands in Savannakhet Province and Kiet Ngong wetlands in Champasak Province). The MTR engaged national, province and district stakeholders as well as project beneficiaries in target villages. The MTR reviewed developments in the context of the project's implementation, including developments in relevant partner strategies, trends in pressures on site development and shifts in internal and external risk since the design of the project. All components, outputs and activities of the project were evaluated.

1.2 Objective of the MTR

3 The main objective of the MTR was to assess progress towards expected outcomes and identify areas in need of improvement and/or corrective actions in order to achieve its target results. The main review questions were formulated in the inception report as:

A: Relevance

1) Are the project outcomes congruent with country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, and indigenous peoples, if relevant)?
2) Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programs that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals? If so, are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?

B: Effectiveness of project results

3) To what extent has the project achieved improved understanding among stakeholders on risks of climate change and disaster mitigation of targeted wetlands?
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C: Efficiency

8) Did they intervention deliver results in a timely and cost-effective manner? How were inputs converted to outputs, outcomes and impacts in a cost-effective way? Were inputs delivered within the intended time-frame?

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9) Can beneficiaries sustain benefits over time? Has the project contributed to more resilience against risks of climate change?

10) Is there any evidence of replication or scaling up of project results? What factors would enhance replication?

E: Factors affecting performance

11) How is the approach of the project received by project partners? How are stakeholders engaged in all steps of project planning, implementation and monitoring?

12) How does the project approach enhance partner's capacities?

13) Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes?

14) Is there a clear Theory of Change, how well is it understood/shared by stakeholders? If not, what would be a suitable Theory of Change to all stakeholders?

15) How are project implementing partners discharging their roles and responsibilities? What changes might be needed to improve delivery over the latter half of the project?

16) What are the financial management challenges? To what extent have co-financing pledges been delivered?

G: Cross-cutting issues

17) To what extent are gender and other equity considerations taken into account in the design and execution of the project?

18) To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and execution of the project?

4 In reviewing project achievements, the MTR followed GEF evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability as factors affecting performance and delivery and cross-cutting dimensions: gender and equity concerns, environmental and social safeguards. The MTR is also aimed to draw lessons and provide recommendations for corrective actions to stakeholders.

1.3 Intended users

5 The main intended users of the MTR report are project team and project partners at the national level; project executing agencies at province and district level and project beneficiaries at village level, GEF; FAO at the international level. Table 1 below summarizes these of the MTR, what they want to learn from the MTR, and why and how they are expected to use the results of the MTR. The section should also reference the stakeholder analysis and selection of interviewees identified in the inception report.

Table 1: intended users of the MTR

Primary Users of the MTR	What they want to learn from the MTR	How they expect to use the MTR
International Level: GEF, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (inclusive of LTO), GCU and other responsible units at FAO HQ (e.g. PTF and TOs), BH and PMU	-was the design suitable, does it need change -what is the progress towards objectives/indicators - what lessons can be learned - is the approach suitable, what could be improved	- agree on adjustments to be made to design, time frame of the project and case for extension -assess theory of change -share and build on lessons learned
National Level: Project Steering Committee (PSC), Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MAF) and other national project partners (e.g. IUCN), Tetraktys)	-is the project contributing to national development policy priorities -are stakeholders at province/ district/ village levels satisfied with progress -what is the progress towards agreed goals -what is the progress in allocating funds to partner organizations, efficiency -what has been the impact of the project on capacity building at province/district and village levels	-to report project progress to higher authorities -to review the performance of the project implementing agencies at all levels - to agree on adjustments made to design, timeframe of the project and a case for extension
Province Level: Province Offices of Natural Resources and Environment (PONRE), Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and Lao Women's Union (PLWU)	-how effective was the support received from the project - what could be improved to achieve agreed targets	-to help decide on scope of action at district levels -to propose alternative arrangements and activities to project management
District Level: District Offices of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE), Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) and Lao Women's Union (DLWU)	-how effective was the support received from the project - what could be improved to achieve agreed targets	-to better plan activities for result -to propose alternative arrangements and activities to project management
Village Beneficiary Level: Village Committees on Wetlands, Water and Fish Management. Specific Groups of wetland users: Men, Women, Farmers, fishermen, livestock owners, women collecting daily foods from the wetlands	-how effective was the support received from the project -learn from each other what is working well, what is not yet working	-to have their voice heard -to propose additional priorities for support from the project to manage wetland and water resources better

1.4 Methodology

6 **Overall methodological approach -** The MTR review adopted a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders kept informed throughout the MTR process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered underpinned its validation and analysis as well as to support the conclusions and recommendations.

7 To validate the contribution of the project towards its stated outputs and outcomes, field visits were conducted to meet farmer-beneficiaries, women, and other stakeholder groups, and to observe and assess changes in livelihoods and environment. Desk reviews and consultative interviews with project staff at FAO Laos constituted an important aspect of the review, primarily in relation to question of efficiency and factors affecting performance.

8 **Sample and sampling frame** – as there were no individual household interviews foreseen, there was no sampling strategy. The MTR visited seven of the 48 target villages where activities are on-going and met with province stakeholders in two provinces and four districts. The seven villages visited were selected in consultation with district authorities on the basis of having a wide range of activities going on. The MTR consulted 20 key persons in Vientiane city, 12 in each province city. In each village a meeting was held with around 8 men and 8 women. A total of 163 persons consulted, of which 102 men and 61 women (see appendix 6 for a complete list of people met).

1.5 Data-collection methods and sources

9 *Data-collection methods, tools* – the MTR prepared separate checklists of questions for interviews with national, province/district stakeholders and village beneficiaries, see Appendix 4.

- In village meetings, consultants used a visual approach, asking villagers to draw a map of the wetland, then adding the different uses, contributions to household income, issues of management (economic, environmental, social), villager's assessment of project interventions, and villager's proposals for the future. The MTR also had a special meeting with the FAO project staff to review the theory of change.

10 *Data sources* – the MTR reviewed a package of documents provided by the project, consisting of the original project document, annual plans and progress reports, special consultant reports.

11 *Stakeholder engagement —* Stakeholders were selected on the basis of being directly involved with project implementation. This included staff at the MONRE, the executing agency, at nation al level and partner organizations such as IUCN, Province level PONRE decision makers and technical staff, district level executing agencies and village beneficiaries. The list of key informants interviewed is provided in Appendix 6.

12 *Composition of the MTR team – The* two members of the MTR team share a long experience (Mr. Foppes 27 years, Mr. Lathsavong 20 years) working in Lao PDR in the natural resource management sector on biodiversity conservation, livelihoods, value chains, participatory land management and nutrition aspects in various capacities as project implementers, researchers, advisers, evaluators in a context of donor-NGO projects supporting the Lao Government. They understand the institutional context, and can both communicate in Lao language directly with stakeholders.

1.6 Limitations

13 There were no large limitations to the ability of the MTR team to implement their mission. The team was mobilized timely and FAO provided adequate logistic support allowing the team to meet all stakeholders according to an agreed schedule.

2. Project background and context

14 *Project Title:* Climate Change adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR.

15 ***Context:*** The project targets two RAMSAR wetlands in Lao PDR: Xe Champhone (XC) in Savannakhet Province and Beung Kiet Ngong (BKN) in Champasak Province. Wetlands are an important source for livelihoods and biodiversity resources in the lower areas of Lao PDR. Champhone district is considered the rice bowl of the country due to its ability to grow large surpluses of rice. Besides water for rice growing, wetlands also provide benefits for fisheries, livestock, vegetables and Non-Timber Forest Products. Wetlands are also important habitats for threatened species of fish, turtles and crocodiles. Climate Change will have a big impact on these ecosystem services from wetlands and may lead to increased vulnerability to disasters (irregular floods, droughts).

16 ***Threats and Barriers being addressed by the project:*** Communities living in and around these wetlands are vulnerable to Climate Change impacts, causing irregular flooding and droughts. The project aims to improve understanding and capacity of these communities and relevant Government agencies to be better able to adopt adaptive strategies. The project specifically aims to address three key barriers:

- Barrier 1: Inadequate knowledge and understanding of CC impacts and the complex and interrelated nature of vulnerabilities to CC and natural disasters

-Barrier 2: Limited knowledge and experience for the development and implementation of specific CC adaptation measures

-Barrier 3: Long term CC adaptation (CCA) planning is sector specific, general, not yet translated or integrated into local planning and is not informed by tested and cost-effective CCA measures

17 ***Project duration and dates***: 01 June 2016- 30 June 2021 (5 years)

18 ***GEF Project ID:*** GCP/LAO/022/LDF

19 ***GEF focal area:*** LDCF. Strategic Objectives; GEF 6, CCA-1, CCA-2 and CCA-3.

-The project was approved under GEF5, but will use the AMAT tracking tools of GEF6,

-CCA-1 - Reduce vulnerability of people, livelihoods, physical assets and natural systems to the adverse effects of climate change;

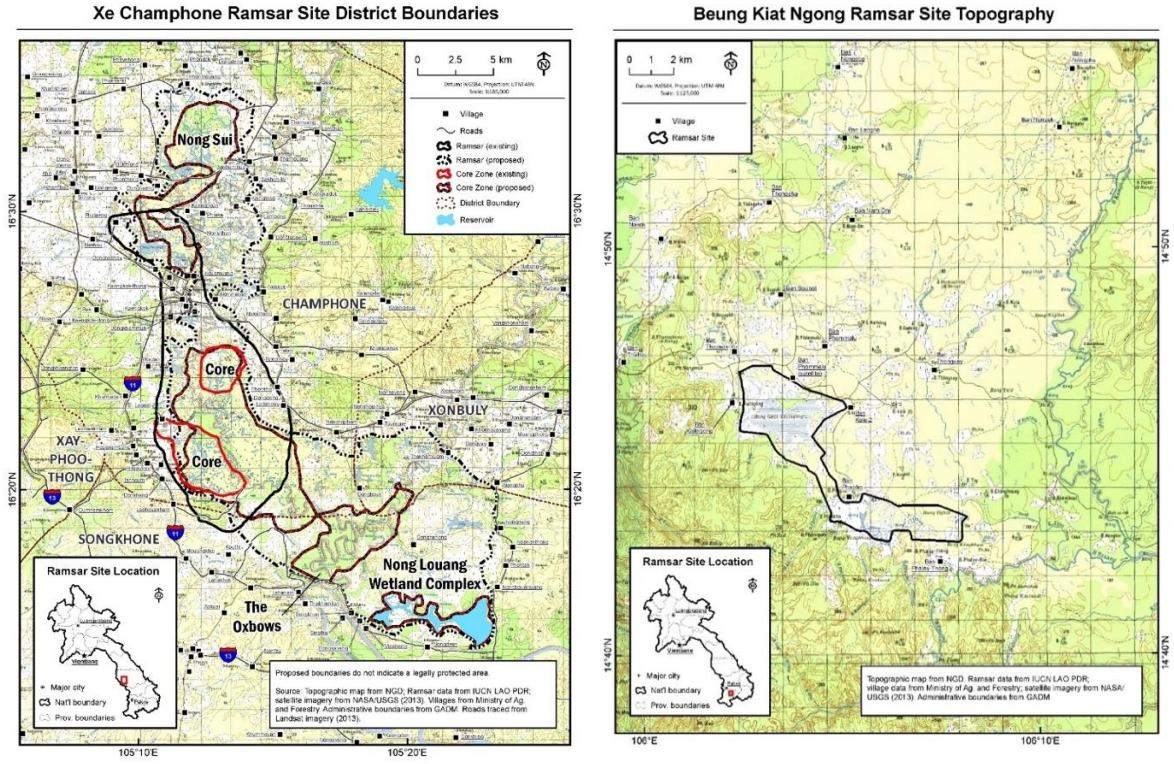
-CCA-2 - Strengthen institutional and technical capacities for effective climate change adaptation;

-CCA-3 - Integrate climate change adaptation into relevant policies, plans and associated processes.

20 ***Executing Partners:*** Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

21 ***Project Sites:*** The project targets two wetland areas in Lao PDR, which contain the country's only two declared Ramsar sites: Xe Champone (XC) in Savannakhet province (12,400 ha, 14 villages, 7,000 inhabitants) and Beung Kiat Ngong (BKN) in Champasak province (2,360 ha, 13 villages, 11,500 inhabitants), see area maps below.

22 ***Project Strategy and Expected Results***: The project's strategy for reducing the climate change vulnerability of communities and wetlands is centered on the concept of *"Ecosystem-Based Adaptation"* (EBA). This strategy involves empowering local communities to manage the wetlands allowing them to maintain their abilities to buffer the impacts of climate change (both through acting as a physical buffer, for example by absorbing and smoothing high and low river flows, and through the provision of diversified and resilient livelihood support options).



23 The project aims to reduce the vulnerability to the impacts of climate change of 55,650 people living in 60 rural communities located in and around two target wetlands of global importance (the only two wetlands in Laos designated as Ramsar sites). The expected results of the project at community level are:

-1,280 families (8,400 members), in the 20 villages within the current Ramsar site boundaries, involved in adaptive agricultural practices, systems and infrastructure (e.g. climate smart agriculture, improved cropland management, dry and wet season rice cultivation, livestock production, aquaculture)

-800 families (5,250 members) in the 20 villages within the current Ramsar site boundaries, have acquired at least one additional livelihood support option as a CC fallback option

-6,400 families (42,000 members) in 40 other villages within the proposed expanded Ramsar site boundaries have improved and more sustainable access to wetland products and services

-47,360 ha of wetland habitats in XC and BKN with indices of CC-related management effectiveness maintained at least at baseline levels

-Between 600 and 1,220 ha of target wetlands under improved direct management:

- *200ha of forests under improved management to increase resilience to CC effects (floods, erosion etc.)*
- *200ha under invasive species management*
- *20ha with water flow improved due to wetland re-opening*
- *600ha with protected habitats and nesting sites (e.g. lakes for crocodiles, forests for bird nesting)*
- *200ha with controlled burning to improve habitat condition.*

24 ***Project Objectives and Components***. The objective of the project is to reduce climate change (CC) vulnerability of communities and the fragile wetland eco-systems upon which they depend. The project has three components:

25 Component 1: Improved understanding of CC impacts and risks in XC and BKN wetlands

Output 1.1. Pilot methodological tool for participatory CC vulnerability and disaster risk assessment (VDRA) in wetlands developed.
Output 1.2. Training program on climate change/CC adaptation (CCA) and vulnerability and disaster risk assessment (VDRA) in wetlands.
Output 1.3. Participatory CC vulnerability risk assessment carried out in BKN and XC wetlands
Output 1.4: Studies of CC-related issues affecting the target wetlands

26 Component 2: Efficient and cost-effective adaptation measures

Output 2.1. Planning and coordination frameworks for the two sites promoting CCA measures
Output 2.2: Capacities of water/natural resources/wetlands user groups strengthened to apply effective governance of NRM use and management
Output 2.3. Direct investment in CCA strategies.
Output 2.4: Capacity development programs and innovation systems supporting CC resilience strategies.
Output 2.5. Early warning, disaster risk reduction and early recovery measures and systems in place

27 Component 3: Integration of CCA and disaster management measures into planning processes.

Output 3.1. Methodological guidelines for integration of CC adaptation and disaster risk management into local and national plans.
Output 3.2. Training program for community, district and provincial stakeholders in participatory CC adaptation and disaster management planning and M&E.
Output 3.3. Institutional mechanisms for coordinating climate change resilience in wetlands strengthened

28 Groups and Beneficiaries the project aims to reach: The project document states that the project aimed to cover a first tier of around 27 villages with 21,500 inhabitants most directly involved in their management, later adding a second tier of 33 villages with around 34,150 inhabitants who are less directly involved, bringing the total to 60 villages with around 60 villages and 55,650 inhabitants.

29 Key Partners involved in the project: FAO is the GEF Agency responsible for supervision and provision of technical guidance as well as being the financial and operational Executing Agency. The project is executed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

(MONRE), which is also the Lead Coordinating Agency (LCA). The project is managed through Project Steering Committees (PSC) at National and Province levels, which include representatives from a range of relevant line agencies.

30 The LCA is supported by a Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU), which has executive responsibility for the delivery of project outputs and the achievement of project outcomes. The PMCU consists of a National Project Coordinator (NPC) from MONRE, supported at central level by a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) from FAO and two Provincial Project Units (PPUs) staffed by technical advisors appointed by FAO and funded by LDCF. The PMCU works in direct support of District Implementation Teams comprised of DONRE, DAFO and local communities. Other key project partners supporting the PMCU include IUCN and IWMI, who provide TA services for specific outputs, specified in LoAs.

31 *Human and financial resources*: The FAO Project Advisory team consists presently of an international CTA, a National Knowledge Management and Participation Specialist monitoring officer, a National Capacity Building Specialist, two Administrative Officers and two District Level Coordinators., all based in the capital city. As of September 2020, the team will be strengthened by an International Operations Specialist.

32 The project document of 2016 projects a total cost of the project be USD 20,084,959, to be financed through a USD 4,717,579 LDCF grant from GEF and USD 15,367,380 in co-financing from. In practice, the project relied mostly on the core LDCF funding as most of the foreseen co-funding did not materialize.

33 *Any significant political, socioeconomic and environmental changes that may affect the project*: There were unprecedented floods in 2019, which have increased awareness on the need to adapt to climate change among village beneficiaries as well as Government agencies. The COVID-19 crisis of 2020 has had a big impact on both target areas. While Lao PDR has managed to stay free of COVID-19 infections, the impact is mainly economic. Significant numbers of Lao workers returning from Thailand are residing in all project target villages. While no official statistics exist, their numbers make up 10-30% of the labor force in these villages (MTR's estimate from interviews with villagers). With no income, these people will increase poverty levels. On the positive side they constitute a labor force that could be employed.

34 *Any changes made to the project's design, timeline or budget*: The scope of the project was extended from 25 to 51 target villages and from two to four districts in 2019. No other changes have been made so far, but as will be explained throughout this report, the MTR will recommend a budget-neutral extension.

35 *Implementation Status to date*: Three phases can be distinguished between June 2016 and June 2020:

36 *A: Start-up Phase: June 2016-June 2018*: Good progress was made implementing component 1, but little action took place in components 2 and 3. The approach focused mainly on research and was mostly implemented by the central government partner. There was very little action on CC adaptive measures in the field among villagers, district and province partners. This led to dissatisfaction with project progress among project partners and a substantial turnover of staff within the project team. The CTA resigned at the end of this phase.

37 *B: Middle Period (July 2018-January 2019).* Without CTA, the project was limited in its effectiveness, but still managed to shift from component 1 to components 2 and 3, notably

through the establishment of Fish Conservation Zones (FCZ) and several livelihood activities in collaboration with Province partners. The project still did not have good baseline data or improved wetland management plans and there was no mechanism for structurally supporting province and district partners through Letters of Agreement (LoAs). This resulted in underspending of the budget, especially for component 2.

38 *C: Final years (February 2019-June 2020).* With the arrival of a new CTA, the project rapidly established seven new LoAs, allowing district and province partners to implement activities. This resulted in a rapid expansion of progress in field implementation. In both sites, the scope of the action has been expanded, including new villages and adding two other districts, increasing the number of target villages from 25 to 51. Budget allocation has been improved, but many activities are still in the initial stage. The project would need another year to deliver the expected results, which could be funded from remaining funds.

3. Theory of change

39 There was no Theory of Change (ToC) developed during the design phase. The MTR team asked stakeholders how they see the problems of and theory of change and found:

- There are still big differences in what each stakeholder sees as the main objectives of the project:
    - Some parties focus on the impact of climate change on wetland biodiversity
    - Local communities focus on the economic role of wetland for livelihoods
    - Some see floods as a problem that needs disaster management
    - Others floods as a source of water for dry-season rice farming
- There is confusion on outputs and outcomes: What are called "outcomes" in the project document are actually project outputs, they are not linked to wider outcomes in terms of well-being of people and nature.
- The RAMSAR wetlands in Lao PDR are a contested area:
    - *Vertical confusion:* Villages, district authorities, province authorities and Ministry of Environment all claim leadership priority. Responsibilities and rights remain to be assigned.
    - *Horizontal confusion:* Various line departments all claim their legislation prevails over wetlands: Land, Water, Agriculture, and Forestry. There is no specific legislative framework for wetlands management.
    - *Lack of a clear regulatory framework:* There is no specific category for wetlands in land use planning processes. Wetlands are either categorized as forests, agricultural land or water surfaces which are all managed by different sets of regulations
- Both at country and at project level there is no clear vision on institution: who will be the managers of the wetlands at each level, what rules will apply, what responsibilities should each management level have, what capacities should be built to implement CC Adaptations? This remains to be worked out.

40 The project document seems to imply a ToC where the focus is on climate change and on lack of knowledge among stakeholders. It describes a rather generic process whereby improved stakeholder understanding on impacts of Climate Change (CC) under component 1 will provide a basis for developing CC adaptations under component 2, which can be scaled up under component 3 to inform policy and planning approaches. It is less clear which CC adaptations should be promoted or how CC adaptations impact on wetland ecology, hydrology and on livelihoods derived from wetlands.

41 The strong focus on knowledge development led the project to spend a lot of time hiring consultants to do studies. While these have generated a large pile of reports, they have contributed very little to improved or shared understanding of stakeholders, especially at the community level. The studies focused too much on wildlife issues, not enough on livelihood issues or water management issues. Not much progress was made in developing

CC adaptations or strengthening local leadership structures to manage wetlands better. This is a major complaint heard from many stakeholders.

42 Project staff and villagers have quite a different analysis of the issues. They focus more on the internal dynamics of wetland ecosystems, and less on climate change, which is more an external factor that impacts on those existing dynamics. They see wetlands as an ecological system which floods structurally. Local people have already adapted to this by shifting rice cultivation from the wet season to the dry season. Floods are not seen as a disaster, rather as a good thing, bringing water and nutrients that will allow dry season farming.

43 The main impacts of irregular floods, caused by climate change, are issues of cattle feeding when pastures are inundated and impacts on infrastructures. These can be mitigated by early warning systems, avoiding construction of structures that obstruct the flow of water and production of animal fodder.

44 The main problems in wetland management are related to dry season farming. Over the last twenty years, there has been a big increase in the use of local diesel pumps taking water out of natural ponds and lakes. This has resulted in an increase in rice production which is a key source of income, helping local communities out of poverty. The downside is a tendency towards lower water levels.

45 This drives farmers to encroach on wetland habitats, extending their paddy fields to be closer to the source of water. This encroachment is a main threat to water storage functions of wetlands and to wildlife habitats. It has led to destruction of flooded forests, areas suitable for vegetable production and animal grazing. It also inhibits natural regeneration of native fish species which reduces fish catches. Related problems are invasive plant species such as *Mimosa pigra* which choke up wetlands and reduce their water retention function. These problems call for solutions such as Fish Conservation Zones, Land Use Plans, zoning and demarcation of zones, clear rules and regulations on wetland use and strong committees entitled to enforce them, forage production models, restoration of wetland habitats, especially flooded forests and protection of rare fish and wildlife species. The increased competition on access to water for dry season rice farming creates a need for water user groups that can regulate fair access to water and maintaining agreed minimum water levels.

46 The ToC presented below was produced through a series of meetings between the MTR team and the project's TA team (see diagram). The desired long-term outcome of the project remains "increased resilience (to climate change) of local communities and the wetlands on which they depend". To reach that long-term outcome, the project aims at three immediate outcomes:

- **Wetlands Protected and Restored**: effective protection of biodiversity, encroachment halted, flooded forests restored
- **Hydrology and Water Flows Managed Better:** less flood damage, better water retention, early warning systems
- **Sustainable Livelihoods Derived from Wetlands**: sustainable rice and fish yields and alternative incomes

47 To reach these outcomes, the project can be seen as aiming to achieve 10 key outputs:

1. Participatory Wetland Plans
2. Models for Flooded Forests

3. Clearly Demarcated Zones with rules and regulations on their use
4. Empowered Wetland Management Committees in all villages and at cluster and district level
5. Early Warning Systems for Floods based on hydrological monitoring and good communications
6. Models for removing invasive species to restore wetland habitats
7. Restoration/reparation of water-regulating structures
8. Water User Groups established and running
9. Models for native fish production in wetlands (FCZ) and ponds
10. Models for forage production and livestock raising
11. Models for alternative incomes from tourism and NTFPs

48 The original division into three components can be maintained to plan project activities, but less emphasis should be given to component 1, more emphasis should be given to completion of component 2 and paying more attention to local institution building under component 3.

49 The main inputs provided by the donor are then seen as technical assistance, investments in institution building and investments in climate change adaptations.

50 This ToC is not a final product but it makes outputs and outcomes more visible and easier to monitor for all stakeholders. It may serve to develop a common vision in further dialogue with stakeholders.

Theory of Change of the Project on Climate Change Adaptations for Wetland Areas (CAWA)

1 Technical Assistance
-full-time staff
-short-term consultancies on contract basis

2 Investments in Institution Building
-steering structures
-capacity building and training
-knowledge exchange

3 Investments in Climate Change Adaptations through Letters of Agreements (LoAs)

Component1:
1 Develop Vulnerability assessment tool
2 CCA training
3 Implement vulnerability assessment
4 Studies on CC issues

Component3:
1 Develop guidelines for integrating CCA and DRM in local and national plans
2Training of communities, districts and province stakeholders in CCA and DRM
3 Promote institutional mechanisms for CC resilience coordination

Component 2:
1 planning frameworks established in the two sites
2 strengthen wetland and water user groups
3 direct investment in CCA strategies
4 Capacity development for CC resilience
5 develop early warning, disaster risk reduction and recover measures

1 Participatory wetland management plans

2 Models for flooded forest restoration

3 Clearly demarcated zones, with regulations

4 Empowered Wetland management committees at village, district

5 Early flood warning systems tested

6 Models for removing invasive species

7 Water regulating infrastructures restored

8 Water User Groups established

9 Models for native fish production in wetlands (FCZ) and fishponds

10 Models for forage production

11 Models for alternative income

1 Wetlands protected and restored:
-**Biodiversity** effectively protected
- **Illegal encroachment** effectively halted
-**Flooded forests** restored

2 Hydrology/ water flows better managed:
-**Less flood damage** in wet season
- Better water retention in dry season
-**Early flood warning systems** in place

3 Sustainable livelihoods derived from wetlands:
-**Sustained high rice yields** in dry season for income and food security
- **Sustained fish yields** for nutrition and income from native species
- **Sufficient forages for livestock** raising for income
- **Alternative income** from tourism, NTFPs and handicrafts

Increased resilience of local communities and wetlands on which they depend

4. Key findings and MTR questions

MTR question 1 - Relevance

51 *Finding 1.1. Relevance to beneficiaries.* Beneficiary communities visited by the MTR team all see the CAWA project as highly relevant to their key development concerns. Wetlands provide their key sources of livelihoods: food (rice, fish), income (rice, livestock, NTFPs) and water. Communities display strong feelings of ownership and have articulated ideas on how to manage their wetlands. Their key concerns are preserving water and sharing access to water in the dry season, controlling encroachment and illegal use and enhancing livelihoods benefits derived from wetlands.

52 *Finding 1.2. Coherence with Government policies.* Government implementing agencies at all levels (central, province, and district) all judge the CAWA project to be highly coherent with Government development goals and policies. More specifically these include:

a) Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs): Lao PDR acceded the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 2010. The project is also well aligned to four GEF Climate Change Outcomes: Component 1 aligns with CCA-2 Outcome 2.1 'Increased knowledge and understanding of climate variability and change-induced threats at country level and in targeted vulnerable areas'. Outcome 2 aligns with CCA-1 Outcome 1.2 'Reduced vulnerability to climate change in development sectors' and Outcome 1.3 'Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas'. Outcome 3 aligns with CCA-1 Outcome 1.1 'Mainstreamed adaptation in broader development frameworks at country level and in targeted vulnerable areas'.

b) Domestic Policy, Legal and Regulatory instruments (PLRs): The project is well aligned to the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2009) under COP-9, the National Climate Change Strategy, and the National Integrated Water Resources Management Plan[2].

The eighth National Socio-economic and Development Plan (NSEDP) for 2016-2020 mentions a target for formulating a Wetland Management Plan to adopt the RAMSAR Convention on wetlands in article 6.6.1. The NSEDP also mentions River Basin Management Plans as a sound part of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). This would apply to the Xe Bang Hieng Basin as well. Last but not least, the NSEDP prioritizes food security in the Xe Bang Hieng basin through accelerated rice cultivation. At district and province levels, local policy makers also expect direct improvements in the household income of CAWA target village through sustainable fisheries, sustainable use of other wetland products and from wetland-based tourism (source: Gebert, 2017).

53 At the same time, the MTR finds that the right to control wetlands is a contested ground between Government agencies. There is vertical confusion as to the division of responsibilities between villages, village clusters, district, province and central level.

[2] The project supports the nine policy priorities under the National Water Resources Policy: 1) Institutional strengthening and coordination; 2) Legislation, plans and their implementation; 3) River basin and sub basin water resource planning; 4) Data collection and analysis; 5) Water allocation ; 6) Protection of water quality and eco-systems; 7) Management of floods, droughts and climate change; 8) Financial aspects of water resource management; 9) Awareness, participation and capacity building (source: PIF, 2009).

54 There is horizontal confusion between national line agencies who all claim ownership: Land, Water, Agriculture, and Forestry. Each agency wants to apply their own set of regulations. Most of the wetlands are classified as agriculture or forestry land. There is no specific category for wetlands in land use planning and there is no specific set of regulations to manage wetlands.

55 The project is developing an institutional framework that allows appropriate management functions to be allocated to local communities who are the de-facto managers of wetlands and to divide functions between agencies that allows for an unambiguous set of rules for wetland management that everybody can follow.

56 *Finding 1.3 Diverse theories of change.* While the project is considered highly relevant by beneficiaries and relevant by Government agencies, the theory of change is understood differently by various parties.

57 Donors and central government focus on the aspects of climate change and its impact on biodiversity and formulate the issues in terms of lack of knowledge. Central and Province Government are keen on the aspect of Disaster Reduction, where floods are seen as disaster to be mitigated. District and Village Government are primarily looking at wetlands as a source of livelihoods to be protected, they see floods as a source of water for dry season agriculture to be better managed.

58 These diverse outlooks on the concept of wetland management conflict with each other and often lack a sound understanding of hydrological aspects of wetlands. It is the highest priority for the project to develop a shared vision and theory of change on resilient wetland management that all stakeholders can embrace. A draft theory of change is presented in this report, following a series of meetings on the topic between MTR team and project advisory team.

59 *Finding 1.4. Coherence with FAO Strategic Objectives and Goals*. The CAWA project is primarily framed in terms of increasing resilience of livelihoods to disasters in a wetland context. Globally, there are not yet many good models for doing so. The strong connection between local communities and their wetlands in Laos provides a good basis for developing such models. It is important for the project to be given enough time to accomplish that.

MTR question 2 - Effectiveness

60 *Finding 2.1. Lack of clear indicators.* Because the theory of change was not developed, the original project results table did not have many clear indicators for monitoring. The MTR team spend several days in sessions with the project technical assistance team to review indicators and targets. This is a work in progress: e.g. there still are no outcome indicators at objective level and also targets for indicator 2.7 still need to be set. Adjusted indicators and targets are presented in Appendix 6.

61 *Finding 2.2. Lack of baseline data*. Although the project almost exclusively performed studies over year 1 and 2, no systematic attempt was made to set baseline data. There are some for biodiversity and since 2019 a start has been made with water level monitoring. However there are no baseline data on livelihoods at household level, which makes it difficult to monitor changes in the benefits of wetlands to livelihoods. The project has yet

to do a sampled household-economics survey, focused on the role of wetlands in livelihoods, to serve as a baseline.

62 *Finding 2.3 on Component 1: Improved understanding on CC impacts and adaptations.* The project completed an extensive vulnerability assessment and produced a total of 26 technical studies (see section F: Technical Report, p. 89 in Appendix 5: List of documents consulted, "Reference list"). These were technically sound, but had several weaknesses:

1) The analysis was focused on biodiversity and habitats, less on hydrology and livelihoods.
2) They provide no baseline for monitoring at village or household level on livelihoods impacts
3) The reports are generic, there are no stand-alone documents per village, making it hard to serve as basis for participatory planning at village level
4) They provide little thoughts and no basis for institutional development
5) Although some training workshops were organized, they contributed very little to better understanding of CCA impacts and adaptations among village and district stakeholders. There was no clear pathway for moving from vulnerability assessments to wetland management plans

63 The focus on research went at the detriment of participatory planning, as the focus was on data-collection, rather than on facilitating management processes with stakeholders. Also, most of this work was implemented by stakeholders at central level, province and district level stakeholders were not involved. This caused a severe delay in the start of field activities. Since 2019, the project involves province and district agencies through Letters of Agreements (LoAs). All in all, the MTR labels progress in component 1 as ***Moderately Satisfactory.***

64 *Finding 2.4 on Component 2: Developing CC Adaptation measures.* The project has developed a broad set of adaptation measures which are now being tested at village level. The implementation of most of these activities only started mid-2019, and as a result, they are still in the testing phase. As of yet, there are very few models of CCA that are ready for scaling up.

65 According to project progress reports, there are 26 activities with on average, 23 households are participating per activity in 51 villages. It should be noted that most of these households are recorded as participating in village-wide activities such as Fish Conservation Zones. The numbers of households participating in single-household activities such as planting pastures or growing vegetables range are much lower.

66 The MTR team observed that there were high rates of failure among some of these trials, e.g. in one of the villages visited, Ban Phakkha, 22 household were supported to plant forage species, but only 2 were successful. The quality of delivery of extension services could still be improved by dedicated training-of trainer events and more attention to follow-up.

67 A key output under this component are wetland management plans. So far these have not been completed. The MTR observes that this exercise is left mainly to district stakeholders, with less consultation of local communities. The project needs to find a way to involve individual villages which are de factor the key unit of management in a participatory, nested approach. Accompanying wetland use maps and plans were started but not completed.

Now a new project is started by WCS which will fill that gap. It is important that the CAWA project coordinates well with the new WCS project so as to not confuse villagers, to avoid overlaps and to achieve wetland use maps and plans of good quality that villagers can use.

68 The CAWA project should not invest in any more mapping efforts as this will be done by WCS. Instead CAWA could focus on the institutional side, strengthening village wetland committees and helping them devise rules and regulations. The CAWA project has already made some good progress in strengthening committees managing Fish Conservation Zones, this experience could be applied to village wetland management committees.

69 The MTR team noticed a very limited effort of the project to restore flooded forest, which are vital for protection against erosion and also are an important breeding ground for native fish. They consist of tree species that can withstand long periods of flooding such as "kok sam saeng", Xanthoxyllum *lanceatum*, "Kok thom", *Hymenocardia punctata* and "Kok siao", *Phyllantus taxodifolia*.

70 At the same time, they say that many of these forests have been cut due to illegal encroachment. In the BKN site, the PONRE then issued land certificates for these new paddy fields, making it very difficult to reverse the situation. The project has started nurseries but they contain very few of these key species. The project should aim to establish trials for restoration of flooded forests with these key species, making sure there are sufficient seedlings and suitable sites selected and agreed with villagers to be used for forest restoration.

71 The target communities of the CAWA project already have a very strong economic interest in their wetlands: dry season rice is a major source of income, livestock and fisheries are not small sources of income either. The project should focus for its remaining time in investments in activities that relate water and wetland management to rice, livestock and fisheries to capitalize on this existing strong economic bond.

72 This makes the case for investing in alternative livelihoods such as tourism and NTFPs less urgent. Pilots on NTFPs and tourism already started should be completed, but the project should assess the feasibility of these efforts. While the tourism development for local tourists visiting the monkey forest and the turtle lake are promising, new NTFP activities may not be feasible given the time and effort needed to create new value chains.

73 The effort to establish disaster risk warning and reduction systems has made a good start in establishing a water-flow monitoring network, where data are collected and recorded at province level. The PONRE office has started issuing flood warnings based on this system. It is still unclear how effective this system is in communicating messages to villages and for them to take timely action.

74 The main observation of the MTR team is that after a long delay over 2016-2018, the project has made a good start over 2019-2020 with component 2 activities. Yet the number of households participating to reach meaningful impact on expected outcomes in terms of sustainable livelihoods, better conservation and management of wetlands and better regulation of hydrology and water.

75 The MTR sees this as a major concern: the project will not reach its objectives if this component is not accelerated to sufficient levels. One way to do so would be to extend the

life of the project with at least another year, using un-used funds. The MTR judges progress in component 2 so far as ***Moderately Unsatisfactory***.

76 *Finding 2.5 on Component 3: Integration of CCA and DRM in planning processes*. Progress in this component depends on products delivered under components 1 and 2. Due to the lack of well-tested CCA measures that could be scaled up and the absence of completed wetland management plans, there is not yet much content that could be used to integrate CCA and DRM in district and province planning processes.

77 A major output expected under this component is the development of a National Guideline for Management of RAMSAR Wetlands in Lao PDR. The project has supported MONRE in drafting such guidelines, but their official approval is still held up by administrative procedures. The lack of an agreed set of objectives at the national level on the approaches for managing wetlands may be a cause for this delay. The CAWA project should focus its efforts at the national level to create a common theory of change through strategic stakeholder exchange events.

78 The project developed a capacity development plan at the start of the project. It was difficult for the MTR to assess whether this plan was relevant and to what extent it is being followed as there was no readily available reporting. It would be good to revisit this strategy in line with a revision of the project's institution building approach.

79 The MTR also observes that the project document lacked a clear strategy for building strong institutions that can execute wetland management at village, village cluster, district, province and national levels.

80 It is difficult to imagine any real changes in wetland management if there is no provision for assigning rights and responsibilities to particular stakeholders that allows them to implement any wetland management plans. The project should be given more time to fill this gap and the TA should be allowed to put more effort into this aspect. For now, the MTR judges progress in component 3 as ***Unsatisfactory.***

81 *Finding 2.6 on Component 4: Establishing M&E systems and sharing of lessons learnt.* This component was not foreseen in the project document but added by the team. The project has established an M&E database and assigned an officer to manage it. As mentioned earlier, the project design did not provide very good indicators for monitoring and the project never established a baseline for most indicators. This remains a key weakness of the M&E system.

82 The project has shared its lessons learned and raised awareness on climate change aspects of wetland management in a range of platforms and meetings at national, province and district level. The MTR judges this component **Moderately Satisfactory**.

83 The four components are not of equal importance. Component 2 takes up 75% of the overall project budget and contains all the actual CCA measures that are at the heart of the project's objectives. The performance of the project under component 2 is unsatisfactory. As this component carries so much more weight than the others, the MTR judges the overall Effectiveness of the CAWA project so far to be **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

84 At the same time, the MTR sees the project turning around so there is a good basis to reach satisfactory effectiveness by the end of the project, provided the project would be given a one-year extension.

MTR question 3: Efficiency

85 *Finding 3.1 Timeliness.* The focus on research and on the central level over the first two years caused a major delay in delivery of CCA implementation on the ground. As of 2019, the situation has much improved as the project involved province and district Government partners through specific LoAs.

86 However, there are still many delays between planning and implementing activities, especially when it comes to procurement of goods and services. These delays are partly due to the time-consuming procurement procedures of FAO. While designed with the aim to provide accountability, the effect of having so many checks and counterchecks in the administrative system causes frequent delays affecting project performance. GEF and FAO should explore ways to make these procurement procedures more efficient and less time-consuming.

87 The delays have led to a situation where the project is unlikely to achieve its goals within the present timeframe, where the project would end in 2021. The project should be allowed at least another year to make up for the delays in the delivery of field activities. As the project has been underspending, there is enough budget left to consider a budget-neutral extension. The MTR judgement on timeliness is therefore: **Unsatisfactory.**

88 *Finding 3.2 Cost-effectiveness*. The project mainly operates on a contracting basis, where partner organizations implement activities according to Letters of Agreement (LoAs). This is a very useful system as it allows the project to directly provide funding to national, province and district partners without having to wait for time-consuming government funding procedures.

89 Overall this financial disbursement system seems to be functioning well, it has resulted in a flurry of field activities. The MTR has two minor observations. Firstly the MTR is not convinced of the cost-effectiveness of all LoAs, where quite considerable budgets are spent on meetings and travel costs, resulting in very few activities on the ground and low amounts of households benefiting, if compared to similar rural development projects in the country. Secondly, the financial reporting on LoAs is only done at the end of each contract, which makes it more difficult to control expenditures made by partners during implementation. MTR judgment on cost-effectiveness is therefore **Moderately Satisfactory**.

90 The overall judgement of the MTR on efficiency is **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

MTR question 4: Sustainability

91 *Finding 4.1 Socio-political sustainability* the socio-political climate in Laos favors wetland protection and local communities show strong commitment to managing the wetlands on which their livelihoods depend in a sustainable manner. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis since early 2020 are serious, they will lead to greater poverty and unemployment. There is a risk that this negative economic downturn could have a negative impact on wetland protection, but is not considered to be immediate. Socio-political sustainability is therefore **Moderately Likely.**

92 *Finding 4.2 Financial sustainability.* So far, the project has underspent its budget, making it possible to consider a budget-neutral extension. After project ending, the Government is unlikely to be able to fund the extension and training services supported by the project due to its structural budget deficits. However not all of the CC adaptations introduced by the project would require external funding to continue. Local communities may be expected to maintain fish conservation zones, lesser maintenance works for water regulatory infrastructures and cleaning of invasive species by themselves. The financial sustainability of the project's results can therefore be seen as **Moderately Likely.**

93 *Finding 4.3. Institutional and Governance sustainability.* The institutional and governance system for participatory wetland management were not well addressed in the project document. They still needs to be developed and put in place. There are good examples of participatory co-management of local communities involving in management of conservation forests in Lao PDR[3]. The CAWA project will need to focus on this missing aspect to make CC adaptation in wetlands in Lao PDR sustainable. So far, the institutional and governance sustainability is **Unlikely**.

94 *Finding 4.4 Environmental Sustainability.* The measures introduced by the CAWA project are aimed at reducing environmental risks in wetlands. An indirect risk could be the construction of large reservoirs and dams that could induce more erosion and siltation in the wetland landscape. As wetland management plans are supposed to stop such projects from happening, these risks are thought to be minor. Environmental sustainability is therefore considered to be **Likely**.

95 *Finding 4.5 Evidence of replication or catalysis of project results*. Most the 26 CAA measures being tested have just been started in early 2020, so it is too early to see evidence of replication. The MTR team interviewed beneficiary households and found many interested in replicating measures such as forage/pasture establishment, fish cultivation, and removal of invasive species, which can be done without much investment.

96 Interviewed groups of villagers displayed a strong interest in restoration of water regulatory structures (water gates, canals, and dams), demarcation of protected zones, garbage disposal systems, and tourism development, which all would require project investment. If given more time, the project is likely to achieve more evidence of replication. The sustainability of the project results through replication is therefore **Moderately Likely**.

97 Taking all these aspects together, the MTR judges project sustainability **Medium Likely**.

MTR question 5: Factors affecting Performance

98 *Finding 5.1 Project design*. The project design was very elaborate and followed the requirements of GEF. The main shortcoming was an unclear Logical Framework with no clear Theory of Change. The project design put a lot of emphasis on research, it did not address the complexities of interactions between land and water management and livelihoods well and it did not have a clear institution building strategy. In the original budget plan, expenditures were structured mainly as consultancy contracts.

[3] De Koning, M. and Parr, J.W.K. 2016. Collaborative governance improves effectiveness of Hin Nam No National Protected Area in Central Lao PDR. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310114090_Collaborative_governance_improves_management_effectiveness_of_Hin_Nam_No_National_Protected_Area_in_Central_Lao_PDR

99 On this basis, the project spent too much time and effort in doing research, delaying the development of CC adaptive measures in the field. Over the past two years, this situation has been addressed and there is now a good system for generating CC adaptation measures in affected communities, but most of these have only been started effectively since the beginning of 2020. There still is no clear strategy for assisting the Government in developing an institution building strategy for national wetland management. The project will need more time to overcome these delays if it is to achieve its objectives. MTR judgement: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

100 *Finding 5.2 Quality of project execution and management arrangements*. The modality of the CAWA project is one where FAO has complete budget responsibility. Government and other partners are consulted and contracted through LoAs, but the final decision on budgets rests with FAO. This model has the considerable benefit of avoiding getting bogged down in complicated, slow and not so transparent Government administrative mechanisms. It should allow for rapid deployment of funds where they are actually needed. It has the downside of not being very sustainable, as it will only work during the lifetime of the project.

101 The CAWA project did not make good use of this rather unique mechanism during the first two years, spending most of its funding at central level and to international consultancy contracts. It should not be the role of central Government and consultants to implement project activities at village level.

102 Since 2019, the project has used this modality to direct fund activities to implementing partners at Province and District level. These levels are much better at responding to the needs of local communities than central Government agencies. The role of the central Government agency is being transformed from an executing agency to an agency that provides guidelines and standards. The role of province levels is to act as strategic units and for district levels to be the actual implementing agencies.

103 This fits much better to the Government's own "Sam Sang" policy[4] for defining the roles of central, province and district Governments. It also fits better to the expectations of FAO/GEF. As there is a positive development here, the MTR judgement is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

104 *Finding 5.3 Project oversight by FAO as GEF agency and national partners*. The oversight from FAO involves a wide range of offices within the global FAO system. Yet this elaborate system of checks and balances was not able to prevent the project from not performing well for over two years. FAO should review how systems for overview of national projects can be made more simple and effective. The oversight has since improved as can be seen from the addition of a program specialist to the TA team. MTR Judgement: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

105 *Finding 5.4 Financial management.* The financial management of the project seems to be in good order as far as the MTR could judge from interviews with accountants and

[4] Politburo, 2012. Resolution of Politburo on formulation of Provinces as Strategic Units, Districts as Comprehensively Strong Units and Villages as Development Units. Central Party Politburo, Resolution No 03/CCP, dated 15.02.2012 https://www.directoryofngos.org/a/download?id=document1953&field=file&notetype=document&file=MTAuX1NhbV9TYW5nX3BvbGljeS5wZGY=

stakeholders. As mentioned earlier under Finding 3.2 above, there are some minor reservations on the timeliness of financial oversight of LoAs. MTR judgement: **Moderately Satisfactory**.

106 *Findings 5.5 Co-financing.* The project document projected a co-financing arrangement where the investment from GEF of US$4.7 million would be flanked by another US$15.4 million co-financing from seven other sources. Three of these: FAO, IUCN and IWMI, became project partners rather than co-sponsors. Only one co-financing option became reality: the German Development Bank, KfW financed US$2.2 million to the MRWP project in the BKN wetlands in Champasak. In practice, there was little collaboration between the projects. The MRWP project did most of the investments in Champasak while the CAWA project focused mainly on the XC wetlands in Savannakhet, especially in the initial years. MTR Judgement: **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

107 *Finding 5.6 Project partnership and stakeholder engagement*. Over the first two years, a high amount of dissatisfaction grew among project partners over the way partnerships were conducted, which led to the resignation of the first CTA. This situation has since been much improved by having LoAs which are tailored to the needs and abilities of each partner and devolve implementation from national to province and district levels. The new LoAs give more space to province and district staff to provide good services to beneficiary communities. MTR Judgement: **Moderately Successful**.

108 *Finding 5.7 Communication, visibility, knowledge management products.* The project has made good use of events like World Wetlands Day to present posters and other education materials to the general public. The project presented findings in several workshops at national, province and district levels. Internally the project teams communicate and share findings via social media such as WhatsApp-Groups. There is still no clear platform for discussing wetland management issues in Lao PDR. MTR judgement: **Satisfactory**.

109 *Finding 5.8 Monitoring and evaluation design.* A national consultant designed a good monitoring system with clear instructions on participatory methods for monitoring key indicators, but his recommendations were not followed up, especially in the collection of baseline data. MTR judgment: **Moderately Satisfactory**.

110 *Finding 5.9 Implementation and budget for monitoring and evaluation.* The monitoring system and the recommendations of the consultant were not followed up. As a result, the project has difficulty to show progress against benchmarks from the beginning of the project. This is a serious shortcoming that remains to be addressed. MTR Judgement: **Highly Unsatisfactory**.

111 Overall, factors affecting performance were dealt with in a **Moderately Unsatisfactory** manner

MTR question 6: Cross-cutting Dimensions

112 *Finding 6.1 Equity issues related to inclusion of vulnerable and ethnic groups (gender, human rights, disadvantaged groups, decent labor).* Within the context of Lao PDR, most of the target villages of the CAWA project are relatively well-off, living far above the poverty

line[5]. The wetlands provide these communities with the ability to produce a sustainable surplus beyond what they need for their own consumption, so most of the rice produced is sold and it provides a major source of household cash income, making these communities relatively prosperous.

113 Most of these communities have a history going back centuries. They have strong village organizations, their economic status and good political connections to higher levels give them a certain "agency" to influence decisions about the wetlands areas they depend on. Their economic dependence on wetlands also provides a strong interest and sense of ownership. These factors create a positive environment for sustainable and climate-resilient wetland management.

114 Then again, the role of wetlands in livelihoods should not be overstated. The MTR team asked all seven village visited to assess the key sources of household income. While rice, fish, fermented fish, livestock and vegetables are important, they only contribute 40% of household income.

115 Remittances by young family members working in neighboring Thailand was the single most important income source, providing another 40% of average household income. Young people migrate in large numbers to Thailand to find work there. In the seven village visited, the number of persons who had migrated to Thailand ranged from 0.5-1 per household. During the 2020 COVID-19 crisis, about one-third of these workers returned home, adding to the labor force but also to the number of poor people in target villages.

116 This is not an issue the CAWA project can do much about, but it puts the expectations on the role of wetlands in livelihoods in perspective.

117 In all seven villages visited, the MTR team asked who is using the wetlands more: women or men. This usually created some discussion on who participates more in rice cultivation, fishing, livestock raising, vegetable production and NTFP collection. While men and women both participate in all these activities, in each of the seven villages the conclusion was that women are the primary users of wetlands, they spend more time in wetlands than men, to an average rate of 60%-40%.

118 Yet women are not specifically targeted to take part in management functions or to be selected for participating in project activities.

119 In short, the MTR judges that equity issues are very important, but the CAWA project has invested insufficiently in developing a thorough socio-economic baseline. There are not data to distinguish between rich and poor, to determine which activities fit better to women or to men. Consequently there is no strong strategy to address equity at village level. The MTR judgment is therefore **Unsatisfactory**.

120 *Finding 6.2 Environmental standards*. The aim of the project is to ensure environmental sustainability in wetland landscapes. Specific CCA measures that will contribute to

[5] Among the target villages and among households there will be differences in poverty status. Unfortunately the project never collected the baseline data that could have informed stakeholders about these differences. This knowledge gap remains to be addressed.

environmental sustainability include: restoration of flooded forests, elimination of invasive species, physical re-opening of wetlands, fish conservation zones and forage plots.

121 Most of these activities have just been started in early 2020, so it is too early to judge how successful these measures will be. If the project is given more time to complete and scale up these activities, there is a good chance that environmental standards will improve.

122 During the MTR interviews in seven target villages, the topic of waste management was often brought up, mostly by village women. Household waste nowadays contains a lot of plastic and garbage heaps pollute the landscape around the villages. The main concerns of the women are that cattle get sick from eating plastic.

123 In the case of the monkey village, Ban Dong Meuang, local tourists pollute the area by throwing away plastic bags containing food given to the monkeys. CAWA would seem in a good position to address these issues by introducing basic village waste management systems with low-cost incinerators combined with awareness-raising campaigns.

MTR judgment: **Moderately Satisfactory.**

124 *Finding 6.3 Social Standards.* The project document foresaw a number of approaches to ensure social sustainability: participatory vulnerability assessments, promotion of resilient livelihood activities, diversification of livelihood options, strengthening local organizations and horizontal approaches to scale up good practices.

125 The project has implemented vulnerability assessments, but these were not applied as a starting point for participatory planning and focused more on the ecological aspects. The project has strengthened some local organizations, e.g. fish conservation zone committees, but there has been little progress in strengthening village institutions responsible for wetland management. So far, there has been little progress in developing resilient livelihood options related to wetlands. MTR judgement: **Unsatisfactory.**

126 The overall judgement of the MTR on cross-cutting factors is **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

A: Conclusions on progress towards project objectives

Conclusion 1 – Progress towards conservation and management of wetlands

127 At the national level, the CAWA project is supporting the drafting and ratification of national RAMSAR wetlands management guidelines. At province level, vulnerability assessment studies provide scientific information on biodiversity values and threats to wetlands.

128 At district level, the project has delineated core conservation zones (total protection) in the XC wetland and started to demarcate them with boundary markers. The project has started to support district agencies to develop wetland management plans. Fish Conservation Zones have been established in all 24 core target villages and a good system for participatory monitoring fish catches has been put in place. The project has started campaigns to eliminate invasive plant species and pilots to re-open up wetlands and repair water regulation infrastructures.

129 The project has not made much progress in restoring flooded forests. There is no strategy for strengthening wetland management committees at village, village cluster and district level. There are still no individual wetland land use plans or maps for each of the 24 villages. This gap is currently being filled by a new project implemented by WCS. The challenge will be for WCS and CAWA to integrate village-level wetland management plans with district-level wetland landscape management plans.

Conclusion 2 – Progress towards sustainable water management in wetlands

130 The project has supported a regular flood monitoring system at province level in Savannakhet and its outcomes are starting to feed disaster warning systems. The project has developed guidelines for water management in wetlands and started to assess individual village plans for regulating water flows and water retention so as to select activities to support. The main bottleneck here is that these activities have just been started and may not be completed in the limited remaining time.

Conclusion 3 – Progress towards sustainable livelihoods derived from wetlands

131 The project has started a range of CC adaptive livelihood activities that range from fish fingerling stations to vegetable gardens and forage plantations. Most of these activities seem to have a good potential for scaling up. Unfortunately, most of these initiatives have just been started in 2020, so there are not yet many good models to show. The project would need more time to achieve that.

132 A key bottleneck in the livelihoods component is the lack of baseline data, which makes it difficult to monitor actual gains and to target disadvantaged groups or women specifically. The project may need to focus on activities that support the key livelihoods derived from wetlands, such as rice cultivation, fishing and livestock raising. There is potential for tourism development as local tourists are already visiting and may provide a source of income, especially in the monkey forest of Ban Dong Meuang and the turtle pond in Don Daeng.

B: Conclusions on overall progress in implementation

133 **Conclusion 4 – Relevance.** The CAWA project is considered highly relevant to the development priorities of beneficiary communities by the communities themselves and other stakeholders. The project is also considered highly coherent to the environmental and poverty alleviation policies of the Government. The main problem is that the control over wetlands remains a contested area. There is vertical confusion on distributing roles and responsibilities between villages, district, province and central level. There is horizontal confusion between line agencies, making it unclear whose set of regulations should apply. Related to this issue is the lack of an agreed approach to wetland management. Each stakeholder stresses a different perspective. The main challenge for the CAWA project is support processes that can bring stakeholders to agree on a common framework and to have a good institutional strategy for sustainable wetland management. In spite of these challenges, the relevance of the CAWA project remains **Highly Satisfactory**.

134 **Conclusion 5 – Effectiveness.** The project is making good progress after a long start-up period. It remains difficult to measure progress as indicators for monitoring were not well defined and there are very few baseline data collected. Under component 1, a wealth of scientific data were collected, but they have not contributed much to the ability of local stakeholders to develop strong wetland management plans. Under component 2, the project has developed a wide range of Climate Change (CC) Adaptation Measures that have potential for making communities and wetland more resilient to CC. Yet most of these activities were started only in 2020. Wetland land use maps or management plans are not available for most target villages and landscape-level plans are still not completed. Component 3, integration of CC adaptation measures, will depend on good results from outcome 2. The project will need to be given at least an additional year beyond 2021 to deliver sustainable results. So far, effectiveness of the CAWA project is **Unsatisfactory**.

135 **Conclusion 6 – Efficiency.** The project is being managed in a cost-effective manner, but timeliness of delivery suffered from a long start-up period, where a lot of data were gathered but little action took place on the ground. Over the past two years, timeliness has improved considerably, the project is now on the right track but still needs to make up for lost time. The efficiency of the CAWA project is **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

136 **Conclusion 7 – Sustainability.** Socio-political sustainability is moderately likely, where government policies are supportive, there is strong ownership among communities, but the economic downturn caused by COVID-19 may create more pressure on wetlands. Financial sustainability is considered moderately likely, as some of the measures may be continued by communities without the need for external support. Institutional/governance sustainability is considered unlikely as long as there is no coherent institutional system in place for wetland management. Environmental sustainability is considered to be likely, as all the project activities are aimed at that purpose. There are not yet signs of replication, but several of CC adaptation measures promoted by the project are likely to be scaled up. Overall, sustainability of the CAWA project is considered to be **Medium Likely.**

137 **Conclusion 8 – Factors affecting performance.** The project design allowed for a substantial effort to address impacts of climate change on two important wetlands in Lao PDR and the people living around them. Weaknesses in project design (an unclear theory of change, too much focus on knowledge building instead of institution building) contributed to the long delays in establishing CCA measures on the ground.

138 The quality of implementation has much improved by using the tool of LoAs to support project implementation by a wider range of partners, especially at province and district

level. Oversight by FAO involves strict procedures which provide a high degree of accountability. On the other hand, FAO oversight was not able to prevent the delays in field implementation to build up over almost three years. Good financial management allows for investments to be used where they are needed: capacity building at village, district and province levels. At least one of the co-financing modalities for seen in the project document came through (KfW) but in reality there was limited synergy between the two projects. Only 27% of the projected co-financing potential was reached so far. This limits the potential for scaling-up project results.

139 The partnerships with IUCN and IWMI delivered a range of technical reports of good quality. The weakness is that the accumulated knowledge did not help partners at district and village level much to become more effective in CC adaptations or in developing wetland management plans. Partnerships with province and district partners has improved since they were given LoA contracts as of 2019.

140 The partnership with the central Government partners is cordial but still has not resulted in key outputs foreseen at strategic level (e.g. National RAMSAR guidelines). The project has been effective in communicating the need for climate resilient wetland management through a range of channels. The project had designed a good M&E system since 2017, but due to the lack of a clear theory of change, indicators were not always clear and no attempt was made to collect baseline socio-economic data. This makes monitoring very difficult.

141 The overall judgement on factors affecting performance is **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

142 **Conclusion 9 – Cross-cutting dimensions.** The MTR was impressed with the strong ownership over wetlands displayed by all visited target communities. Most of the target communities are well-off and well-connected, giving them a certain amount of "agency" to be active wetland managers. Both men and women use wetlands, but women visit and use wetlands more frequently, making them the primary users. Yet women remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies and processes regarding wetland management.

143 The main aim of the project is to improve environmental management. More could be done on waste management with was often proposed by local communities. The project document foresaw a range of interventions (e.g. vulnerability studies) to address social standards. Yet these studies have not contributed much to improve social cohesion or local capacities to manage wetlands better. Overall, the MTR finds the project's performance on cross-cutting dimensions **Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

C: Conclusions on risks

144 **Conclusion 10 – Risk assessment.** The project has made good progress over the past two years to catch up with the delays that happened in the first two years. Yet there is a considerable risk that the project may not achieve its objectives. Some of the risk factors have already been outlined in the conclusions on sustainability above.

145 One key risk is that the CC adaption measures not being tested in target communities may not be having sufficient impact, reaching only a few households per village. The project needs to be given an extra year to avoid this risk and prepare good models for scaling up.

146 The second risk lies in the lack of agreement among stakeholders on the objectives of the project and processes to be prioritized, the confusion about who should be doing what in

wetlands management and the absence of a strategy to build a strong participatory framework for resilient wetland management. The project needs to put more emphasis on trying to fill this gap.

147 Minor, more indirect risks are the general economic downturn in the country as a result of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, which will result in more poverty and may lead to more unsustainable use of wetlands. Another risk is the limited success in achieving co-financing agreements, which reduce the changes of scaling-up of project results.

D: Overall assessment of the project

Conclusion 11. Overall conclusion.

148 The CAWA project scores high on **relevance** (**highly satisfactory**). It is considered highly relevant to a large group of beneficiary communities whose livelihoods depend on resilient wetlands and adapting sustainable climate-change adaptations. The project is also considered highly coherent with key Government policies on poverty reduction and environmental management.

149 There is still a lack of agreement among stakeholders on the theory of change and a strategy for institution-building. For the remainder of the project period, the TA team should focus on facilitating processes that will deliver a uniform concept agreed upon by all stakeholders.

150 After a very slow start, the project has made good steps towards improving its **effectiveness**, but progress remains **unsatisfactory** so far. Most of its key targets for outputs remain to be met. The project will need to be given an extension of at least one year to achieve its outputs, which should be possible with the remaining budget. The TA team should be given ample time in the field to ensure that outputs will be achieved and be of good quality.

151 The CAWA project is managed in a cost-effective manner, but timeliness of delivery remains unsatisfactory. Overall **efficiency** is therefore considered **moderately unsatisfactory**. FAO should review timeliness of its decision-making processes.

152 The project is considered **moderately likely** to have **sustainable** results. The mains risks are the two factors described above: not having a common policy and institutional framework and not having good models for CC adaptation and wetland management plans delivered on-time so there is a chance for them to be scaled up.

153 The CAWA project scores **moderately unsatisfactory** on **factors affecting performance**. The project scores well on the development of partnerships and the design of its M&E system, but is still weak in addressing shortcomings in the design of the project, oversight by FAO, implementation of its M&E system (poor baseline) and influencing central Government agencies to move forward with wetland policy development.

154 Also the performance on **cross-cutting issues** is deemed moderately unsatisfactory. Women are the primary users of wetlands, but remain underrepresented in bodies and processes for decision-making on wetlands management.

155 **Overall**, the conclusion of the MTR is that CAWA project had a poor start. It is improving steadily but it's on the performance is still **moderately unsatisfactory**. It is a highly relevant project so it is important to try to achieve its expected outputs. The project is moving in the right direction, but should be given time to address the issues identified in this MTR.

5.2 Recommendations

A: Recommendations regarding relevance

156 A.1 Lack of consensus on the Theory of Change (ToC) among stakeholders makes it difficult to agree on a communal approach and on national guidelines for wetland management. The project team should facilitate meetings with stakeholders that will provide a consensus on the ToC, not only for the project but also to lay the basis for a broader consensus on the principles of wetland management in Lao PDR. The theory of change should be based on a problem tree, based on clear analysis of basic processes influencing land and water management as well as livelihood functions and the impact of climate change thereupon. High priority, to be completed before January 2021.

157 A.2 The lack of an institutional framework for participatory wetland management is a key bottleneck, jeopardizing sustainability of project results. The project should hire a short-term international institution building consultant, preferably with experience in wetlands management, to lay out a strategy for developing an institutional/ governance framework for participatory wetlands management in Lao PDR. This framework should include a roadmap for developing consensus and building institutions, articulating their roles, responsibilities and mutual relationships. The CTA of the FAO team should be given a lead role in implementing such a strategy. High priority, to be completed before February 2021.

158 A.3 The project's capacity building approach is not contributing enough to building management capability among communities. The project should revise its capacity-building approach and plans in the light of its new institution building strategy and focus on developing training materials and events to strengthen management capacity of all stakeholders involved. There should be a specific focus to engage more women at community and district level in management functions.

B: Recommendations regarding Effectiveness

159 B.1 Due to its late start, the project is highly unlikely to achieve its objectives within its present time frame. Project partners (GEF, FAO, and MONRE) should agree on a budget-neutral extension of the project period of at least one year. Without such an extension, the project is unlikely to reach its goals and agreed targets of establishing a model for climate-resilient wetland management. Highest priority, to be completed December 2021.

160 B.2 The core output of the project is to develop good models of CC adaptation measures that can be scaled up. Over the dry season 2020-2021, the Project should focus its efforts on developing good models for Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Measures at village level in the core group of villages in Xe Champhone and Beung Khiat Ngong wetlands. It is vital to get this right, not only to achieve project objectives but also to build a convincing case for adapting this model by stakeholders in other districts, provinces and at national level.

161 Expansion to outer core villages and new districts should be limited to institution building: setting up wetland management committees, developing wetland management plans. Scaling up of CCA measures to outer villages should be postponed to the dry season of 2021-2022.

162 B.3 the MTR reviewed some of the LoAs with district agencies and found a variable performance in terms of quality and quantity of outputs achieved. The project team should

do a participatory evaluation of CCA measures developed under various LoA contracts, analyzing what is going well, what can be improved so as to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of LoA operations.

163 B.4 The project is already covering a wide range of CCA measures, but still lacks a clear model and approach for restoring flooded forests and other trees in wetlands. There should be models on the ground with tree nurseries containing native flooded forest species and forest restoration plots with planted trees in good conditions by June 2021.

164 B.5 Potential synergies between managing forests adjacent to wetland and wetlands management have not yet been explored. The project should also consider supporting the sustainable management of trees in forests adjacent to wetlands which may produce synergy in boosting the capacity and motivation of communities to manage and protect their natural resources (e.g. malva nut forests around BKG).

165 B.6 Communities are already highly motivated to manage wetland sustainably, as they derive key livelihood benefits from wetlands: dry season rice, livestock and fisheries. The project should focus on developing CC adaptive measures supporting these key sources of livelihood. There is also a case for continued support to sustainable tourism based on domestic travelers. The project should not start new activities on NTFPs or handicrafts in unexplored markets that would require intensive capacity building support over several years to become successful.

166 B.7 The project should build on its success in developing a good monitoring system for water levels and streams in Savannakhet province to become an effective early warning system against flood disasters. This is already happening, but communication systems could still be improved as well as clear rapid response plans at community and district level.

167 B.8 Communities are the "de facto" managers of wetlands. The process of developing wetland management plans at district level should include a step of revising wetland management plans at village level, so as to ensure full ownership of communities. These village wetland plans should have clear boundaries of different management zones, a clear set or rules and regulations that each community is willing to commit itself to and a management structure consisting of a committee, bylaws and regular meeting schedules and systems for recording and publishing minutes of meetings. These wetland management plans are an important project output, the project should aim to have them completed and ratified before the end of 2021.

168 B.9 Most target villages do not yet have detailed wetland land use maps for each village. A new WCS project will work on this in the XC wetland area. The project should collaborate and coordinate closely with the recently started WCS project in the XC wetland, which will develop detailed wetland maps for each village. The aim of this collaboration should be to ensure that there is a consistent set of village wetland management plans that fit into the overall wetland management plan. A formal agreement should be reached December 2020.

169 B.10 Lack of demarcation of core protected zones in wetlands was often mentioned as a key bottleneck by communities where the MTR visited. The project should aim to complete demarcation of boundaries of key zones, especially the core totally protected zones, as foreseen in its workplans, before the end of 2021. The format of boundary markers should

be reviewed, so as to come a durable design that will last for many years and is clearly recognizable to all.

C: Recommendations regarding Efficiency

170 C.1 the CTA spends most of his time on project administration, at the expense of giving technical support to building consensus among stakeholders and developing an institutional framework. The FAO Operations Specialist should relieve the CTA of most of his present workload in project administration, in order for the CTA to have more time to work on content matters, such as supporting institution-building process and the building of a national consensus on wetland management guidelines.

171 C.2 FAO's complex internal procedures are one of the causes of delays in project delivery. FAO-RAP should support the Lao country office and the project team to review how FAO procedures could be streamlined to provide a more timely approval of budget requests and other procedures. The Operations Specialist in the project team should follow-up to reduce delays in implementation while still maintaining basic standards of accountability.

172 C.3 The cost-effectiveness of LoAs seems uneven, when outputs are compared to inputs. The project should review the cost-effectiveness of the LoAs and the way expenditures are reported, to ensure LoAs result in foreseen quantity and quality of outputs.

D. Recommendations regarding Sustainability

173 D.1 the main risks for the project to not be successful are the lack of an institutional approach and the limited progress in developing good models for CC adaption measures that could be scaled up. These risks can be reduced by following the recommendations given above under sections A, B and C.

E: Recommendations regarding Factors affecting Performance

174 E.1. The co-financing scheme foreseen in the project document has only partially become reality, which limits sustainability of the project's outcomes. Not later than one year before the end of the project, the project should develop an exit-strategy. This would involve exploring options for scaling-up and handing over project activities and results to other donor-projects and helping project partners connect to potential future sources of funding.

175 E.2 The lack of a good baseline for monitoring is a serious shortcoming that needs to be addressed. The project should revisit its original M&E strategy and invest time in constructing a good baseline on all the revised key indicators (provided in appendix 6) to allow meaningful monitoring of progress, especially on livelihood impacts. High priority, to be completed before March 2021.

F: Recommendations regarding Cross-cutting Dimensions

176 F.1 Women are the primary users of wetlands, but remain under-represented in meetings, bodies and other processes of decision-making around wetlands. The project should revisit its gender strategy and develop new interventions to empower women in wetland management.

177 F.2 The project should develop a few simple but effective activities to improve waste management in project villages, which should include awareness raising, organized waste

collection and disposal and explore labor-saving and hygienic technologies such as low-cost waste incinerators.

Table A11.1 below summarizes these recommendations.

5.2.1.1 Table A11.1 Recommendations table

No.	Rationale for recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
Strategic relevance				
A.1	Lack of consensus on the ToC makes it difficult to get consensus on national guidelines for wetland management	**Recommendation:** Review ToC with stakeholders to create consensus through a series of target network actions and events	Project team	New ToC agreed with stakeholders before Jan 2021
A.2	Lack of institutional strategy means it remains unclear who and how wetland management plans will be implemented. Competition between agencies needs to be addressed.	**Recommendation:** Hire ST Int. Institution Building Specialist to prepare a strategy and roadmap towards an institutional framework for wetlands management in Lao PDR	FAO Country Office and Project team	Strategy ready by Feb 2021
A.3	In the absence of an institutional framework, capacity building is not geared towards management capabilities needed at each level	Recommendation: Revise the capacity building strategy in the light of the new institutional strategy and roadmap	Project team	Revised strategy ready by May 2021
Effectiveness				
B.1	Due to a slow start, the Project is highly unlikely to achieve its objectives within present time frame	**Recommendation:** Project partners should agree on a budget-neutral extension of at least one year.	GEF, FAO, MONRE, PSC	Extension agreed before May 2021
B.2	The core output of the project is to develop good models of CC adaptation measures that can be scaled up	**Recommendation:** Project should focus on establishing good models in inner core villages first, before scaling up to outer core villages and districts	Project team	No scaling up until Sep. 2021
B.3	Variable quality and quantity of CC adaptation measures tested so far	**Recommendation:** Project should do a participatory evaluation of CCA measures to improve quality and chances of replication	Project team	Before end 2020
B.4	So far, little progress in developing models for restoring flooded forests	**Recommendation:** Project should have good models on the ground with native flooded forest species	Project team, with backstopping support from FAO-RAP	Pilots established before June 2021
B.5	There could be more synergy between forest and wetland conservation, boosting community motivation and capability for managing natural resources	**Recommendation:** Project could support NTFP management in forests adjacent to wetlands to create synergy (e.g. malva nuts in XBN)	Project team, with backstopping support from FAO-RAP	2021
B.6	Wetlands already provide key livelihood functions, there is less of a need to create alternative livelihoods that would require long cycles of support creating new value chains	**Recommendation:** Project should focus on rice, livestock and tourism. Not to start new value chains for handicrafts or NTFPs.	Project team	2021

B.7	Project has good water levels monitoring system, which starts to be used as early warning system for flood disasters	**Recommendation:** Project should strengthen flood warning systems, communication and rapid response capacity among communities	Project team	2021
B.8	Communities are the "de facto" managers of wetlands. Wetland Management Plans should be based in community plans that are consolidated into wetland level management plans	**Recommendation:** Project should include a step of revising village level management plans in the process of developing district-level wetland management plans	Project team	Have separate village plans and an overall plan ready by December 2020
B.9	Project has not produced detailed wetland land use maps for each village and does not have capacity to do so. A new WCS project will work on this in the XC wetland	**Recommendation:** Project should have a formal agreement to collaborate and coordinate with the WCS project, to integrate land use plans/ maps into wetland management planning	FAO Country Office, WCS	Formal agreement before December 2020
B.10	Lack of demarcation of core zones was often raised as key issue by communities visited by the MTR	**Recommendation:** Project should complete demarcation of core zones, using good quality markers.	Project team	Before end of 2020.
Efficiency				
C.1	CTA spends most of his time on administration at the expense of technical advice on consensus building and creating an institutional framework for wetland management	**Recommendation:** New FAO Operations Specialist should relieve CTA of most administrative function, so that CT can spend more time on institutional development	FAO Country Office	Agree on revised TORs before Dec 2020
C.2	FAO internal procedures cause delays in project procurement and financing	**Recommendation:** FAO should review its procedures to speed up delivery of project results. Operations Specialist should follow this up.	All FAO offices concerned, FAO RAP should take lead	Before February 2021
C.3	Cost-effectiveness of LoAs seems uneven, could be improved	**Recommendation:** Project team should review cost-effectiveness and look for ways to improve quality and quantity of outputs	Project team	Before March 2021
Sustainability and catalysis/replication				
D.1	Main risks are lack of institutional framework and lack of CC adaptation models that could be scaled up	**Recommendation:** Extending the project period would allow the project to develop CC adaptation models to the point where they could be scaled up. It would also give the project more time to support the Government in completing the National Wetlands Management Plan.		
Factors affecting performance				
E.1	Co-financing only partly realized, which limits sustainability of results	**Recommendation:** Project should develop an exit strategy to assist partners in finding new sources of funding and capacity to carry on	Project team	Not later than one year before end of project
E.2	Lack of good baseline for monitoring impacts is a serious shortcoming	**Recommendation:** Project should establish a baseline for all the revised indicators in its theory of change	Project team	Before March 2021

Cross-cutting dimensions				
F.1	Women are the primary users of wetlands, but remain underrepresented in wetland management processes and functions	**Recommendation:** Project should review its gender strategy and develop key interventions to empower women in wetland management	Project team, with backstopping support from	August 2021
F.2	Waste management was often proposed by communities visited by the MTR team	**Recommendation:** Project should develop a few simple but effective activities to improve community waste management.	Project team	August 2021

6. Lessons learned

178 As the project has not achieved its key outputs yet, it is a bit too early to generate lessons learned on achieving climate resilience for wetlands and surrounding communities. The project may be expected to have such lessons towards the end of the project.

179 There are some lessons learned on project design for participatory wetlands management. The first is that such project design should be based on a good analysis of all processes that influence wetland habitats and their interaction, to develop a valid theory of change.

180 The second lesson learned is that projects aimed at sustainable wetland management should not only focus on generating knowledge (knowing what to do), but also have a strong institution building component (agreeing on who will do what). Project designs should not exclusively build on KAP studies, but have a strong institutional analysis beforehand.

181 The third lesson is that project modality should be adapted to stakeholder realities. The most important stakeholders in this project are the communities living around the wetlands, who are the "de facto" managers as they decide on most of the interventions that make or break sustainability. Therefore wetlands management should be participatory in nature.

182 District offices are limited in their capacity to manage wetlands due to structural shortages of resources (capacities and budgets). However they are the best places to support capacity building of communities to develop and implement participatory wetland plans.

183 The role of Province and Central level offices should be strictly in providing supportive policies, social and environmental standards needed to allow district offices and local communities to manage wetlands. They have similar limitations in resources preventing them from active involvement in day-to-day management of wetlands. They should not be directly involved in implementation.

184 The project became much more effective once it channeled activity budgets away from central level directly to province and district levels through the mechanism of LoAs. In future project design, more though should be given to the well-known principle of delegating tasks to the lowest possible level.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: TOR of the MTR

Appendix 2: Project Result Matrix

Appendix 3: Participatory Stakeholder engagement and analysis for MTR

Appendix 4: Documents to be consulted (required as per the TOR)

Appendix 5: Actual list of documents analyzed

Appendix 6: MTR itinerary, including field missions (agenda)

Appendix 7: List of stakeholders interviewed during the MTR

Appendix 8: MTR matrix for the Mid-Term Review of the CAWA Project

Appendix 9: Checklists of Questions for stakeholder interviews

Appendix 10: Results Matrix showing achievements at mid-term and MTR observations

Appendix 11: Co-financing Table

Appendix 12: GEF evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme

Appendix 1. Terms of reference for the MTR

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review of Climate Change Adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR

GCP/ LAO/022/LDF

GEF ID 5489

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

November 2019

Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASDSP	Association de Soutien au Développement des Sociétés Paysannes
BH	Budget holder
BKN	Beung Kiat Ngong wetland, Champasak province
CAWA	Climate Change Adaptation in Wetlands Areas in Lao PDR Project
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DCC	Department of Climate Change
DEQP	Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
DLM	Department of Land Management
DoNRE	District Office of Natural Resources and Environment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EBA	Ecosystem-Based Adaptation
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
EOI	Expression of Interest
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLO	Funding Liaison Officer
GCU	FAO GEF Coordination Unit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
KfW	KfW (Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau) Bankengruppe, Germany
LCA	Lead Coordinating Agency
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LNMCS	Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat
LoA	Letter of Agreement (FAO – Service Provider)
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MRWP	Mekong Regional Wetlands Project
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Non-Profit Association
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PDR	People's Democratic Republic (Lao)
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PoNRE	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment
PPC	Provincial Project Committee
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PMCU	Project Management Coordination Unit
PPR	Project Progress Report
PPU	Provincial Project Unit
PTF	Project Task Force
RAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SKU	Savannakhet University
RM	Mid-term Review Manager
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
ToC	Theory of Change
TOs	Technical Officers
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VDRA	Vulnerability Disaster Risk Assessment
VTE	Vientiane
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
XC	Xe Champhone wetland, Savannakhet province

1 Introduction

This document describes the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the project "Climate Change Adaptation in Wetlands Areas in Lao PDR" - GCP/Lao/022/LDF (known as CAWA Project). The project is located in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). The project started on June 2016 and has a planned duration of 5 years until May 2021. The MTR was scheduled for February 2019.

This TOR describes the CAWA Project, identifies key areas of work undertaken and challenges faced since project inception, sets out the purpose and scope of the review, and presents the main work plan.

2 Background and context of the project/ program

2.1 Description of project, project objectives and components

1. The CAWA Project is located in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), with primary focus upon two wetland sites within the tropical lowland plains of the lower Mekong river basin – the Xe Champhone floodplain (XC) in Savannakhet province (45,000 ha, 40 villages, 20,000 people) and the Beung Kiat Ngong seasonal wetland (BKN) in Champasak province (12,400 ha, 14 villages, 7,00 people). Both wetlands are of international importance and represent Lao PDR's only two Ramsar convention[6] designated wetlands.

2. The challenge of project implementation revolves around the management and improvement of wetlands and community wetland livelihoods as part of the national, regional and local approach to Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The context is that wetland landscapes and ecosystem clearly provide valuable goods and services which support local food, nutrition and livelihoods, however, from the CCA and DRM perspective they also buffer to flood and drought disasters through provision of flood retention and aquifer recharge functions. These functions are not widely recognised by local or national stakeholders, yet are an important component of landscape-scale CCA and DRM. The key challenge to wetland-based CCA in the Lao PDR context is the progressive loss of wetland function and habitat due to development pressures and agriculture conversion (mainly to rice), and the expansion of livelihood, infrastructure and investment interventions which are neither climate change nor wetland landscape adapted (i.e. maladapted interventions).

3. The project aims to support Lao PDR to set in place the tools required to help local communities and government agencies who live and operate within and surrounding wetland areas to adapt to the impacts of climate change and adjust to rising disaster risk (floods and droughts) in a way that contributes to increased sustainability / resilience of local livelihoods and improved protection, restoration and management of the wetland landscape, hydrology and natural resources upon which they depend. The project will use a combination of landscape, river-basin and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches to enhance the ability of the wetlands and local government management to buffer local people's livelihoods and local economies against climate change (CC) impacts and to reduce disaster risks. This will be achieved through four interlinked components designed to: (i) strengthen relevant planning and management frameworks for wetland conservation, sustainable use, CCA and DRM; (ii) generate replicable models for flood and drought-adapted livelihoods and agriculture, livestock and fisheries practices; (iii) generate replicable models for community-based wetland management; and (iv) set in place in a program for capture, dissemination and national uptake of best practices. The project was designed to contribute to the achievement of the three Global Environment Facility (GEF) 5 LCDF objectives:

    - CCA-1 - Reduce vulnerability of people, livelihoods, physical assets and natural systems to the adverse effects of climate change;

[6] Wetland sites designated under The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971).

- CCA-2 - Strengthen institutional and technical capacities for effective climate change adaptation;
- CCA-3 - Integrate climate change adaptation into relevant policies, plans and associated processes.

4. The Project contribution will be primarily through the promotion and adoption of climate resilient and disaster risk mitigating wetland management approaches and fishery-livestock-agricultural practices, and incorporation of these adaptations into agricultural, natural resource and conservation planning and policies.

5. The FAO-GEF CAWA project, with project number GCP/Lao/022/LDF, started on June 2016, with planned duration of 5 years and closure in May 2021. The LCDF fund allocation for the Project was US$ 4,717,579. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the GEF Agency and acts as the financial and operational Executing Agency responsible for provision of supervision and technical guidance during project implementation. The FAO Country Representative (FAO-R) is the project Budget Holder (BH), and is responsible for supervision of project operations and budgeting. Day-to-day project management is provided by the project PMU in cooperation with Executing Partners.

6. The Project Executing Partner / Lead Coordinating Agency (LCA) at national-level is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP) representing the government of Lao PDR. The LCA is responsible for overall project coordination, cooperation with other government line agencies and other actors, and ensuring that the project is implemented so as to deliver outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner. The International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN) is also an Executing Partner which provides lead technical support. Other international partners include the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and Tétraktys, respectively providing technical inputs on water resource studies and eco-tourism development. Implementation support is also facilitated by the MONRE provincial and district offices, the Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment (PoNRE) and District Office of Natural Resources and Environment (DoNRE), technically supported on livelihood raising topics by the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO).

7. In support of the MONRE LCA, and representing FAO Laos, day-to-day management of the Project is conducted by the CAWA Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU), housed in the DEQP. The PMCU is staffed by a National Project Coordinator (NPC) and a supporting DEQP team, supported at central level by a FAO-recruited international Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and five national project staff (Capacity Development Expert, Knowledge Management and Participation Expert, Administration and Operations Officer, Project and Administration Officer and Project Driver) working in the Project Management Unit (PMU) office based within the MONRE DEQP office. At Provincial and District levels (in the two target sites), the project has two Provincial Project Units (PPUs) staffed by FAO recruited Provincial and District Facilitators. All FAO recruited staff in PCMU and PPU activities are funded by LCDF funds, with staff managed and supervised by the CTA, and top-supervised by the BH FAO Laos and Lead Technical Officer (LTO) at FAO, RAP, Bangkok.

8. Budget provision for the project consists of the US$ 4,717,579, managed by the BH and PCMU, and overseen and approved by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and two Provincial Project Committees (PPCs). Co-Financing to a value of USD 15,367,380, outlined in Annex 2 is listed in the Project Document, yet exists only as an over-lapping and cooperating network of projects, with no formal coordinating platform or sharing of workplans, management approaches or information.

9. Outline of the Project's Results Matrix is provided in Annex 1. The over-arching objective (**Outcome**) of the project, in relation to the above context, is to reduce climate change (CC) vulnerability of communities and the fragile wetland eco-systems upon which they depend. The objective is delivered via four focus components:

   - **Component 1** - improved stakeholder understanding of CC impacts and disaster risks (activity focus on site Vulnerability Disaster Risk Assessment (VDRA) and strategic studies; beneficiary focus on community, sub-national and national partners);
   - **Component 2** - development of cost-effective adaptation measures (with community, sub-national and national partners) to address the impacts and risks revealed (activity focus on improved site planning, coordination, NRM user groups, livelihood innovations, direct investments and an early warning disaster risk and recovery system; beneficiary focus on community and sub-national partners);
   - **Component 3** – integration of CCA and DRM measures into planning processes (with sub-national and national partners) (activity focus on planning guidelines, training and strengthened coordinating mechanisms; beneficiary focus on sub-national and national partners);
   - **Component 4** – an efficient M&E system is implemented by PMU, to track project progress toward impact and objectives, and knowledge is shared widely on implementation lessons learnt and technical output with national and local partners and stakeholder networks (activity focus on reporting and evaluation, M&E system, knowledge workshops and information dissemination; beneficiary focus on community, sub-national and national partners).

2.2 Project stakeholders and their role

10. An outline of key partners and stakeholders involved in the project is provided in Appendix 2, including the implementing agencies and partners, and local groups and beneficiaries, and outline the role each plays in the project.

2.3 Theory of change

11. No Theory of Change (ToC) was developed for the project at the design phase regarding the project's approach to deliver the dual objectives of a reduction of climate change (CC) vulnerability of communities and the wetland eco-system upon which they depend. An apparent ToC is however evident from the project results matrix outlined in Section 1.1 above and Annex 1, where an improved stakeholder understanding of CC impacts and disaster risks (Component 1) is expected to provide a firm foundation for the development of cost effective CCA and DRM measures at the two project implementation sites (Component 2), which can lead to field lessons learnt on CCA and

DRM measures which can be further scale-up and integrated into national and sub-national planning processes (Component 3).

12. The alternative bio-physical theory of change is that the Project through adoption of an EBA / landscape-based approach may support CCA-adapted livelihoods and the wetland through an implementation approach which balances between conservation and development. The conservation / environmental management component aims to sustain the wetland natural landscape and ecosystem services, in face of the VDRA and SEA assessed threats (Component 1), so as to provide CCA and DRM landscape functions and services to support CCA and DRM adapted livelihoods. The development component will focus on flood and drought adapted (CCA) livelihood options (Component 2), supported by NRM and site management improvements (Output 2.2), direct CCA investments (Output 2.3), improvements in livelihood management, techniques and material inputs (Output 2.4), backed-up by a hydro-metric data-based early warning system to better understand and avoid disasters (Output 2.5). The CCA and DRM lessons learnt on-site in terms of improved wetland and livelihood innovations, can in turn be shared to national and provincial levels to inform the development of related policy and planning approaches (Component 3).

2.4 Implementation progress and main challenges faced to date

13. CAWA project implementation may be best described in three phases of differing progress pattern and challenges.

14. **Years 1 and 2 – Start-up Years (Jun 2016 – Jun 2018)**
Progress: Good progress was made in the 'start-up' years, under the initial CTA, initial team, numerous consultants and a focussed group of partners (DEQP, IUCN, IWMI, SKU and Tétraktys). Technically project start-up actions, M&E establishment, baseline socio-economic study (XCP only), gender and capacity development strategies and most of the Component 1 baseline studies and risk / CCA analysis were completed. Good technical progress was made with consolidated baseline studies and consultancies. Component 2 progress was modest against what was planned but still significant in terms of impact (with FCZ establishment), and some progress on Component 3. Component 4 neither is included in the Prodoc, nor was clearly recognised and discussed at the beginning of the project (inception workshop, PSC meeting, M&E consultancy).
Challenges: The institutional delivery model focussed on central government (DEQP lead) and primarily foreign technical and research agencies. Management challenges were mainly logistical and related to a quick start-up of activities and field studies. The end of the period was, however, firstly marked by a substantial team turn-over (majority of first team and CTA departing) with only 2 team members remaining and 4 members newly recruited. Secondly, relatively low levels of engagement among District and Provincial government partners, who had been left to act as observers rather than participants, due to lack of budgets or task allocations related to direct project implementation (i.e. few sub-national level LoAs, with exception of PONRE Champasak and University of Savannakhet). Thirdly, by an over-whelming focus of project activities and budget (80%) on one site only (XC Savannakhet), leaving attention to BKN Champasak in a very light state due to an overlap with the KfW-funded MRWP project at site. These last three points left a legacy of project management challenge for the remaining project phases.

15. **Year 3 – Middle Period (Jul 2018 – Jan 2019)**

Progress: Good progress continued through this period, with largely new team, no CTA and an acting FAO-R supervising. Project institutional delivery continued with a focus on central government (DEQP lead) and foreign technical and research agencies, yet there were three new sub-national partners added with PAFO Savannakhet. Component 1 activity was with reduced post-baseline, with focus on follow-up CCA and wetland management training, and one consultancy (KAP Survey). Component 2 progress increased with follow-up on FCZ establishment (both sites), and new livelihood raising and land management activities under the PAFO partners. Component 3 remained un-started and Component 4 was still not recognised. Good technical progress continued during the period (IUCN and Tétraktys).
Challenges: Technical progress continued, yet with reduced technical leadership to design and steer major changes or expansions. There were no new baseline studies or project management plans during period, and a largely unchanged institutional delivery model, with exception of the initiative to start three new sub-national PAFO LoAs. Management challenges did arise in keeping existing progress on-track, and in expanding with the new sub-national LoAs, minus the vital link with project period 1 provided by the remaining long-term staff, the lack of project institutional memory and limited hand-over period for new staff would have had a more serious impact. The feeling of disengagement among District and Provincial government partners at PONRE and DONRE, however, increased over the period and was expressed in PPC meetings. This was not helped by award of new LoAs only to PAFO (i.e. another ministry), or by the limited input of the project at the second field site (BKN Champasak). Project also suffered from underspending relative to budget allocation largely due to a lack of on-going LoAs with sub-national field-level implementation partners to allow for expenditure of a substantial procurement budget related to Component 2 workplan activities.

16. **Years 3, 4 and 5 – Final Years (Feb 2019 – May 2021)**
Progress: Progress remains focussed on completion of Component 1 (review of VDRAs, flood and catchment studies), a substantial expansion of Component 2 activities, commencement of Component 3 and 4 activity programmes. The feeling of disengagement among District and Provincial government partners has been dispelled through initiation of a coordinated new network of PONRE, DONRE, PAFO and DAFO livelihood raising, NRM and wetland protection activities under the new LoAs. The imbalance between sites and provinces has been addressed with a much-expanded works programme, budget allocation and CAWA staff recruitment of the BKN Champasak site.
Challenges: With well-experienced ''new'' team, and arrival of new CTA and FAO-R, project progress and expenditure over Year 3 (early 2019) remained stable and modest under on-going LoAs, yet significant expansion of programme and expenditure was delayed until early Year 4 due to focus on project internal housekeeping and ~~mid-term review~~ (i.e. existing LoA renewals and closure; log frame, workplan, procurement plan and budget review; staff contracting and recruitment. The challenge to expand of project progress and expenditure has continued through end of Year 3 into early Year 4, due to project time input to a re-design on the institutional implementation structure, with major effort to design and initiate 7 new LoAs with District and Provincial partners at both project field sites (PONRE, PAFO, DONRE and DAFO), and a significant re-design of the national-level LoA with DEQP. Increase in project expenditure and expansion of field progress and scope via new LoA partners and accelerated procurement has been challenged by the complexity and changeability of FAO contracting, procurement and quality assurance procedures.

3 MTR purpose

17. The MTR is explicitly called for, in the project document, under Section *4 – Implementation and Management Arrangements, Sub-Section 4.6 - Provision for Evaluations*. These TOR follow the guidelines of GEF unit's document *Guide for Planning and Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of FAO-GEF Projects and Programmes (draft Version 1.1, February 2019).* The MTR will serve an accountability purpose (inform decision making and provide accountability) for GEF, GCU, BH, PMU and FAO Management, and an improvement purpose (improve project) for Project Management, PTF, GCU, PMU, NPC, PSC and PPC.

18. The project plans to carry out a Mid-Term Review (MTR) with the objective of assessing progress towards expected outcomes and to identify areas in need of improvement and/or corrective actions in order to achieve its target results. The main purpose of the review is to determine whether the project is on track to achieve its stated aims, and where project objectives are not being met the MTR will make recommendations to improve project implementation towards the stated objectives, while also helping to improve the future impact and sustainability of project. It will seek to draw lessons and make recommendations that will be useful to stakeholders. The MTR will provide, as appropriate, strategic, programmatic and management recommendations for corrective actions to streamline and improve the project delivery towards its objectives.

19. The target users of the MTR Report are the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MAF) and other national project partners, the GEF, NPC, PSC, PPC, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (inclusive of LTO), GCU and other responsible units at FAO HQ (e.g. PTF and TOs), BH and PMU. This TOR should serve as a guiding document for the project's main management stakeholders, in particular the Budget Holder (BH) who is responsible for initiating and managing the MTR, the staff from the FAO Project Task Force (PTF), the FAO GEF Coordination Unit (GCU) and the MTR team.

1 MTR scope

20. The MTR covered the implementation period of the project from June 2016 to June 2020. Concerning the geographical coverage, the MTR will conduct field missions in the two project areas. The MTR team will engage the main national, provincial and district stakeholders as detailed in the project document. An initial list is provided in *Appendix 1*. The team will also review developments in the context of the project's implementation, including developments in relevant partner strategies, trends with regard to site development pressures and shifts in project internal and external risks, since the design of the project. All components, outputs and activities of the project should be evaluated.

4 MTR objective and key questions

4.1 MTR objectives

21. The MTR will follow the format of the GEF evaluation criteria. The criteria that need to be assessed and rated are:

A. Project Relevance

Project Design:

- Review the issues being addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions.
- Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document. MTR Team should assess any changes to the relevant (both positive and negative).
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- Review how the project addresses country, FAO and GEF priorities.

Results Framework / Logframe and Theory of Change:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time- bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Review and update the project's Theory of Change (Result Matrix) based on the project experiences and developments on the external environment.

B. Effectiveness of results

- Review the logframe indicators and overall quality of project outputs against progress made towards progress towards achieving project outcomes and objectives to date, versus end-of-project targets and briefly assess the likelihood of longer-term impacts resulting from the project.
- Populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the '*Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of FAO Projects*'; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red).
- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective. By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

C. Efficiency of Project Implementation

Using the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of FAO GEF Projects*; assess the following categories of project progress:

- whether there were delays to project activities;
- whether the project built on existing systems, data, structure, etc; and
- whether systems were in place to improve efficiency.

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D. Sustainability of Project Outcomes.

Assess overall risks to sustainability factors of the project in terms of the following four categories:

- Financial risks;
- Socio-political risks;
- Institutional framework and governance risks;
- Environmental risks;
- Socio-Economic risks;
- Replicability and Catalytic Role.

E. **Factors affecting the performance and delivery of project results**
Focused on quality of project oversight, execution and management, inclusive of:
- Project design and readiness
- Project management and oversight
- Work planning
- Stakeholder engagement, partnerships and institutional linkages
- Financial management and co-finance
- Project-level M&E systems, M&E design and M&E plan implementation
- Reporting
- External Communications and knowledge management
- Decision-making, coordination and internal communication processes

F. **Cross-cutting dimensions,**
Including gender and equity concerns, environmental and social safeguards (as appropriate).

1.1 MTR questions

Box 2 – Examples of MTR questions (to be adapted for each project)

1.Relevance (rating required)	Are the project outcomes congruent with the country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, FAO Country Programing Framework, needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, Indigenous Peoples if relevant? Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as adoption of new national policies, plans or programs that affect the relevance of the project objectives and goals? If so, are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?
2. Effectiveness Achievement of project results (rating required)	(Delivery of results) To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes, and objectives, and what, if any, wider results has the project had at regional and global levels to date? Were there any unintended results? Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction and environmental status change (reflecting Global Environmental Benefits), or any change in policy/legal/regulatory framework? To what extent can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component? (Likelihood of impact) Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the eventual achievement of the project's intended longer-term impacts, and what can be done to improve the likely achievement of positive impacts from the project? To what extent may the progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project?

	For programme assessments: (coherence) what is the coherence between the programme and its child projects theories of change, indicators and expected/achieved results; (added-value) what is the added-value of bringing the different interventions together under one programme (or over the same level of investment made through comparable alternatives)?
3.Efficiency (rating required)	To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively? To what extent has the project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation? In case of OPIM project, was the Execution Agreement efficiently followed? An additional set of questions is suggested for projects with an OPIM component in Annex 13 of the MTR Guide. To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies, and complementarities with other projects and partnerships, etc, and avoid duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives? If the project is executed under the OPIM modality, add relevant OPIM questions (see list in the OPIM toolkit).
4.Sustainability (rating required)	(Sustainability) What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain after the end of the project? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and benefits (consider financial, socio-economic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects)? (Replication and catalysis) What project results, lessons and experiences generated by the project have been replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources), or are likely to be in the near future? If the project is executed under the OPIM modality, add relevant OPIM questions (see list in the OPIM toolkit).
5.Factors affecting progress (rating required)	(Project design) Is the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes? Is the project's causal logic (as depicted in its ToC) coherent and clear? To what extent are the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe? To what extent was gender integrated into the objectives and results framework of the project? Were other actors, such as civil society, indigenous population or private sector involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results? (Project execution and management) To what extent did the execution agency effectively discharged its role and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project? What have been the main challenges in relation to the management and administration of the project? How well have risks been identified and managed? What changes are needed to improve delivery in the second half of the project? If the project is executed under the OPIM modality, add relevant OPIM questions (see list in the OPIM toolkit).

	(Financial management and Co-financing) What have been the challenges related to the financial management of the project? To what extent has the pledged co-financing been delivered, and has there been any additional leveraged co-financing provided since implementation began? How has any short fall in co-financing or materialization of greater than expected co-financing affected project results? (Project oversight, implementation role) To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision (technical, administrative and operational) during the project identification, formulation, approval and start-up, and current execution phases? (Partnerships and stakeholder engagement) To what extent have relevant stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society, indigenous populations, disadvantaged/vulnerable/disabled groups and the private sector, been involved in project formulation and implementation, and what has been the effect of their involvement/non-involvement on the project results? How do the various stakeholder groups see their own engagement with the project? What are the mechanisms of their involvement and how could these be improved? What are strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships? Has the Stakeholder Engagement Plan been adhered to, and documented? Have all stakeholders been aware of the ESS Plan and the Grievance Complaint Mechanism? (Communication and knowledge management) How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience? How can this be improved? How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results and lessons learned and experiences? To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results? (M&E design) Is the project's M&E system practical and sufficient? How has stakeholder engagement and gender assessment been integrated in the M&E system? How could this be improved? (M&E implementation) Does the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Has information been gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies? To what extent has information generated by the M&E system during project implementation been used to adapt and improve project planning and execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability? Are there gender-disaggregated targets and indicators? How can the M&E system be improved?
6. Cross-cutting dimensions	**(Gender and minority groups, including Indigenous Peoples, disadvantaged, vulnerable and disabled peoples)** To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Has the project been designed and implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits? Was a gender analysis done? (**Environmental and social safeguards (ESS)**) To what extent where environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS Mitigation Plan (if one exists) was adhered to?

22. The MTR team is advised to follow the generic questions and structure presented above by the GEF Annex 4 ''TOR template for FAO-GEF project MTR'' outline presented above. In all other aspects besides technical approach and site context, the CAWA project should be judged like any other GEF LDC project using the standard generic criteria and questions above. The MTR team is however warned that the project ToC, interaction of objectives and related design of activity implementation is not trivial, and has a level of complexity which will require additional briefing and a fuller understanding prior to conduct of the MTR review and formulation of final MTR questions.

23. The review of ToC and objectives, most specifically in regard to questions of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, will require an understanding of the complex site-level bio-physical dynamics which underly the project strategy and which play behind and within the ToC. Most notably a good base-level understanding is needed of the:

- *Fundamental importance of wetland landscape* – a sustained health, function and survival of the wetland landscape is the foundation of the project's GEF, CCA and DRM outcomes and outputs – this including the wetland's physical extent, ecosystem and hydrology – requiring a strong project focus on site and wetland protection and management of development impacts (on-site, in-basin and nearby);
- *Fundamental importance of sustained flood patterns* - connected with the protection and management of the hydrological function of wetlands – a sustained wetland flood pattern is the most crucial feature to ensure the survival of the wetland and a sustained catchment function and water supply on-site and downstream (surface and ground water);
- *Multi-objective strategy* – Aside from the Project's direct wetland, river-basin, NRM and water resource inventory, management and protection tasks (i.e. related to achieving the above foundation objectives of wetland landscape, wetland function and flood pattern preservation) - the project's GEF LDC objective is based on the upper-level aim of protecting, raising and making more resilient the livelihoods of the wetland reliant communities. Delivering this objective of improved livelihoods, the success of the project interventions (and aim of their design and synergy) is focussed on multiple objectives of:
    - *Lowering wetland environmental impact* – livelihood options should have a low negative to positive bio-physical impact on the function and existence of the wetland site, ecosystem and hydrology;
    - *Increasing farmer profit and self-sufficiency* - raising livelihoods not in terms of production level, but in terms of farmer profit and self-sufficiency in nutrition and household food supply terms;
    - *Introducing CCA smart approach* - ensuring livelihood options are CCA smart in terms of increased drought and flood tolerance, avoidance or adaptation;
    - *Introducing DRM smart approach* – ensuring livelihood options are planned, delivered and discussed in a way that will decrease farmers natural disaster (flood and drought) risk, and raise awareness of community and local government partners of the level and trend of disaster risk;

- *Ensuring Capacity Development orientated implementation* – both livelihood development and wetland management interventions should be designed and task-allocated in such a way that the differing layers of partners, community, NGO, district agency and provincial agency in the implementation matrix can be involved in a 'action learning – learning by doing' capacity development process with respect to design, planning and implementation of interventions and sub-contracts (LoAs).

- *Worthiness of field lessons to inform planning and policy* – the project's top-level objective is lastly to pass the lessons learnt in the field upwards to inform provincial and national planning and policy processes, yet to be successful and worthy of transfer, the field-level approaches must innovatively and successfully balance conservation (wetland preservation) and development (livelihood raising) in such a way that ticks the wetland management, CCA, DRM and ESS boxes, yet is also practical enough to be replicated by communities and local government without the need for high-level technical or budgetary support.

24. The MTR team should consider the above aspects of ToC and implementation objectives, before they formulate their final questions and apply review criteria to assess project, log frame, component synergy and activity intervention relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

5 Methodology

25. The MTR should adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards[7] and be in line with MTR Guidance Document and annexes which detail methodological guidelines and practices.

26. The MTR review will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders kept informed throughout the MTR process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation and analysis and will support the conclusion and recommendations.

27. To validate the contribution of the project towards its stated outputs and outcomes, field visits will be conducted to meet farmer-beneficiaries, women, and stakeholder groups, and to observe/assess/test physical changes on the people and their environments. Desk reviews and consultative interviews with project staff at FAO Laos will constitute an important aspect of the review, primarily in relation to question of efficiency and factors affecting performance.

28. In summary, the MTR will make use of the following methods and tools:

    - Review of existing reports,
    - Interviews with key informants, stakeholders and participants, and
    - Direct observation/Technical Assessment or Tests during field visits.

29. The methodology described in the TORs, as well as the identified ToC should be based on an initial assessment carried out by the BH/RM. For complex projects and programs

[7] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

and in all cases where an inception mission is foreseen, the ToC and the methodology may be further developed by the BH/RM and MTR Team, and presented in an inception report.

30. Final decisions about the specific design and methods for the MTR should emerge from consultations among the project team, the MTR consultants, and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the MTR purpose and objectives and answer the MTR questions.

6 Roles and responsibilities

31. The **Budget Holder** (BH) is accountable for the MTR process and report and is responsible for the initiation, management and finalization of the MTR. Depending on their availability and commitments, the BH may designate another individual - the **MTR Manager** (RM) – to act on their behalf.

32. With the assistance of the project's **Lead Technical officer (LTO)** and the **GEF Coordination Unit (GCU) – FLO and MTR focal point and** guidance from this document, the BH/RM is responsible for the drafting and finalization of the ToR. This TOR should be based on document review, discussions with PTF and if possible, a face-to-face meeting with LTO to get a good understanding of the project. The BH/RM is also responsible for the identification of the MTR team members, briefs the MTR team on the MTR methodology and process, and takes the lead in organising the MTR missions. The BH/RM review the draft and final MTR reports, along with the GCU's MTR focal point for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the ToR and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the MTR report.

33. The **GCU** will appoint a focal point to provide technical backstopping through the MTR process, including guidance and punctual support to the BH/RM and MTR Team on technical issues related to GEF and the MTR. This can also include support in identifying potential MTR team members[8], participation in interview panels, and briefing the MTR team on the MTR process, relevant methodology and tools. The GCU also follows up with the BH to ensure the timely preparation of the Management Response.

34. The BH, or the RM appointed by the BH, is responsible for initiating the MTR process, providing inputs to the first version of the TOR, especially the description of the background and context chapter, and supporting the MTR team during its work. They are required to participate in meetings with the MTR team, make available information and documentation as necessary, and comment on the TOR and report. Involvement of different members of the PTF will depend on respective roles and participation in the project. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the associated Follow-up Report to the MTR, supported in this task by the LTO and others members of the PTF. Further details on the Management Response and the Follow-up Report are provided in the MTR Guidance Document.

[8] The BH/RM should be responsible for the administrative procedures related to the ET's recruitment.

35. The National Project Coordinator (NPC) facilitates the participation of Government partners in the MTR process and supports the PMU to ensure good communication on the MTR across Government. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) facilitates Government and other partner and stakeholder participation in the MTR process.

36. The **MTR Team** is responsible for further developing and applying the MTR methodology, producing a brief MTR inception report, conducting the MTR, and for producing the MTR report. All team members will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the MTR with written inputs to both the draft and final versions of the MTR report (the MTR Team Leader has overall responsibility for delivering the MTR report). The MTR team will agree with the GCU MTR focal point on the outline of the report early in the MTR process, based on the template provided in Annex 12 of the MTR Guidance Document. The MTR Team is free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own MTR tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the BH/RM, consults the BH and PTF where necessary. The MTR Team Leader is fully responsible for the MTR report, which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. Although an MTR report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO, the BH/RM and GCU do provide Quality Assurance of all MTR reports.

37. The MTR Team Leader guides and coordinates the MTR Team members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and leads on the preparation of the draft and the final report, consolidating the inputs from the team members with his/her own.

38. More detailed guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the key individuals and

7 MTR team composition and profile

39. The MTR team will consist of one Lead Consultant (MTR Specialist) who must have a good project evaluation background (preferably of GEF projects) with a Climate Change / Agriculture, Livestock or Fisheries background, and one National Consultant preferably with a Natural Resource Management / Environment / Conservation background. The Lead Consultant will serve as the Team Leader. He/She will be responsible for the design and overall management of the MTR, and shall take a lead role in composing the reports and analyzing the project's Theory of Change. The National NRM - Environment Expert will focus on the technical assessment of the project outputs using appropriate technical tools and standards, and analysis of the project outcomes and potential impacts from a technical perspective. In line with the gender equality and women's empowerment objectives of FAO and the UN System, and with the GEF policy on gender, if possible, at least one of the team members should be a woman. To establish the objective and independent nature of the MTR, the team members should have no previous direct involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the project. All will sign the Declaration of Interest form of the FAO GEF Coordination Unit.

40. Minimum requirements for the position of Lead Consultant Evaluation Specialist:

    - Advanced degree in the agriculture, livestock or fisheries, climate change topics, forestry or environment;

- Proven international evaluation or mid-term review experience in developing or least developed countries (actual experience in Asia, specifically Lao PDR, and in the evaluation or review of projects related to sustainable natural resource management, wetland management, conservation, water and river basin management and climate smart agriculture will be an advantage);
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios and in elaborating and/or reconstructing a project's Theory of Change;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to climate change adaptation;
- Experience working with environmental projects or with the UN System (previous work experience with the GEF or GEF evaluations and with FAO will be an advantage);
- Work experience of at least 12 years including project/programme or country evaluations and/or reviews;
- Experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication, presentation and writing skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills and ability to deliver high-quality evaluation or MTR reports;
- Should be capable of working with people of different national and cultural backgrounds.

Minimum requirements for the position of National NRM / Environment Expert:

- Advanced degree in natural resource management, forestry, rural development, watershed management, or environmental science;
- Minimum 5 years of work experience related to wetlands, forestry, land and water management, or conservation, with particular emphasis on climate change adaptation-related assessments, planning and/or capacity development;
- Proven experience on community-based and participatory development projects in Lao PDR;
- Some experience of evaluations or reviews;
- Excellent communication skills (proficiency in English and Lao);
- Knowledge of work being done by relevant national institutions such as MONRE and MAF, and international agencies such as FAO including on capacity development;
- Possess computer/word processing skills and should be capable of working with people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

41. The roles and responsibilities of the MTR Team members, are set out in the ToR for the individual consultants.

42. The MTR consultants should be independent from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the project that is the subject of the MTR.

8 MTR products (deliverables)

43. The MTR team will first conduct a desk review of project documents (i.e. PIF, Project Document, Project Guideline Documents, PIRs, Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools, project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, etc.) provided by the Budget Holder and the Project Management Unit before the MTR team travel to Vientiane

Capital . Based on the desk review, they will draft an Inception Report and finalize it in the first few days of the mission (see MTR guidance document and its associated annexes for an outline of contents). The mission will then consist of briefing/debriefing sessions, interviews and site visits to the targeted communes in three agro-ecological zones .

44. Based on the findings from the document reviews, interviews/focus group discussions and field visits, the MTR Team should prepare a draft MTR Report, in accordance with the template set out on this TOR [Appendix 2]. The MTR Team should include a section in the MTR report setting out the evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

45. Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make SMART timebound recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant (see MTR Guidelines). A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary.

46. The MTR Team shall prepare and deliver the following outputs.

47. **Pre-Mission Inception Report**: MTR team clarifies objectives, methods and tools, presents a list of stakeholders and individuals to be interviewed and a provisional itinerary with field visits, to be used for the MTR in the first week of in-country field mission. It serves as a map and reference in planning and conducting an MTR. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the MTR design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details the GEF evaluation criteria/questions that the MTR seeks to answer (in the form of an MTR Matrix); data sources and data collection methods; analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source and data collection method; and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product.

48. **Briefing/Debriefing/Presentations**: After an introduction of the MTR process and mission – it's aims and objectives and the rules of operation and stakeholder liaison / interview An initial briefing to stakeholders shall be organized at the onset of the country mission. Initial findings to be presented to project management and the partners at the end of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: 20 February 2019

49. **Draft MTR Report**: Full draft report with appendices and annexes within 4 weeks of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: First draft: 17 March 2020 and Final draft: 14 April 2020.

50. **Final MTR Report**: Revised report with annex detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. Approximate due date: ……..

9 MTR timeframe

51. The MTR will take place in Lao PDR from 2 – 24 February 2020.

Task	Dates	Duration	Responsibility
ToR preparation	6 November 2019	1 week	BH/RM, LTO, FLO and GCU MTR focal point
ToR finalization	6 December 2019	3 weeks	BH/RM
Team identification	6 December 2019	3 weeks	BH/RM, LTO, FLO and GCU MTR focal point
Team Recruitment	6 January 2020	4 weeks	BH
Travel arrangements and organisation of the agenda/travel itinerary in the country for the field mission	6 January 2020	1 week	BH/RM, project team and MTR Team
Provision of the project information package for home-based study	13 January 2020	5 days for desk review	CAWA and MTR team
Prepare an MTR Pre-Mission Report	By 20 January 2020 (2 weeks before mission)		MTR team
Briefing of MTR Team	21 January 2020	1 day	BH/RM, when necessary supported by PTF and GCU
Clearance of the MTR inception report	27 January 2020		BH/RM and the GCU MTR focal point
Travel of MTR Team and initial Briefings	(foreseen international travel by 2 February) 3 – 4 February 2019	2 days in VTE	BH, FLO, LTO, GEF unit
MTR mission in Lao PDR (VTE and field sites)	5 – 21 February 2020	3 weeks	MTR Team with support of PMU
De-Briefing to FAO Office and Government Partners on Initial Findings	22 – 24 February 2020	3 days	Lead Consultant
Return travel and Preparation of First Draft	25 February – 16 March 2020	3 weeks	MTR team
First (zero) draft for circulation and comments	17 - 24 March 2020	1 week	BH/RM, PMU, GCU MTR focal point, LTO for comments and quality control (organised by BH/RM)
Production of second draft	25 – 31 March 2020	1 week	MTR team
Circulation of second draft	1 – 7 April 2020	1 week	BH/RM and key external stakeholders (organised by BH/RM)
Production of final report	8 – 14 April 2020	1 week	MTR team
Management Response (MR)	By 14 May 2020	4 weeks	BH
Follow-up report in PPR or PIR	By 14 November 2020	6 months	BH

Appendix 2: Project Results Matrix

Results Chain	Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target	Means of Verification and Responsible Entity	Assumptions
Component 1: Improved understanding of CC impacts and risks in XC and BKN wetlands					
Outcome 1: Improved understanding of CC impacts and risks, in XC and BKN wetlands.	**Outcome Indicator 1.1** Perceptions and understandings of CC impacts and risks resulting from training and from vulnerability assessments in PONRE, DONRE, PAFO and DAFO and communities around the target wetlands	Some limited awareness of CC vulnerability due to a) the CC and wetlands study in XC by the MRC, and in BKN due to Mekong Water Dialogues work and b) MRC CCAI work in Savannakhet, c) PPG discussions.	70% of members of PONRE, DONRE, PAFO and DAFO staff covering the target wetlands (28 out of 40) and 70% of members of community organisations (both men and women) in the target villages are aware of CC impacts and risks	Awareness scorecards to be developed in Year 1. KAP surveys to be carried out in provincial and district offices (PONRE, DONRE and PAFO, DAFO), and communities around the wetland areas, in year 1, immediately prior to mid-term review and immediately prior to final review	Commitment among local authorities and community members Trained staff remain in the provinces
Output 1.1. Pilot method-logical tool developed for participatory CC VDRA in wetlands	**Output Indicator 1.1.1.** State of development and use of pilot methodological tool for participatory CC VDRA in wetlands	CAM[9] method has been used in XC, BKN and Siphandone wetlands and also in Xe Pian, (but not in a participatory manner there), and by Mekong ARCC in Phou Hin phoun.	Participatory CC VDRA tool available in Lao language for national replication, based on test and refinement at two wetland sites	Project reports, including: Quarterly and annual progress of the project • Reports of training events • Review and assessment of quality of applications of CAM method and adaptation measures recommended	
Output 1.2. Effective[10] training programme on CC/CCA[11] and VDRA[12] in wetlands	**Output Indicator 1.2.1.** Numbers of stakeholders trained in participatory CC vulnerability and DRM management *(CCA Outcome 2.1 Indicator 5)*	None[13]	Totals: • 15 PONRE and 15 PAFO staff in each target province (= 60) • 15 DONRE and 15 DAFO staff in each of 3 districts surrounding the wetlands (=60) • 400 villagers, of which 200 female (20 villagers/village)	• Records of meetings and trainings • Quarterly progress reports of project	

[9] CAM = Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Methodology (http://www.icem.com.au/documents/climatechange/cam/CAM%20brief.pdf)

[10] "Effectively Trained" = based on good learning practices for effective capacity development in FAO Learning Module 3 on Effective Learning (www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment), including action-oriented peer-to-peer adult learning such as farmer field schools

[11] CCA = Climate Change Adaptation

[12] VDRA = vulnerability and disaster risk assessment

[13] A learning needs assessment will be carried out in Year 1 at PONRE, PAFO, DONRE, DAFO and village level, to generate a baseline to be tracked through KAP methodology

Output 1.3. Participatory VDRAs carried out in BKN and XC wetlands	**Output Indicator 1.3.1.** Numbers of participatory VDRAs carried out[14] in wetland communities, addressing aspects of wetlands, wetland based livelihoods and gender	VDRAs have been carried out on XC and BKN, focused on wetland habitats and species and to some degree, livelihoods.	By year 2, one in each of 20 key villages, including focus on gender differences in vulnerability	• Reports of participatory vulnerability assessments • Progress reports of implementation of adaptation plans • Project quarterly and annual reports	
Output 1.4. recommendations for appropriate adaptation measures based on analyses of CC-related issues affecting the target wetlands **(including traditional knowledge)**	**Output Indicator 1.4.1.** Number of studies generated[15] on CC-related issues affecting the target wetlands, including analysis of gender dimensions	See endnote	**Reports available on the following key topics available in English and Lao languages[16]:** - Allowable rates and locations of water extraction for irrigation - Spatial priorities for wetland re-opening - Acceptable fish off-take levels, timing of closed seasons, locations of no-take areas - Spatial priorities and technical recommendations for improved watershed management - Sustainable limits and locations for grazing - Integrated Pest Management options - Measures for management of invasive alien species - Appropriateness for controlled burning to protect valuable wetland habitats - Protection measures for key wetland species (e.g. crocodile, turtles)	Project publications	

[14] By District Implementation Teams (DONRE, DAFO, communities) with technical and facilitation support from Provincial Project Units

[15] With support from external consultants hired by the project, working in collaboration with national and regional institutions

[16] Indicative list, subject to ongoing review on the basis of needs analyses and discussions with local stakeholders

Component 2. Efficient and cost-effective adaptation measures					
Outcome 2. Efficient and cost-effective adaptation measures in place to reduce the impact of CC and natural disasters on wetlands eco-systems and local livelihoods.	**Outcome Indicator 2.1:** Numbers of families, in the 20 villages within the current Ramsar site boundaries, involved in adaptive agricultural practices, systems and infrastructure (e.g. climate smart agriculture, improved cropland management, dry and wet season rice cultivation, livestock production, aquaculture)	Around 160 families are applying two or more of these practices.	1,280 families (total 8,400family members) apply two or more of these practices.	Farmer surveys, focus group discussions	Recognition of CC implications by community members and commitment to taking corresponding CCA actions and accepting short term costs Acceptance of EBA-based approach rather than "quick fixes" based on maladaptive practices Continuation of generally favourable governance environment at community levels
	Outcome Indicator 2.2 Numbers of families in the 20 villages within the current Ramsar site boundaries, who have acquired[17] at least one additional livelihood support option as a CC fallback option	50% of vulnerable people surveyed have no reliable fall-back livelihood support option if their main option fails due to climate change	800 families (total 5,250 family members), with equal benefits for men and women	Questionnaire applied to villagers in target wetlands (complemented by focus group discussions)	
	Outcome Indicator 2.3 Numbers of families in 40 other villages within the proposed expanded Ramsar site boundaries with improved and more sustainable access to wetland products and services	Baseline to be established in year 1	6,400 families (total 42,000 family members), with equal benefits for men and women	Questionnaire applied to villagers in target wetlands (complemented by focus group discussions)	

[17] "Acquired" means that they are carrying out the additional livelihood support option(s) or that they have the capacities to do so, and that the additional livelihood support option(s) account(s) for at least 10% of their income (or has the possibility to do so)

	Outcome Indicator 2.4 Area of target wetlands under effective management and protection to promote resilience and the flow of ecosystem services	Baseline values to be determined in project year 1		Indices of management effectiveness are maintained at least at baseline levels over the entire area of the target wetlands (around 47,360ha)	Management effectiveness indices (adapted from GEF BD1 tracking tool) to be developed in project year 1 by knowledge management specialist and applied with participation of DONRE/PONRE, DAFO/PAFO and community organisations.	
	Outcome Indicator 2.5 Area of wetland habitats in XC and BKN under improved forms of direct management to address CC-induced risks	**Practices**	**ha**	**ha**	•CAM assessments and development of wetland management measures for each habitat •Implementation reports of adaptation measures •Reviews of effectiveness of management measures •Quarterly progress reports and annual reports	
		Improved management of forests to increase resilience to effects of CC (floods, erosion etc.)	0	200 ha		
		Invasive species management	0	200 ha		
		Water flow improved due to wetland re-opening	0	20 ha		
		Protection of habitats and nesting sites (e.g. lakes for crocodiles, forest patches for bird nesting)	2,550[18]	600 ha		
		Controlled burning	0	200ha		

[18] WCS has supported restoration of wetland habitat through community programmes to remove invasive weed species such as water hyacinth (*Eichhornia* spp), and has assisted nine communities to develop zoning of critical habitat areas (2,550 ha) and regulations to manage use of natural resources in these areas.

Output 2.1 Planning and inter-sectoral coordination frameworks for the two sites promoting CCA measures	**Output Indicator 2.1.1.** Numbers of plans that incorporate CCA considerations	No specific planning for wetlands introducing CC adaptation.	- 1 CCA-friendly territorial LUP per wetland - 1 CCA-friendly financial investment plan per wetland - 1 specific CCA plan per wetland - All infrastructure, agriculture and rural development plans in target districts incorporate wetland-focused CC vulnerability assessment with corresponding CCA measures	Review of plans	
	Output Indicator 2.1.2. Frequency of meeting of coordination mechanisms that embrace CCA in target wetlands and buffer zones.	**Meetings/year**		Review of meeting minutes of coordination mechanisms	
		Current meetings do not address CCA	1 Ramsar National Committee meets annually; 2 provincial Ramsar committees meet at least 2 times annually Site specific wetland stakeholder committees meet at least 2 times annually		

Output 2.2 Capacities of water/natural resources/wetlands user groups strengthened to apply effective governance of NRM use and management	**Output indicator 2.2.1:** Capacities of user and governance groups[19]	Village clusters (*khet*) or "development clusters" (*khumban*) promote development and local governance, and have enforcement (militia) arms. Village councils are responsible for community resources such as village protection or production forests. Village leaders play important roles in managing small-scale irrigation, enforcing fishing rules and allocating land. Villager groups include: - Water user groups in charge for maintenance and monitoring irrigation activities and equipment. - Ban Houmuang (XCP) fisheries group, following the installation of fish conservation zones. - Ban Kiat Ngong village has a malva nut collecting group, in charge of monitoring nut harvesting.	User and governance groups covering all key areas[20] of target wetlands have capacities[21] to apply effective governance, with a specific focus on adaptation and resilience issues and a gender focus	Focus group discussions and KAP surveys	
	Output Indicator 2.2.2: Number of villages in wetland and buffer areas covered by effective governance groups and water user groups[22].	Local governance groups do not currently address wetland management and do not specifically provide for CC adaptation measures	All target villages have governance groups and wetland user group with rules, providing for adaptation considerations, applied and adhered to.	•Note development and acceptance of rules covering water use and release. Note local application and adherence to water governance rules. •Specific VA report on water use by each community • Quarterly and annual project reports	
Output 2.3 Direct investment in	**Output Indicator 2.3.1:** numbers of families (male and female led) benefiting from one or more forms of direct investment in CCA[23]	NA	1600 families	Focus group discussions and questionnaires	

CCA strategies	**Output Indicator 2.3.2:** number of villages with value-adding facilities for NTFPs established, benefiting men and women	NA	10 Villages	Focus group discussions and questionnaires	
	Output Indicator 2.3.3: number of villages with visitor facilities for ecotourism established benefiting men and women	NA	10 Villages	Focus group discussions and questionnaires	
	Output Indicator 2.3.4: number of semi-natural reservoirs established benefiting men and women	2 small/medium reservoirs	4 small/medium reservoirs	Focus group discussions and questionnaires	
	Output Indicator 2.3.5: Area of riparian forest replanted (ha)	NA	200ha	Focus group discussions and questionnaires	

[19] Inspired by FAO Learning Module on Organizational Development and Analysis (http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en/)

[20] Those parts of the target wetlands with highest levels of threat and/or vulnerability

[21] Formal groups have clearly defined mandates and rules, and meet regularly: formal and informal groups are considered by community members (in focus group discussions) to be effective and inclusive of different gender and socioeconomic groups

[22] Village clusters (*khet*), "development clusters" (*khumban*), village councils and resource user groups

[23] e.g. CC-resistant livestock and cropping materials, small-scale irrigation equipment, improved veterinary facilities, access to wells with improved CC resilience, pilot aquaculture projects, rainwater harvesting and water storage equipment

Output 2.4 Strengthened individual capacities through effective programmes and innovation systems to support CC resilience strategies	**Output Indicator 2.4.1:** # men and women with increased knowledge and awareness to apply CC-resilient wetlands management, CC-resilient agricultural practices and/or non-agricultural livelihood support options	Knowledge and awareness TBD through baseline Knowledge, Awareness and Practice (KAP) surveys and learning needs assessment	50% of men and women's population in project target area	KAP surveys	
Output 2.5. Early warning, disaster risk reduction and early recovery measures and systems in place	**Output Indicator 2.5.1**. Effectiveness of early warning systems in 20 target villages, as measured by promptness of receipt of, and effectiveness of response to, early warning messages	Early warning messages delivered on time to 10% of all events in year prior to project startup. Effective action taken by 5% of affected villagers	Early warning messages delivered on time to 100% of all events in target villages in year 5, and effective action taken in response by 50% of all affected villagers	•Interviews with provincial, district and communities after each early warning has been issued and passed to follow chain of warning and action being taken	
Component 3: Integration of CC adapation and disaster management measures into planning processes					
Outcome 3. Efficient and cost-effective CC adaptation and disaster management measures in wetlands integrated and budgeted in local and national planning processes	**Outcome Indicator 3.1:** # local, regional and national level plans that incorporate CC vulnerability assessments, CCA measures and analyses (and mitigation measures as needed) of impacts on wetlands, with corresponding budget allocation	No local plans provide for application of CC/DRM assessment approaches At least 1 national plan provides for application of CC/DRM assessment approaches	- All projects and plans developed by PONRE/DONRE and PAFO/DAFO that directly affect the target wetlands - At least 50% of all other provincial and district plans and projects in the target provinces and districts - BKN Ramsar site management plan - Water allocation and abstraction management plans/rules at district level in the target districts - At least 5 national plans related to natural resources management and agriculture[24] provide application of CC/DRM assessment approaches.	•Review of plans and project documents from national, provincial and district levels.	Continued political commitment to addressing CC implications Willingness to coordinate between institutions
	Outcome indicator 3.2 Number of institutions adopting tools for participatory CCA and DM planning and M&E in wetlands	None	- Participatory CCA and DM planning and M&E is used in 2 other districts within the province, and for 2 other wetlands nationally - DONRE and DAFOs in four districts	•Community based climate events records. •DONRE/DAFO records •Reports to local and national Ramsar committees •Questionnaire on levels of adoption	
	Outcome indicator 3.3:	**# of respondents by scorecard rating**		Questionnaires/focus group	

	Perceptions of effectiveness of institutional coordination at national level in support of CCA	TBD through baseline evaluation of perceptions	70% of members of the institutions targeted for improved institutional coordination have favourable perceptions of the effectiveness of this coordination	scorecard ratings	
Output 3.1. Methodological guidelines for integration of CC adaptation and DRM into local and national plans	**Output Indicator 3.1.1.** Numbers of methodological guidelines used in planning instruments at different levels	None	Guidelines used in: - Provincial and district plans and new proposals. - BKN Ramsar site management plan - Water allocation and abstraction management plans/rules at district level	Review of plans	
Output 3.2. Effective learning programme for community, district and provincial stakeholders in planning and M&E for participatory CC adaptation and disaster management.	**Output Indicator 3.2.1** Numbers of stakeholders effectively trained in participatory adaptation and DRM planning and M & E	None	- 10 PONRE and 10 PAFO staff in Savannakhet and in Champassack - 10 DONRE and 10 DAFO staff in each of 3 districts surrounding the wetlands - 50 community members from surrounding wetlands	•Training meeting reports •Project quarterly and annual reports •Reports of progress of implementing adaptation measures	
Output 3.3. Institutional mechanisms for intersectoral coordinating CC resilience in wetlands strengthened at national level	**Output Indicator 3.3.1** Existence and frequency of meeting of coordination mechanisms for CC resilience in wetlands	Existing coordination mechanisms: - National Committee for Wetland Management and Ramsar Convention - National, Provincial, District and Village Disaster Committee (district and village levels not operational in the target areas) - National Steering Committee on Climate Change	Revise members of committees to integrate new sectors into wetlands management.	Composition of members.	

[24] Including the 15 year MONRE Action Plan, the NAPA, the CC Sub-sector working group strategy and the National Strategy on Environment and Climate Change Education and Awareness

Appendix 3: Participatory Stakeholder engagement and analysis for MTR

Key Stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)[25]*	What is their role in relation to the project?	What is the reason for being included or excluded in the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[26]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR? **
1. Active stakeholders with direct responsibility for the project, e.g. FAO, executing partners				
FAO	Executing agency	Included – Project executing agencies	1	
MONRE	Executing partner		1	
IUCN	Executing partner		1	
2. Active stakeholders with the authority to make decisions related to the project, e.g. members of the project's steering committee				
National Ramsar Committee	Highest national committee related to the project	Included	1	
MAF	Member of the PSC	Included	2	
MPI				
MOFA				
MOF				
National Ramsar Secretariat	Service providers	Included – Implementing agencies, authorities and organizations	1	
MONRE – DEQP (Social and Environment Division)				
MONRE – DEQP (Environmental Assessment Division)				
PONRE Champasak				
PONRE Savannakhet				
PAFO Champasak (Livestock and Fisheries Section)				
PAFO Savannakhet (Agricultural Land Management Section, Crop Section, Livestock and Fisheries Section)				
DONRE Pathoumphone				

[25] Write names of relevant individuals if known, and be as specific as possible

[26] **1 = essential; 2 = desirable; 3 = if time/resources allows**

Key Stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)[25]*	What is their role in relation to the project?	What is the reason for being included or excluded in the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[26]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR? **
DONRE Champhone				
DAFO Pathoumphone				
DAFO Champhone				
IWMI				
Tétraktys				
3. Secondary stakeholders (only indirectly or temporarily affected)				
GEF Lao PDR Focal Point	Official focal points	Overlapping co-finance and donors	3	
UNCCC Representative/Focal Point				
UNCCD Representative/Focal Point				
National University of Laos (Faculty of Environmental Sciences)	Academic partner	Consultant and host of the World Wetlands Day 2019		
Savannakhet University	Academic partner and service provider	Service Provider and host of the World Wetlands Day 2017		
4. Stakeholders at the grassroots level who directly or indirectly benefit from the intervention (where possible gender disaggregated)				
MONRE – DWR		Overlapping co-financed and mandated agencies	2	
MONRE – DCC				
MONRE – DLM				
Provincial Ramsar Committee	Highest provincial committee related to the project	Included	1	
Provincial Ramsar Secretariat	Implementing partners and beneficiaries	Included – Grassroots partners and beneficiaries	1	
Provincial Government Office				
District Ramsar Secretariat				
District Government Office				
Lao Women's Union				
Cluster Village				
Community Governance Group				

Key Stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)[25]*	What is their role in relation to the project?	What is the reason for being included or excluded in the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[26]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR? **
5. Stakeholders at the grassroots level, who do not benefit from the intervention (where possible gender disaggregated)				
6. Other interest groups who are not directly participating in the intervention, e.g. other development agencies working in the area, civil society organizations				
KfW	Bilateral aid agency implementing project in BKN (MRWP)	Included – agencies and organizations working in the area	3	
UNDP	Multilateral agency implementing project in XC (SAFE Ecosystems)			
ADB	Multilateral agency working in the area			
World Bank	Multilateral agency working in the area			
IRRI	Multilateral agency implementing project in XC			
WCS	NGO working in XC			
ASDSP	NPA working in XC			

NB: *Names will be provided closer to the implementation date.
** Stakeholder involvement will be defined during preparation of the agenda.

Appendix 3: Annotated MTR Report Outline

The annotated outline is one annex of the Review Terms of Reference. The review team can adjust the structure to suit the specific needs of a review, as long as the logic is maintained in the report and the flow of information and analysis is coherent and clear. See Annex 12 of the MTR Guidance document for updated format and notes on writing the MTR Report

The report should be presented with numbered chapters and paragraphs, following the template of this document.

The length of a project review report should preferably not exceed 40 pages excluding executive summary and annexes.

The text and the bullet points under each heading are to be used as reference for the contents to be included in the report.

Appendix 4: Documents to be Consulted (as per the TOR)

The list of important documents and webpages that the MTR Team should read at the outset of the MTR and before finalizing its design and the inception report. A list of key documents to be included in the 'project information package' is given below.

Documents to be provided to the MTR Team ('project information package')
1. Project Identification Form (PIF) 2. Comments received from GEF Secretariat, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and the GEF Council members on the project's design and FAO's responses 3. FAO Concept Note and FAO Project Review Committee report 4. Request for GEF CEO Endorsement 5. FAO-GEF Project Preparation Grant (PPG) document[27] 6. Project Document 7. Project Inception Report 8. Six-monthly FAO project progress reports (PPR) 9. Annual work plans and budgets (including budget revisions) 10. All annual GEF Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports[28] 11. Any documentation detailing any changes to the project framework and project components, e.g. changes to outcomes and outputs as originally designed 12. List of stakeholders 13. List of project sites and site location maps (for planning the mission itineraries and fieldwork) 14. Execution Agreements if project under Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) and letters of Agreement (LoA) 15. Relevant technical, backstopping, and project supervision mission reports, including Back to the Office Reports (BTOR) of relevant project and FAO staff, including any reports on technical support provided by FAO HQ or regional office staff 16. Minutes of the meetings of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), FAO Project Task Force (PTF) and other relevant meetings 17. Any Environmental and Social Safeguards assessment and risk management plan produced during project design period and online records on FPMIS 18. Any awareness raising and communications materials produced by the project, such as brochures, leaflets, presentations given at meeting, address of project website, etc. 19. All other monitoring reports prepared by the project 20. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools (TT) at CEO endorsement and updated TT at mid-term for GEF-5 projects (and for GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects with BD Objective 2 with protected area elements) and/or review of contribution to GEF-7 core indicators (retrofitted) for GEF-6 projects, and GEF-7 core indicators for GEF-7 approved projects 21. LDCF/SCCF Adaptation Monitoring and Assessment Tool (AMAT) 22. Financial management information including an up-to-date co-financing table, summary report on the project's financial management and expenditures to date, a summary of any financial revisions made to the project and their purpose, and copies of any completed audits for comment (as appropriate) 23. FAO policy documents related to FAO Strategic Objectives, Gender (including FAO Policy on Gender Equity), Indigenous Peoples, Environmental and Social Management, and Climate Change 24. GEF Gender Policy, GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, GEF Guidelines on Gender Equality, and GEF Guide to advance Gender Equality in GEF projects and Programs 25. GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards, GEF Policy and Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement 26. GEF Policies on Monitoring and Evaluation 27. GEF Co-financing Policy and Guidelines

[27] Applicable to full-sized projects, medium-sized projects, and projects under Programs for which Project Preparation Grant (PPG) was approved by the GEF.

[28] A Project Progress Report (PPR) is an FAO requirement, due every six month, with deadlines on 31 July for a reporting period from 1 January to 30 June, and on 31 January for a reporting period from 1 July to 31 December every year. The Project Implementation Report (PIR) is a GEF requirement, due every year (usually from July) until project closure for projects that have been under implementation for one year or longer.

The following documents should also be made available to the MTR team as requested
28. FAO Country/Countries Programme Framework document, FAO Guide to the Project Cycle, Guide to mainstreaming gender in FAO's Project Cycle, FAO Environment and Social Management Guidelines, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Manual
In the case of Programmes
29. CEO endorsement/approval of Child Projects under the Program 30. Program Framework Document (PFD) and Child Projects titles or concepts

Appendix 5. List of documents consulted ("Reference list")

A: Project Preparation Documents

GEF, 2013. *Project Identification Form (PIF).*19pp.

GEF and UNEP, 2013. *STAP Scientific and Technical screening of the Project Identification Form (PIF), 5489.* 2pp.

GEF, 2013. *GEF Secretariat's Review of the CAWA Project on Climate Change Adaptation in Wetland Areas (CAWA).* Project Review Sheet, September 2013. 9pp.

GEF, 2015. *Request for CEO Endorsement to LDCF/SCCF Council Member*s, project ID 5489. 119pp.

GEF, 2015. *Request for CEO endorsement for CAWA Project, ID 5489. 30 pp*.

FAO, 2015. *Risk certification form – Environmental screening*.

FAO, 2016. *2nd Concept note for the CAWA Project*. 6pp.

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Meynell, P.J. IUCN/MONRE, 2014. *Overview of the main planning/environmental decision-making instruments, and programmes/projects related to water wetlands and climate change adaptation in Lao PDR and in the target site*s. Output 3 Preparation Document. 25pp.

Meynell, P.J. IUCN/MONRE, 2014. *Review of climate change methods and projections used in various studies and projects for Lao PDR.* CAWA Project Output 4 Preparation Document. 22pp.

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Meynell, Peter John, Oudomxay Thongsavath, Khamphat Xeuasing, Vilavong Vannalath, Raphael Glemet. IUCN/MONRE, 2014. Climate change vulnerability of the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar site, 2014. Output 5.1 Preparation Document. 75 pp.

Meynell, P.J. e.a. IUCN/MONRE, 2014. *Initial vulnerability assessment of infrastructure around Xe Champhone and Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar wetlands, Lao PDR*. Output 5.3 Preparation Document. 36 pp.

FAO and GEF, 2015. *Project Document: Climate Change adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR, PROJECT SYMBOL: GCP/LAO/022/LDF (English),* 190 pp.

FAO and GEF, 2015. *Project Document: Climate Change adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR, PROJECT SYMBOL: GCP/LAO/022/LDF (Lao),* 177 pp.

MONRE, GEF and FAO. 2016. Inception Report, *Climate Change adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR, PROJECT SYMBOL: GCP/LAO/022/LDF.* 44 pp.

B: Project Plans, Progress Reports and Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

FAO-CAWA, 2017. *Six-monthly Project Progress Report (PPR) CAWA, January - June 2017.* 45 pp.

FAO-CAWA, 2018. *Six-monthly Project Progress Report (PPR) July - December 2017.* 45 pp.

FAO-CAWA, 2019. *Six-monthly Project Progress Report (PPR)* CAWA, *July - December 2018. 44 pp.*

FAO-CAWA, 2020. *Six-monthly Project Progress Report (PPR)* CAWA, *July - December 2019. 53 pp.*

FAO-CAWA, 2017. *Budget Revision and Justification (A)*

FAO-CAWA, 2018. *Budget Revision and Justification (B)*

FAO-CAWA, 2019**.** *Budget Revision and Justification (C)*

FAO-CAWA, 2020 *Budget Revision and Justification (D)*

FAO-CAWA, 2016. *Project 5-year Workplan (excel sheet) 6 pp.*

FAO-CAWA, 2016. *CAWA Annual Work Plan Year 1,* (excel sheet) 7 pp.

FAO-CAWA, 2017. *CAWA Annual Work Plan Year 2,* (excel sheet) 7 pp.

FAO-CAWA, 2019. *CAWA Annual Work Plan Year 4,* (excel sheet) 7 pp.

FAO-CAWA, 2017. *Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) 1*, 28 pp.

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FAO-CAWA, 2019. *Project Task Force meeting briefing note 1 July 2019.* 2 pp.

C: Lists and maps of project sites and locations

FAO-CAWA, 2017. *Map archives.* Large collection of satellite images and land use maps of the two sites.

D: Execution Agreements and Letters of Agreement (LoA)

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FAO-CAWA, 2018. List of service providers under LoA.

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Appendix 6: MTR itinerary, including field missions (agenda)

Date	Time	Activities	Participant
10-12 August		- 3 days meetings with FAO_R, FAO Laos, FAO CAWA, DoE & IUCN teams in Vientiane (schedule to be later detailed) - Introductions, MTR Briefing (FAO), Project background, approach & history (CAWA team) & meeting with national partners	2 MTR Consultants & FAO-R, FAO Laos, FAO CAWA, DoE & IUCN teams
13 August	8:00-17:00	- Travel to Savannakhet by UN392 - Overnight in Savannakhet	2 MTR Consultants & Thongsay
14 August	8:00-11:00	- Meeting with PoNRE to discuss project implementation history & progress	2 MTR Consultants & Phoumixay
	11:00-14:00	- Meeting with LWU Savannakhet to discuss he project implementation plans and progress	
	14:00-17:00	- Meeting with PAFO LFS to discuss project implementation history & progress - Overnight in Savannakhet	
15 August	8:00-12:00	Travel to Champhone District Integrated Livelihood Development – visit Kadan village – - FCZ management - Water use and management agreement - Veterinary plan of operation for animal disease control (poultry & ruminants); - Fodder introduction & ruminant livestock feed improvement plans; - Compost production for water hyacinth; - 2nd. Native fish hatchery; - Organic vegetable producers; - Mimosa clearance & control	2 Consultants & Phoumixay, Keooudone and villagers
	13:00-17:00	*Wetland & NRM management approach* – Visit Nongkan – Nongmaehang – Nongdern wetland complex – - Boundary demarcation wetland complex, and discuss plan for integrated wetland, site & water management - Wetland clearing Nongkan (previous) and Nong Mahaeng, & discuss water hyacinth control - Water management issues & plan of agreement (dry season pumping of Nong Mahaeng) - Nong Dern spillway and dyke renovation & plan to restore lake as water resource & stop rice encroachment; - Fish Conservation Zone (FCZ) & discuss program of native fishery & habitat management - Overnight in Champhone	
16 August	8:00-12:00	Meeting with Taleo village - Eco-tourism livelihoods – Visit eco-tourism investment site at old temple at Taleo village & discuss eco / cultural tourism development program; - Veterinary centre and vaccine fund, & plan of operation for animal disease control (poultry & ruminants); - Native chicken & duck production & hatchery (incubators) program;	2 Consultants & Phoumixay, Keooudone and villagers

		- Fishery / Aquaculture livelihoods – Visit native fish hatchery & discuss native fish breeding & aquaculture program; - Water use and management agreement - Fodder introduction & ruminant livestock feed improvement plans; - Fish Conservation Zone (FCZ) & discuss program of native fishery & habitat management	
	13:00-17:00	- Eco-tourism livelihoods – Visit eco-tourism investment site at Hotay Pidock of Nonglamchanh village & discuss eco / cultural tourism development program; - Visit monkey forest and Souy lake to observe the eco-tourism investment site - Overnight in Champhone	
17 August	8:00-12:00	- Meeting DoNRE and DAFO to discuss on the project implementation progress	2 Consultants & Phoumixay, Keooudone and villagers
	13:00-17:00	- Meeting with DICT and Tetraktys team to discuss on the implementation progress of eco-tourism development in XCP wetland area - Overnight in Champhone	
18 August	7:00-10:30	- Travel to Xonnabuly District - Meeting DoNRE, DAFO &d LWU Xonnabuly District to discuss project activities & implementation progress	2 Consultants & Phoumixay Thongsay & DoNRE, DAFO & LWU teams
	10:30-14:00	- Travel to Songkhone District - Meeting DoNRE, DAFO & LWU Songkhone District to discuss project activities & implementation progress	2 Consultants & Phoumixay Thongsay & DoNRE, DAFO & LWU teams
	14:00-17:00	- Travel to Champasak province by car UN392	2 Consultants & Thongsay
	17:00-18:00	- Summary the finding of all partner and field visit in XCP wetland area - Overnight in Pakse	2 Consultants
19 August	8:00-12:00	- Meeting with PoNRE of Champasak to discuss project history & implementation progress	2 Consultants & Soukphamixay
	13:00-17:00	- Meeting with PAFO LFS of Champasak to discuss project implementation progress - Overnight in Pakse	2 Consultants & Soukphamixay
20 August	8:00 – 12:00	- Travel to Pathoumphone - Meeting with DoNRE, DAFO & LWU to discuss project implementation progress	
	13:00-17:00	Integrated Livelihood Development – visit Phapho village – - Mimosa clearance & control (Phommalu on way) - FCZ management - Water use & management agreement & dry season water storage (semi-natural ponds) - Veterinary centre & vaccine fund, & plan of operation for animal disease control (poultry & ruminants); - Native chicken & duck production & hatchery (incubators) program;	2 Consultants & Soukphamixay, Duangvilay

		- Fodder development for livestock feed improvement plans; - Native fish hatchery; - Organic vegetable producers; - Overnight in Pathoumphone	
21 August	8:00 – 12:00	Integrated Livelihood Development – visit Phakkha village – - FCZ management - Water use & management agreement & dry season water storage (semi-natural ponds) - Veterinary plan of operation for animal disease control (poultry & ruminants); - Fodder development for livestock feed improvement plans; - Native chicken & duck production & hatchery (incubators) program; - Organic vegetable producers; - Water hyacinth clearance & control	2 Consultants & Soukphamixay, Duangvilay
	13:00-18:00	- Return from Pathoumphone to overnight in Savannakhet by car UN392	2 Consultants & Thongsay
22 August	8:00 -15:00	- Return from Savannakhet to Vientiane by car UN392	2 Consultants & Thongsay
23-27 August		- Development of Preliminary MTR Findings report & presentation in Vientiane - Further informal meetings with FAO_R, FAO Laos, FAO CAWA, DoE & IUCN teams as required in Vientiane	2 Consultants CAWA, DoE, IUCN & FAO Laos teams as required
28 August	9:00-12:00	- Wrap-up meeting on the preliminary findings with FAO_R, FAO Laos, FAO CAWA, DoE & IUCN teams in Vientiane	2MTR Consultants & FAO, FAO-CAWA, DoE & IUCN teams

Appendix 7. List of stakeholders interviewed during the MTR

A: Vientiane

No	First name	Last name	Position	Organization/location
1	Mr. Khonesavanh	Louangraj	National Project Director	MONRE, Vientiane
2	Ms. Soudavy	Kepoaseuth	Dep. Dir. Department of Environment	MONRE, Vientiane
3	Ms. Chithanom	Ounsida	Dep. Dir. Department of Environment	MONRE, Vientiane
4	Mr. Longkham		Dept. of Environmental Technology	MONRE, Vientiane
5	Ms. Souphavan	Amphaivong	Dept. of Environmental Technology	MONRE, Vientiane
6	Mr. Pouthala	Souksakhone	Dep. Head, Soc.Ec. Environment Division	MONRE, Vientiane
7	Mr. Bouasengpaseuth	Phasithideth	Dep. Dir. Planning Division	MONRE, Vientiane
6	Ms. Anousone	Chanthavong	Department of Environment	MONRE, Vientiane
8	Ms. Khaikeo	Chanthavisouk	Department of Environment	MONRE, Vientiane
9	Mr. Bounlone	Oudomdi	Department of Environment	MONRE, Vientiane
10	Mr. Nasar	Hayat	Country Representative for Lao PDR	FAO, Vientiane
11	Mr. Kevin	Jeanes	CTA, CAWA	FAO, Vientiane
12	Ms. Pany	Vanmanivong	Administrative Officer, CAWA	FAO, Vientiane
13	Ms. Linka	Douangchanh	Accountant, CAWA	FAO, Vientiane
14	Mr. Sitthideth	Abhay	M&E officer, CAWA	FAO, Vientiane
15	Mr. Chanthaphone	Thammavong	Capacity Building Specialist	FAO, Vientiane
16	Dr. Natacha	Pervushina	Acting Country Director	IUCN, Vientiane
17	Mr. Peter	Brakels	Biodiversity specialist	IUCN, Vientiane
18	Dr. Santi	Saypanya	Country Director	WCS, Vientiane
19	Mr. Samuel	Leslie	Savannaketh Program Director	WCS, Vientiane
20	Mr. Souvanpheng	Phommasane	Governance consultant	AFC, Vientiane

B: Savannakhet Province

No	First name	Last name	Position	Organization/location
21	Mr. Noukan	Inthapanya	Director	PONRE, Savannakhet
22	Mr. Sivilayphone	Sisouvong	Director, Water Resources Section	PONRE, Savannakhet
23	Ms. Phasouk	Louanvixay	CAWA coordinator, PONRE	PONRE, Savannakhet
24	Mr. Phouthon	Khettavong	Director, Livestock Section	PAFO, Savannakhet
25	Mr. Kanthavong		Dep. Dir. Livestock Section	PAFO, Savannakhet
26	Mr. Souphasay	Vorlasan	Head, Livestock Unit	PAFO, Savannakhet
27	Mr. Phetsamone		Officer, Livestock Unit	PAFO, Savannakhet
28	Ms. Keophone	Kettavong	Director Province Lao Women's Union	P-LWU, Savannakhet
29	Ms. Somvang	Lamphougnern	Deputy Director	P-LWU, Savannakhet
30	Ms. Ai-ladda	Pheangphetlavanh	Officer	P-LWU, Savannakhet
31	Mr. Khamphad	Xeuasing	Field Coordinator, IUCN	IUCN, Savannakhet
32	Mr. Phoumixay	Phanthavong	FAO/CAWA Field Coordinator	FAO, Savannakhet
33	Ms. Keo-Oudone	Choulamonty	Director DONRE	DONRE, Champhone
34	Mr. Lasan	Keovongsa	Officer, DONRE	DONRE, Champhone
35	Mr. Saikham	Boudkongbai	Head, Environmental Unit	DONRE, Champhone
36	Mr. Sounthon	Silath	Dep. Dir. District Tourism Office	DICT, Champhone

37	Ms. Zoë	Rousseau	Volunteer, Tétraktys (by telephone)	Tétraktys, Champhone
38	Mr. Phanthavong	Thongsavath	Tourism developer, Tétraktys	Tétraktys, Champhone
39	Ms. Thipphaphone	Phaxaysithilath	Dep. Dir. Livestock Section	DAFO, Champhone
40	Mr. Phoudong	Vongdalavanh	Director, DONRE Xonbouly District	DONRE, Xonbouly
41	Mr. Kolakhab	Chakfasavang	Dep. Dir. DONRE	DONRE, Xonbouly
42	Mr. Khamphaeng		Environmental Officer	DONRE, Xonbouly
43	Mr. Chanthasone	Khamkeuy	Water Resources Section, DONRE	DONRE, Xonbouly
44	Mr. Boudhy	Sayavongsa	Deputy Dir. DAFO Xonbouly District	DAFO, Xonbouly
45	Mr. Si-sa-at	Panthavong	Director, DONRE Songkhone District	DONRE, Songkhone
46	Mr. Phoulatsamy	Thongthitvolavong	Water Resources Section, DONRE	DONRE, Songkhone
47	Mr. Sitiphong	Vongphachanh	Environmental Unit, DONRE	DONRE, Songkhone
48	Mr. Bounhong	Lathafasavang	Dir. DAFO Songkhone District	DAFO, Songkhone
49	Mr. Somphon	Sithirath	Agricultural Extension Unit, DAFO	DAFO, Songkhone
50	Mr. Khantavy	Heuangsoua	Village Head, plus 8 men and 7 women	Ban Kadan
51	Mr. Bounleut	Sengsouvankham	Village head, plus 8 men and 5 women	Ban Keng Kok Dong
52	Mr. Sithideth	Phetsalath	Village Head, plus 9 men and 8 women	Ban Taleo
53	Mr. Khamphon	Phommathep	Village Head, plus 9 men and 6 women	Ban Don Daeng
54	Mr. Phancha	Phommavongsa	Village Head, plys 8 men and 9 women	Ban Dong Meuang

C: Champasak Province

No	First name	Last name	Position	Organization/location
55	Mr. Soupany	Silibounyo	Director, PONRE, Champasak Province	PONRE, Savannakhet
56	Mr. Sengsoulivanh	Inthachack	Dir. Water Resources Section, PONRE	PONRE, Savannakhet
57	Dr. Duangmany	Luangmany	Project Manager. KfW-MRWP	MONRE, Champasak
58	Mr. Vilavong	Vannalath	Dep. Dir. Planning Section, PAFO	PAFO, Champasak
59	Ms. Malaiphet	Bounmy	Dir. Livestock Section, PAFO	PAFO, Champasak
60	Ms. Vanny	Sengkapkeo	Livestock Extension Officer	PAFO, Champasak
61	Mr. Douangvilay	Xaisimeuang	Dep. Dir. DONRE, Pathoumphone Dist.	
62	Ms. Vilayvanh	Xaisimeuang	Environment Section, DONRE	DONRE Pathoumphone
63	Ms. Phoukhan	Sitthiset	Dep. Dir. District Lao Women's Union	DONRE Pathoumphone
64	Mr. Orathai	Vongkhamchanh	Dep. Dir. DAFO, Pathoumpone Distr.	LWU Pathoumphone
65	Mr. Soukphamixay	Xouymanivong	FAO/CAWA Field Coordinator	DAFO Pathoumphone
66	Mr. Bounsouay	Phonsili	Village Cluster Chairman	FAO, Champasak
67	Mr. Vichien	Simmaly	Village head, plus 6 men and 3 women	Kaelae village cluster
68	Mr. Bounphan	Sipaseuth	Village head, plus 7 men and 4 women	Ban Phapo

Total 163 persons consulted, of which 102 men and 61 women.

Appendix 8. MTR matrix for the Mid-Term Review of the CAWA Project

1. Relevance	1) Are the project outcomes congruent with country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, and indigenous peoples, if relevant)? 2) Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programs that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals? If so, are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?
2. Effectiveness of project results	*A: Delivery of Results* 3) To what extent has the project achieved improved understanding among stakeholders on risks of climate change and disaster mitigation of targeted wetlands? 4) What is the progress of implementation of project activities towards work plans? 5) How do recipients experience project interventions with regards to their livelihoods and their living environment? 6) Is there any evidence of impact on wetland management, water management and wetland-dependent livelihoods? *B: Likelihood of Impact* 7) Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the achievement of the project's longer-term objectives? What can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impacts from the project? To what extent can the progress towards long-term impacts be attributed to the project?
3. Efficiency	8) Did they intervention deliver results in a timely and cost-effective manner? How were inputs converted to outputs, outcomes and impacts in a cost-effective way? Were inputs delivered within the intended time-frame?
4. Sustainability	9) Can beneficiaries sustain benefits over time? Has the project contributed to more resilience against risks of climate change? 10) Is there any evidence of replication or scaling up of project results? What factors would enhance replication?
5. Factors affecting performance	11) How is the approach of the project received by project partners? How are stakeholders engaged in all steps of project planning, implementation and monitoring? 12) How does the project approach enhance partner's capacities? 13) Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes?

	14) Is there a clear Theory of Change, how well is it understood/shared by stakeholders? If not, what would be a suitable Theory of Change to all stakeholders? 15) How are project implementing partners discharging their roles and responsibilities? What changes might be needed to improve delivery over the latter half of the project? 16) What are the financial management challenges? To what extent have co-financing pledges been delivered?
6. Cross-cutting Issues	17) To what extent are gender and other equity considerations taken into account in the design and execution of the project? 18) To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into account in the design and execution of the project?

Appendix 9: Checklists of questions for interviews with stakeholders

5.2.2 9.1 Checklist of Questions for Village Beneficiaries

A: Understanding of wetlands management issues

Question 1: What are the main uses and benefits of wetlands? Who are the main user (numbers of household, men/women)? What is the average economic value of each benefit per household? What are the trends of each use (growing/stable/getting less)

Use/benefit	No HH	% Men	% Women	Income/HH/Year	Total Value	Trend
Rainy Season Rice						
Dry Season Rice						
Livestock grazing						
Fishing						
NTFPs						
Vegetables						
Etc;						

Question 2: What are the main problems and conflicts in the use of the wetlands (conflict between use groups, conflicts between villages, other conflicts) How could these issues be resolved?

A: Problem Analysis

Problem	Cause	Solution	Who can solve?

B: Stakeholder conflict analysis

	Rice farmers	Cattle owners	Fishers	NTFP collectors	Vegetable growers	Culture/ tourism	Other village
Rice farmers							
Cattle owners							
Fishers							
NTFP collectors							
Vegetable growers							
Culture/ tourism							

Other village							

Question 3: Have you experienced any changes in the climate over recent years? What are the impacts on wetlands? How could these impacts be mitigated?

Climate change	Years	Impact	Potential Solutions
Flood			
Drought			

B: Review of project activities

Question 4: What activities were supported by the project in your community? How many households benefited? What went well, what did not go well?

Activity	No HH	% Men	% Women	Assessment	Reasons for success/failure

C: Building institutional capacity

Question 5: What have we learned from the project? How has the project improved the capacity of our community to manage wetlands better?

Activity	What we have learned	Indicator of improved management

Question 6: What community institutions exist to manage wetlands? What are there mandates? How often do they meet? Do they have rules and regulations? What is going well, what is not going well?

Instition. Mandate, meetings rules, going well, problems remaining

Institution	No members	How often do they meet?	Rules exist	What is going well?	What problems remain to addressed?
Fish Conservation Zone Committee					

Question 7: What are your suggestion/proposals for improving wetland management?

Proposed action	Expected Inmpact	Who should be involved?

5.2.3 9.2 Checklist of Questions for District/Province Implementing Agencies

Question 1: What is your role in the project? How is the project assisting your office? How relevant is the project for your mandate?

Your role in the CAWA project	Support received from CAWA	Relevance of CAWA for your policy mandate

Question 2: How is the collaboration/coordination process? How has it changed before 2019 and after?

	2016-2018	2019-220
What has changed?		
Good Points		
Weak Points		

Question 3: Who are the main stakeholders you are dealing with in the CAWA Project? How is the collaboration progressing?

Stakeholder	Role	Good points	Weak points

Question 4: What are the main issues in wetland management, how can we solve them?

Problem	Cause	Solution	Who can solve?

Question 5: What has been the progress of activity implementation in your opinion?

Activity	No Villages	Assessment	Reasons for success/failure

Question 6: What is the progress in developing wetland management plans and institutions? Has zoning been completed? What rules/regulations were officially approved? What village/district level committees were set up? How well are they working?

Institution	No villages completed	Experience so far	What could be improved?

Zoning/mappiing			
Wetland Management Plans			
District Wetland Committee			
Village Wetland Committee			
Village Fish Conservation Zone			
Others…			

Question 7: What are your suggestions/proposals for strengthening wetland management and for improving project organization?

5.2.4 9.3 Checklist of Questions for National level Policy-makers and Project Partners

Question 1: What is your role in the project? How is the project assisting your office? How relevant is the project for your mandate?

Your role in the CAWA project	Support received from CAWA	Relevance of CAWA for your policy mandate

Question 2: How is the collaboration/coordination process? How has it changed before 2019 and after?

	2016-2018	2019-220
What has changed?		
Good Points		
Weak Points		

Question 3: Who are the main stakeholders you are dealing with in the CAWA Project? How is the collaboration progressing?

Stakeholder	Role	Good points	Weak points

Question 4: What are the main issues in wetland management, how can we solve them?

Problem	Cause	Solution	Who can solve?

Question 5: What is youpsr impression of the progress of the project so far?

Improved understanding on wetlands management	Activity Implementation	Coordination between partners	Efficiency of deployment of budgets	Contribution to national policies	Others

Question 5: What do you see as the main policy gaps in wetland management? How can the CAWA project assist in resolving them?

Policy gaps	How CAWA can assist

Appendix 10. Results matrix showing achievements at mid-term and MTR observations

This matrix shows results in the delivery of project outcomes and outputs towards mid-term project goals, assessed by the MTR. Progress is colour-coded using a "traffic-light system": green means: achieved, yellow means: on target to be achieved and red means: not on target to be achieved.

Indicator assessment key

Green = Achieved	Yellow = On target to be achieved	Red = Not on target to be achieved

For outcomes, satisfaction is rated using the GEF six point rating scales:

HS = Highly Satisfactory
S = Satisfactory
MS= Moderately Satisfactory
MU= Moderately Unsatisfactory
U = Unsatisfactory
HU= Highly Unsatisfactory
UA= Unable to Assess.

5.2.4.1 Table A11.2 Progress-towards-results matrix showing the degree of achievement of project outcomes and outputs (against mid-term targets)*

Table A11.2 - Part 1: Objective Level (no indicators established so far, remains to be considered)

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target[29]	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment	Achieve-ment rating[30]	Justification for rating
Project Objective: To reduce climate change (CC) vulnerability of communities and the vulnerable wetland eco-systems upon which they depend	**Indicator A**: 25% of all target HH gained at least 25% increase in livelihood benefits from wetland landscape	Not yet agreed or assessed. Baseline data exist for 4 vlllages			To be set		UA	
	Indicator B: Evidence of better water management: a)retention in dry season in around wetlands b) disaster preparedness for floods in wet season				To be set		UA	
	Indicator C: Evidence of better wetland management: a) increased occurrence of key wetland species (fish, crocodiles, turtles b) reduction of paddy encroachment in wetlands				To be set		UA	

[29] If available

[30] Use the six-point progress-towards-results rating scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Table A11.2 - Part 2: Outcome Levels

Table A11.2 - Part 2.1: Outcome 1: Improved understanding of CC impacts and risks, enhancing capacities of communities, local and central administrations

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target[31]	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating[32]	Justification for rating
Outcome 1: Improved understanding of CC impacts and risks, enhancing capacities of communities, local and central administrations	**Indicator 1.1:** Perceptions & understandings of CC impacts & risks among stakeholders (PONRE, DONRE, PAFO, DAFO, target communities)	Some limited awareness of CC vulnerability due to a) the CC and wetlands study in XC by the MRC, and in BKN due to Mekong Water Dialogues work and b) MRC CCAI work in Savannakhet, and c) PPG discussions	1 training for 30 persons at province and district level on CC and Vulnerability assessment tools. Invasive plant survey on situation and perception. Hydro study on 2 wetlands. Gender needs assessment done for project area	70% of members of PONRE, DONRE, PAFO and DAFO staff covering the target wetlands (28 out of 40) and 70% of members of community organizations (both men and women) in the target villages are aware of CC impacts and risks	70% of members of PONRE, DONRE, PAFO and DAFO staff covering the target wetlands (28 out of 40) and 70% of members of community organizations (both men and women) in the target villages are aware of CC impacts and risks	98% of Government staff and 55% of target population state awareness of CC risks according to KAP survey 2019	MS	Based on KAP survey May 2019. Moderately Satisfactory as training did not result in any visible awareness on adaptive actions that could be taken

[31] If available

[32] Use the six-point progress-towards-results rating scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Table A11.2 - Part 2.2: Outcome 2: Efficient and cost-effective measures in place to reduce the impact of and CC on natural disasters on wetlands eco-systems and/or local livelihoods

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target[33]	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating[34]	Justification for rating
Outcome 2: Efficient and cost-effective measures in place to reduce the impact of and CC on natural disasters on wetlands eco-systems and/or local livelihoods	**Indicator 2.1** No of families involved in climate change-adaptive livelihood practices in the 24 target villages.	160 families apply two or more of these practices	Mainly data collection, very few activities on village level, only demonstration plots	13% of all households in 24 villages apply two or more practices	1,280 families (total 8,400 family members) or 25% of total no. of households in 24 villages apply two or more of these practices	12% or 652 of all households apply two or more of these practices	MS	Over MTR target., but most of these households are involved in group activities such as FCZ. Numbers of HH involved in individual livelihood activities still too low.
	Indicator 2.2 Committees, rules and regulations for wetland management exist, meet regularly and have evidence of enforcing rules.	2 villages have Fish Conservation Zones (FCZ) No Wetland Committees (WMC), No Water User Committees (WUC)	4 new FCZ established, total 6	Inner core (24 villages): 12 villages have FCZ, 12 villages have WMC, 4 villages have WUC	-All 24 villages have FCZ, --All 24 villages have WMC, -8 out of 24 villages have WUC established. -5 village cluster committees - 2district committees	20 village have FCZ, 3 WMC and 14 WUC established 1 village cluster committee 2 district committees	MS	FCZ over MTR target, WMC under target. WUC over target. WMC should be given priority. The expansion is to outer villages is still being debated by province authorities.

[33] If available

[34] Use the six-point progress-towards-results rating scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

	Indicator 2.3: Number of families in the 24 villages increasing their household income with at least 10% from at least one livelihood support action as a CC fallback option.	*"50% of vulnerable people surveyed have no reliable fallback livelihood support option if their main option fails due to climate change"* (prodoc)		8% of all households (800 families, 5,250 family members) can acquire at least 5% of their household income from at least one livelihood support action (outside of agriculture) as a CC fallback option.	17% of all households (800 families, 5,250 family members) can acquire at least 10% of their household income from at least one livelihood support action as a CC fallback option.	1% (56 households in 8 villages) get income from tourism, but percentage of income not known.	U	-No baseline available for tourism income share of HH income. -MTR found many households relying on -Handicraft activities are just starting, baseline should be collected. - NTFPs from forests as a fallback option, no baseline and no intervention foreseen
	Outcome indicator 2.4: Numbers of families in the 26 other villages (outer core) within the larger RAMSAR boundaries with improved and more sustainable access to wetland products and services.		Will be taken from VA results	Only starting after MTR	Focus on establishing wetland management systems in the 26 villagers: 50% (13 villages) have FCZ, All 26 villages have WMC, -All 26 villages have WUC established. -3 village cluster committees - 2district committees	Not many activities in the outer core so far, but plans have been made with district counterparts.	MU	Should CAWA project scale up to outer core villages before having established good models in the inner core? PONRE is not agreed with expansion, would like to focus on developing good models in inner core first. MTR team agrees.
New indicator	**Indicator 2.5** Numbers of families in the 24	Not available	No data	Baseline to be established in 2020	Household Food Source Analysis Surveys show that	This is a new indicator, proposed to	UA	Food and Nutrition Security is a vital benefit from

	villages stabilizing food and nutrition security through products and services derived from the wetland landscape.				vulnerable households can maintain diverse and sufficient foods derived from wetlands	be reported on by project ending.		wetlands not sufficiently reflected in original prodoc. There should be more effort to capture this element.
	indicator 2.6 Effective wetland management is improved. promoting resilience and sustaining the flow of ecosystem services of wetlands are improved.		FCZ under development in three Khumban (group of villages). GIS measurements started to map wetland boundaries for management plans.	RMETT!!!	Indices of management effectiveness are maintained at least at baseline levels over the entire area of the target wetlands (around 47,360 ha)	A draft wetland managemen t plan is being developed in XC site.	MU	The process for wetland planning is not involving communities sufficiently. There is no strategy for developing a nested institutional set-up of management bodies at different levels.
	Indicator 2.7 Area of wetland habitats in XC and BKN under improved forms of direct management to address CC-induced risks		5.4 ha of water hyacinth and2.3 ha with mimosa pigra removed. FCZ initiated in three village clusters. Improved management of forests initiated.		-Removal of invasive species xx ha in xx villages -FCZ established in at least 80% of target villages, covering at least xxm2 in each village. - Flooded forests restored in 30% of target village, xx ha. -2,000ha biodiversity conservation zones		MU	Targets for achievement per CCA measure remain to be agreed upon. They should be specific and include numbers of communities and areas in ha to be covered.

Table A11.2 - Part 2.3 Outcome 3: Efficient and cost-effective CC adaptation and disaster management measures in wetlands integrated in local and national planning processes

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Outcome 3: Efficient and cost-effective CC adaptation and disaster management measures in wetlands integrated in local and national planning processes	**Indicator 3.1:** wetland management plans of good quality are available and officially adopted. of CCA& DM& M E	No local plans provide for application of CC/DRM assessment approaches At least 1 national plan provides for application of CC/DRM assessment approaches	Coordination with MONRE/MAF to incorporate future Vulnerability Assessment into plans. Linkage with LNMC-MRC -DWR on the Mekong - IWRM, river basin programme on which Xe Champhone is dependant		-There are clear wetland management plans that are based on consultations with all communities involved, detailing actions on water allocation and abstraction over 5 years, approved by district and province for at least two sites: XC and BKN -At least 2 national plans related to NRM apply CC/DRM assessment approaches.	- 5 year RAMSAR Wetland Strategy and Guidelines prepared, expected to be approved before end 2020 - XC Management Plan still being drafted, BKN plan supported by KfW/MRWP - Integrated Spatial Plan of Champhone District (draft - DOE, MONRE) requires further support, part of which will be provided by WCS. - 11 government partner agencies' activity plans (funded through LoAs with FAO-CAWA) have adaptation measures incorporated.	MS	There is still no clear process for developing village based wetland management action plans and incorporating them into district level plans. Without such a process, the district level plans risk remaining paper-plans with no real impact on implementation. Communities are the de-facto managers of wetlands, their involvement in planning is crucial.
	Indicator 3.2: Number of institutions adopting tools for	None	Training done for VA tools for MONRE &MAF staff.		-Participatory CCA and DRM planning and M&E is used in 2 other districts	Lessons learnt on inclusion of wetland CCA & DRM measures in planning and implementation	MS	-KAP survey indicated'52% of trained staff say their office uses tools for CCA and

	participatory planning		M&E system of project reviewed with external consultant		within the province, and for 2 other wetlands nationally -DONRE and DAFOs in four districts -CCA & DRM planning & implementation lessons shared nationally with MONRE (DoE, DWR & DCC), MAF & wetland management stakeholders.	processes presented in workshops (see below).		DRM planning and M&E in wetlands (after one training event). -There is little evidence so far that flood and drought avoidance strategies are contributing to CCA and DRM.
	Indicator 3.3: Perceptions on effectiveness of institutional coordination at all levels	TBD through baseline evaluation of perceptions	Meetings to inform and discuss project objectives and implementation: inception meeting at national level . inception meeting at provincial level. PSC meeting. Five meeting during monitoring mission. CAWA Office in province opened and staffed		-There is an approved national RAMSAR management plan that specifies coordination mechanisms. - a survey among stakeholders shows 70% favorable perceptions of coordination	- CAWA supports MONRE- RAMSAR secretariat. Strategy still to be ratified. -FAO National Consultation Work-shop on Eco-Friendly Water Management for Sustainable Wetland Agriculture 6/12/ 2019. -Provincial & district meetings (PSC, PPC, Ramsar) in XC & BKN (Dec 2018 & Dec 2019)	MS	Approval of the RAMSAR National Management Plan would be a good starting point for a nationally coordinated approach to wetland management, linked to international best practices.

Table A11.2 - Part 2.4 Outcome 4: Effective M&E & sharing of lessons learnt, knowledge, data & activity visibility to verify project impact & results

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Outcome 4: Effective M&E & sharing of lessons learnt, knowledge, data & activity visibility to verify project impact & results	**Indicator 4.1**: System developed and implemented for monitoring, dissemination of results and knowledge	0 = No system	N/A		Progress reports contain up-to-date status of key indicators of progress derived from M&E system	System developed but moderately effective. Many indicators not worked out.	MS	MTR reviewed all indicators with GTA team to better reflect current strategy and progress.

Table A11.2 - Part 3: Output Levels

Table A11.2 - Part 3.1: Outputs towards Outcome 1-Improved understanding of CC impacts & risks in XC & BKN wetlands, and enhanced capacities to design & implement CCA & DRM measures

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Output 1.1 - Pilot methodological tool for participatory CC vulnerability & disaster risk assessment (VDRA) in wetlands developed	**Indicator 1.1.1** State of development & use of pilot methodological tool for participatory CC VDRA in wetlands.	CAM method has been used in XC, BKN and Siphandone wetlands and also in Xe Pian, (but not in a participatory manner there), and by Mekong ARCC in Phou Hin phoun.	Primary Vulnerability methodologies were reviewed, tools developed, tested and translated into Lao language for initial validation in April 2017. Progressive validation of VA tools will be continued until Y3.	Participatory CC VDRA tool available in Lao language	Participatory CC VDRA tool available in Lao language for national replication, based on test and refinement at two wetland sites	Completed	MS	Methodology not very participatory and missing good questions on links between wetlands and livelhoods.
Output 1.2 - Training programme on climate change/CC adaptation (CCA) & vulnerability & disaster risk assessment (VDRA) in wetlands	**Indicator 1.2.1** Numbers of stakeholders trained in participatory CC vulnerability & DRM management (CCA Outcome 2.1 Indicator 5)	None	Review of CBNA was done in PY1 by IUCN. Pre-selection and baseline assessment of candidates were rapidly done with DEQP, IUCN and FAO. First training on CC and vulnerability concepts, and use of VA tools done 20-21 June 2017 for 25 participants from province and district staff.		Totals: • 15 PONRE and 15 PAFO staff in each target province (= 60) • 15 DONRE and 15 DAFO staff in each of 3 districts surrounding the wetlands (=60) • 400 villagers, of which 200 female (20 villagers in	•Province: 50% (30 provincial staff) •District: 37% (22 district staff) • Village: 100% (540 villagers)	MU	Targets were set too high as each office only has 2-5 staff actually working with the project. There is no clear

					each of 20 villages)			
Output 1.3 - Participatory CC vulnerability risk assessment carried out in BKN & XC wetlands	**Indicator 1.3.1** Numbers of participatory VDRAs carried out in wetland communities, addressing aspects of wetlands, wetland based livelihoods and gender	VDRAs have been carried out on XC and BKN, focused on wetland habitats and species and to some degree, livelihoods.	Participatory planning of vulnerability assessment on a community-by-community basis was not carried out in Y1.	VDRA carried out in key villages but no separate reports per village, no data per HH	By year 2, one in each of 20 key villages, including focus on gender differences in vulnerability	VDRA carried out successfully in 24 villages in year 2 (2017). VDRA update on-going under LoA participatory planning, and BKN & XC management planning.	MU	VDRA work done in all 24 villages, but only presented in two summary reports. Individual reports per village are not available, baseline data per household not available.
Output 1.4 - Studies of CC-related issues affecting	**Indicator 1.4.1.** Number of studies generated [5] on CC-related issues affecting the	See endnote (below this table)	4 studies completed[35]:	Reports available on 5 key topics in English	Reports available on the following 9 key topics available in English and Lao languages[36]:	Cumulative number of studies (12) has exceeded the indicative target list of 9 reports available on the key topics.	MS	High number of studies completed, but not very applicable for stakeholders to make management plans.

[35] 1. Invasive plants in Xe Champhone Ramsar Site,
Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR by CAWA Project team, December 2016 (English & Lao);
2. Gender Report - Xe Champhone Ramsar Site, Lao PDR by IUCN, January 2017 (English & Lao);
3. Fisheries Survey Report in Xe Champhone Ramsar Site, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR by CAWA Project team, February 2017 (English);
4. Institutional Mechanisms for
Wetlands Governance in the Lao PDR in the Context of the Ramsar Convention
for CAWA by Dr. Rita Gebert, April 2017 (English).

[36] 1-Allowable rates and locations of water extraction for irrigation (2 studies done)
2-Spatial priorities for wetland re-opening (1 study done)
3-Acceptable fish off-take levels, timing of closed seasons, locations of no-take areas (1 study done)
4-Spatial priorities and technical recommendations for improved watershed management (done)
5-Sustainable limits and locations for grazing (not done)
6-Integrated Pest Management options (not done)
7-Measures for management of invasive alien species (done)

the target wetlands	target wetlands, including analysis of gender dimensions			and Lao languages				

Baseline for Output Indicator 1.4.1: Studies generated to date on CC-related issues affecting the target wetlands:

-ADPC for Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme, 2005 (UNDP, IUCN); Vulnerability assessment of climate risks in Attapeu Province Lao PDR.

-Eastham, J. et al. 2008 Mekong River Basin Water Resources Assessment: Impacts of Climate change. CSIRO: Water for a Healthy Country National Research Flagship. Australia

-MRC/SEA START/IWMI – Hoanh, C.T., et al. Impacts of Climate change and development on Mekong flow regime. 2009Project: Reducing vulnerability of water resources, people and environment to climate change impacts led by CSIRO

-MRC Adaptation to climate change in the countries of the Lower Mekong. MRC Management Information Booklet Series No 1. 2009

-Arief Anshory Yusuf &Herminia A. Francisco: Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping for Southeast Asia. January 2009. Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia/IDRC/SIDA

-Norwegian Church Aid.November 2009. GROWING RESILIENCE Adapting for Climate Change in Upland Laos. A Report Prepared by Sean Foley, EcoAsia Limited

-Strategy on Climate Change of the Lao PDR; March 2010

-Rod Lefroy, Laure Collet & Christian Grovermann. July 2010 Study on Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Land Use in the Lao PDR.CIAT for Land Management and Registration Project (LMRP)

-World Bank, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR): 2011 Climate Risk and Adaptation Profile – Lao PDR

-UNDP project document 2011 – Improving Resilience the Agricultural Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts and website[1](IRAS)

-FAO. 2011 Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. Managing Climate change risks for food security in Lao PDR. (RIMES)

-MRC 2011. Climate change adaptation demonstration projects in LMB. Building community resilience to climate change in Champhone district, Savannakhet.

-ICEM – MRC Basin-Wide Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability Assessment for Wetlands of the Lower Mekong Basin for Adaptation Planning, 2012

-EcoLao (2012). Scoping Assessment of Climate Change Adaptation Priorities in the Lao PDR. Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia, Partner Report Series No. 6. Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok.

-ICEM – Mekong ARCC, 2014. Climate Change Impact and Adaptation study for the Lower Mekong Basin. USAID and DAI

8-Appropriateness for controlled burning to protect valuable wetland habitats (not done)

9-Protection measures for key wetland species (e.g. crocodile, turtles) (done)

Table A11.2 - Part 3.2 Outputs towards Outcome 2-Efficient and cost-effective adaptation measures in place to reduce the impact of CC and natural disasters on wetlands eco-systems and local livelihoods

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achieve-ment rating	Justification for rating
Output 2.1. Planning & inter-sectoral coordination frameworks for the two sites promoting CCA measures	**Indicator 2.1.1.** Numbers of plans that incorporate CCA considerations	No specific planning for wetlands introducing CC adaptation.	No plan	1- CCA-friendly territorial LUP per wetland 2- specific CCA plan 3- CCA-friendly financial investment plan per wetland 4-All district development plans include CC vulnerability assessment with corresponding CCA measures	1- CCA-friendly territorial LUP per wetland 2- specific CCA plan 3- CCA-friendly financial investment plan per wetland 4-All district development plans include CC vulnerability assessment with corresponding CCA measures	Overall: less than 20% completed 1. Integrated Spatial Plan (ISP) prepared for Champhone District but not approved; 2. Wetland management planning process started (25% completed) 3. Not yet done 4. Not yet done	MU	1. ISP quality not yet assessed; 2. Consultative process at village level not yet started; 3. Can only be done after completion of 1 and 2; 4. It means integration of CC measures in district social economic development plans. Not yet done.
	Indicator 2.1.2 Frequency of meeting of coordination mechanisms that embrace CCA in target wetlands & buffer zones	Current meetings do not address CCA	1 meeting: Ramsar National and Provincial Committees' members meeting on institutional mechanisms for wetlands governance in Lao PDR, in Vientiane (21 Mar 2017);	Total 23 meetings: 3 National meetings; 10 Province meetings; 10 Site specific wetland meetings	Total 45 meetings: 5 National meetings; 20 Province meetings; 20 Site specific wetland meetings	Total 18 meetings (78% of MTR target) 8 meetings at national level 7 meetings at province level 3 site specific meetings	S	Satisfactory at national and province level but not at site specific level.

Output 2.2. Capacities of water/natural resources /wetlands user groups strengthened to apply effective governance of NRM use & management	**Indicator 2.2.1** - Capacities of user & governance groups [6}	Very little institutions and groups governing wetlands at village and village cluster levels exist.	No field work implemented on this aspect.	…	User and governance groups covering all key areas of target wetlands have capacities to apply effective governance, with a specific focus on adaptation and resilience issues and a gender focus	1.Capacity development plan completed in 2017. 2.KAP survey done in 2019 3. Many training events were organized but no report exists on numbers of person-days of participants	U	MTR recommends to monitor all capacity building results in tables reporting numbers of men and women and number of days, and number of person-days.
	Indicator 2.2.2 - Number of villages in wetland and buffer areas covered by effective governance groups and water user groups[7].	Village councils are responsible for community resources such as village protection or production forests.	Total 3 villages	24 target villages have governance groups and wetland user group with rules, providing for adaptation considerations, applied and adhered to.	All 48 target villages have governance groups and wetland user group with rules, providing for adaptation considerations, applied and adhered to.	Total 32 villages (>100%) with at least one of the committees/groups established.	MS	Some work already started in new districts. Effectiveness of governance groups is variable. E.g. FCZ are strong, water use groups not yet. There is no effective overarching village wetland committee structure.
Output 2.3. Direct investment in CCA strategies	**Indicator 2.3.1** - numbers of families (male & female led) benefiting from one or more forms of direct investment in CCA [8]	0 families benefiting from direct investment in CCA (e.g. wetland infrastructure)	Total 427 families	800 families	1600 families	Total 5,302 families from 29 villages benefit from one or more forms of direct investment in CCA.	S	High number based on 48 villages. 43% of total comes from FCZ, which is not really investment.

	Indicator 2.3.2 - number of villages with value-adding facilities for NTFPs established, benefiting men & women	0 villages	0 villages	5 villages	10 Villages	Rapid assessment done in 16 villages January 2020.	U	IUCN started this activity very late, it will require a lot of steps, not sure it can still be done.
	Indicator 2.3.3 - number of villages with visitor facilities for ecotourism established benefiting men & women	0 village	0 village	5 villages	10 villages	8 villages (80%) Construction and rehabilitation work well progressed with aim of completion by end of 2020 at the 5 ecotourism sites covering 8 villages in Xe Champhone.	MS	Infrastructures built but still a lot of capacity building needed. More garbage disposal system needed.
	Indicator 2.3.4 - number of semi-natural reservoirs established benefiting men & women	2 small/medium reservoirs	0 small/medium reservoirs	2 small/medium reservoirs	4 small/medium reservoirs	3 small/medium reservoirs completed (75%): 1.Nongdern lake in XC; 2.Laonard community fish pond in XC; 3.Phaleng community fish pond in XC.	HS	Activity on track and highly appreciated by the target beneficiaries.
	Indicator 2.3.5 - Area of riparian forest replanted (ha)	NA	0	100 ha	200 ha	2 nurseries established, reforestation will start in dry season 2020.	MU	Activity started late needs more emphasis on species for restoring flooded forests.
Output 2.4 - Capacity developm	**Indicator 2.4.1** – no. of men & women with increased	0 men & women	n.a.	25% of men and women's population in	50% of men and women's population in	17% of population (815 persons, xx% women) joined initial planning	MS	Slightly behind MTR target due to late start. Indicator likely to increase, but maybe not realistic to get to 50% as

ent programs & innovation systems to support CC resilience strategies	knowledge & awareness to apply CC-resilient wetlands management, CC-resilient agricultural practices &/or non-agricultural livelihood support options			project target area	project target area	and capacity building workshops		the number of villages was doubled from 24 to 48.
Output 2.5. Early warning, disaster risk reduction & early recovery measures & systems in place	**Indicator 2.5.1.** Effectiveness of early warning systems in 20 target villages, as measured by promptness of receipt of, and effectiveness of response to, early warning messages	Early warning messages delivered on time to 10% of all events in year prior to project startup. Effective action taken by 5% of affected villagers	No interventions, no change	Messaged delivered on time to 50% of all villages, Effective action taken by 20% of affected villages	Early warning messages delivered on time to 100% of all events in target villages in year 5, and effective action taken in response by 50% of all affected villagers	Not yet available	UA	Project supported water monitoring which led to better warning system for floods.

Table A11.2 - Part 3.3 Outputs towards Outcome 3 - Efficient & cost-effective CC adaptation & disaster management measures in wetlands integrated & budgeted in local & national planning processes

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of- project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Output 3.1 - Methodological guidelines for integration of CC adaptation and DRM into local and national plans	**Indicator 3.1.1.** No. of guidelines used in planning instruments at different levels	None	None	Same as end of project	Guidelines used in: -Provincial and district plans and new proposals. -BKN Ramsar site management plan -Water allocation and management plans/rules at district level	Draft National Guideline for Management of Ramsar Wetlands in Lao PDR, is under preparation and will include such guidelines.	MU	The theory of change on DRM aspects is not clear. This makes it difficult to develop clear guidelines. MONRE needs to work closer with the MLSW on this.
Output 3.2. Effective learning program for community, district & provincial stakeholders in planning & M&E for participatory CCA & DRM.	**Indicator 3.2.1** - Numbers of stakeholders effectively trained in CCA& DRM planning & M&E	None	None	-5 PONRE and 5 PAFO staff/prov. -5 DONRE and 5 DAFO staff/ dist. -25 community members	-10 PONRE and 10 PAFO staff in 2 provinces -10 DONRE and 10 DAFO staff in each of 3 districts surrounding the wetlands -50 community members from surrounding wetlands	-18 provincial staff (45%) -16 district staff (27%) -136 Villagers (100%)	MS	It is not clear from whether followed the CAWA capacity development plan was followed. It is not clear what skills were built and how trainees were able to apply them.
Output 3.3. Institutional mechanisms for intersectoral coordinating CC resilience in wetlands strengthened at national level	**Indicator 3.3.1** - Existence & frequency of meeting of coordination mechanisms for CC resilience in wetlands	-National Committee for Wetland Management and Ramsar Convention -National/Provincial DRM committee -National Steering Committee on Climate Change			Existing coordinating committees meet at least once per year. Committee membership is revised to integrate new sectors into wetlands management.	-National Ramsar Comm. met 2 x in 4 yearts - National Consultation Workshop on Eco-Friendly Water Management for Sustainable Wetland Agriculture led by FAO, on the 6th of December 2019.	MS	More efforts needed on disaster management and climate change committees.

Table A11.2 - Part 3.4 Outputs towards Outcome 4: Effective M&E & sharing of lessons learnt, knowledge, data & activity visibility to verify project impact & results

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at first PIR (self-reported)	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level assessment (red, yellow or green)	Achieve-ment rating	Justification for rating
Output 4.1 - Project Reporting & Evaluations Implemented as per Requirements	**Indicator 4.1.1 Number of progress reports (PIR and PPR) submitted**	0	1	5	10	8 (80%)	HS	
	Output indicator 4.1.2 Midterm review and final evaluation implemented	0	0	1	2	1 (50%)	S	MTR completed.
Output 4.2 - Project M&E system established & implemented to monitor activities, outputs & outcomes effectively	**Indicator 4.2.1** Results matrix has clearly defined indicators and targets	Results matrix existed but no targets defined	No change	Clear target defined for each indicator	Clear target defined for each indicator	MTR mission supported team to develop targets for indicators.	MU	Lack of clear targets for indicators made it difficult to monitor results.
	Indicator 4.2.2 M&E plan exist and is being followed			M&E plan exist and is being followed	M&E plan has been revised	M&E plan made in 2017 but not really followed until early 2019.	MS	Most of the data collection prescribed has not been implemented regularly.
	Indicator 4.2.3 Baseline on indicators collected	Most baseline not available, foreseen to be collected in year 1	No change	Baselines exist for all indicators	Possible to compare end-of-project results to baseline	-Baseline of socio-economic data only collected for 4 villages in 2018. -Most other baseline data not collected systematically	U	Without baseline for many indicators, it is not possible to monitor changes.
	Indicator 4.2.4 Outputs and indicators regularly monitored					Outputs are reported effectively in annual LoA reports.	MS	There are detailed annual workplans, but reporting is done at LoA level and not linked to the workplan.

						M&E officer spends a lot of time consolidating from LoAs into project progress reports.		Project is developing a dashboard.
	Output indicator 4.2.5 Number of supervision and backstopping missions organized (FAO-R, LTO, FAORAP and HQ Experts)	0	3	5	10	7 (70%) -FAO-R 4 -LTO 2 -FAORAP 1	S	Project team is satisfied with quality of the backstopping.
Output 4.3. Knowledge management, sharing and communication outputs are delivered effectively	**Output Indicator 4.3.1** Number of awareness/knowledge-sharing events and activities organized and involved (WWD, WED, WFD, other awareness/knowledge sharing events)	0	2	10	20	10 (100% of MTR target) -4 WWD -4 WED -2 WFD	S	
	Output indicator 4.3.2 Number of people reached online through website, portal, social media, etc.	0	N/A	500	1000	Website launched in 2018. GIS portal launched in 2018, updated once. Difficulties to manage number of visitors as the website is managed by FAO.	MS	Project produce many communication outputs but they are not always visible as they are centrally managed and controlled by FAO.
	Output indicator 4.3.3 Number of knowledge sharing products (publications, news, stories, videos, etc.)	0	6	36	72	40 (100% of MTR target) - 30 publications -4 news -2 stories -2 videos -2 IEC materials	S	See comment above under indicator 4.3.2.

Appendix 11. Co-financing table

Sources of co-financing	Name of cofinancer	Type of co-financing[37]	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement/ approval[38]		Actual amount materialized as of (date of MTR)		Actual amount materialized at midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/ evaluation team)	Expected total Disburse-ment by the end of the project
			Cash	In kind	Cash	In kind		
NGO	IUCN	Grant	2,400,000					
GEF agency	World Bank	Grant	8,430,000					
Bilateral	KfW	Grant	2,187,380		2,187,380		2,187,380	2,187,380
NGO	IWMI	Grant	600,000					
Government	MONRE	Grant		500,000		500,000	500,000	500,000
Government	MAF	In kind		500,000		500,000	500,000	500,000
GEF agency	FAO	In kind	750,000					
		TOTAL	**14,367,380**	**1,000,000**	**2,187,380**	**1,000,000**	**3,187,380**	**3,187,380**

[37] Grants, loans, equity participation by beneficiaries (individuals) in the form of cash, guarantees, in kind or material contributions and other (please explain).

[38] The type of co-financing whether cash or in-kind should be indicated separately [8] See rating scheme at the end of the document.

Appendix 12. GEF evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme

5.2.4.2 Table A11.3 MTR ratings and achievements summary table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating[8]	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	**HS**	Important Project
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	**HS**	A) Well aligned with GEF CCA-2 Outcome 2.1, "Increased Knowledge and Understanding...", CCA-1 Outcome 1.2 "Reduced Vulnerability...", CCA-1 Outcome 1.3 "Diversified livelihoods..." and CCA-1 Outcome 1.1. "Mainstreamed adaption...". B) Well-aligned to FAO Strategic Objective No 5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	**HS**	Globally significant: these wetlands are important on a global level under the RAMSAR convention and at risk from climate change impacts
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	**HS**	Linked to climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, participatory landscape management, sustainable rural livelihoods,
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	**MU**	Project had a poor start but is on the mend. It will need more time to succeed.
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	**U**	Many expected outputs still to be delivered
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes[39] and project objectives	**U**	Project is unlikely to have impact at landscape level, but some CAA have a good potential
- Outcome 1	MS	Many studies done, but not yet translated to better stakeholder capabilities
- Outcome 2	MU	A range of CCA measures are tested, but just started, below target
- Outcome 3	U	There are no models to be scaled up yet, no strategy for institution building

[39] Assessment and ratings by individual outcomes may be undertaken if there is added value.

- Outcome 4	MS	Project is sharing findings through a range of channels
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	**MU**	Project will need an extension of at least another year to achieve goals
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	Not rated at MTR	
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency[40]	**MS**	Lack of timeliness is a key concern, cost-effectiveness could be improved
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	**ML**	Strong interest of target groups in wetlands is a good basis for sustainability
D1.1. Financial risks	L	Project has sufficient funding to allow an extension of 1 year
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	ML	COVID-19 crisis affects national economy, may put more pressure on unsustainable practices
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	MU	The project yet has to develop a strong institutional and governance strategy for wetlands
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Project contributes to good environmental standards
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Not yet happening but likely to happen if project can be extended with a year
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness[41]	MU	Design did not have a good theory of change and a poor set of indicators. Prodoc designed as research project, rather institutional intervention.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MU	Many delays, poor interactions with stakeholders in first 2.5 years (2016-2018. Now better (2019-2020).
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	U	FAO did not provide sufficient oversight to TA, especially over the first three years
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	Standard practice in country

[40] Includes cost efficiency and timeliness.

[41] This refers to factors affecting the project's ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.

E3. Quality of project execution	MU	Was poor, getting better
E3.1 Project execution and management (PMU and executing partner performance, administration, staffing, etc.)	MS	TA not effective in first 2-3 years, now better. Executing partners still need a lot of capacity building.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MU	Finance management largely in order, con-financing did not materialize.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MS	LoAs are effective, but could still be improved.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	Project is sharing information on CCA in wetlands through various platforms.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	U	Theory of change, indicators and baseline data need to be worked on
E7.1 M&E design	MS	A system was designed but never followed
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	U	There are no baseline data and M&E is not yet institutionalized
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	**MU**	Project is hampered by several factors that need to be addressed
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	U	Lack of baseline data on gender roles in wetland management, lack of a strategy to deal with equity, Women are primary users of wetlands, but there is little strategy to strengthen their role in wetland management.
F2. Human rights issues	UA	Not directly a concern in this project
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	MS/U	CCA measures have good potential, but were only started in 2020, need more time to have impact. On the social standards, the project will need to catch up on strengthening community-based organizations.
Overall project rating	**MU**	

5.2.4.2.1 *Rating scheme*

Additional explanation on how to assess ratings for specific criteria, for example, whether they are highly satisfactory or moderately satisfactory, can be found in Tables A11.4 to A11.7.[42]

[42] See further information on GEF rating scales in Annex 2: Rating scales in GEF (2017c).

5.2.4.2.2 *Overall outcome ratings*

MTRs should use mid-term targets per the project's logframe to assess outcome delivery. If no mid-term indicator targets are available, the MTR should base outcome ratings on an assessment of the delivery of results to date against milestones in workplans and delivery compared with end-of-project targets.

5.2.4.3 Table A11.4 How to assess ratings for specific criteria

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	*Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings*
Satisfactory (S)	*Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings*
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	*Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings*
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	*Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings*
Unsatisfactory (U)	*Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings*
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	*Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings*
Unable to assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements*

5.2.4.3.1 Source: GEF (2017c)

In line with similar guidance on the assessment of ratings for GEF terminal evaluations (GEF, 2017c), the overall rating of the outcomes of the project should be based on performance on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The calculation of the overall outcome rating will consider all three criteria, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical. The relevance rating will determine whether the overall outcome rating is in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU = unsatisfactory range). If the relevance rating is unsatisfactory, the overall outcome will be unsatisfactory as well. However, where the relevance rating is satisfactory (HS to MS), the overall outcome rating could, depending on its effectiveness and efficiency rating, be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

5.2.4.3.2 Table A11.5 Factors affecting performance *(assess each element separately; M&E is treated differently)*

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results meet expectations.

Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results more or less meet expectations.

Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results were somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results were substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management.

5.2.4.4 Table A11.6 Monitoring and evaluation design or implementation ratings *(Overall M&E design, design and implementation assessed separately)*

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation meets expectations.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation more or less meets expectations.
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in M&E design or M&E implementation.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design or M&E implementation.

5.2.4.5 Table A11.7 Sustainability

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	There is little or no risk to sustainability.
Moderately likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Moderately unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability.

Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability.
Unable to assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.