Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Project

FAO Project ID: 635216
GEF Project ID: 9190

Sustainable Management of Forests in Mountain and Valley Areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)

Final Report

MTR conducted in November 2021

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISAITON OF THE UNITED NATIONS - UZBEKISTAN

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We are able to produce this report with the support of all the staff and people connected with the project "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)". Everyone shared their time and ideas to make this review process a success. There are many people to mention by name and everyone who contributed is included in the list of the names annex to this report. All these personnel answered every question we asked and discussed the point raised. The PMO and FAO Uzbekistan Office helped in coordination and arranging the virtual interviews.

We are very thankful to Mr. Abdusattarov Khurshid (Director of Chodak Forestry Organisation), Mr. Amanlikov Khamza (Director of Sirdarya Forest Organisation), Mr. Adilov Sherzod Burxonovich (Director of Kitob Forest Organisation) and Mr. Bozorova Rano (Director of Dehkanabad Forest Organisation) for speaking with us and sharing information related to the project. We also like to thank assistant Directors, experts and office staff of these four forest organisations from the project state for sharing information. Thanks also goes to PMO team for providing information and helping in fixing meetings and field visits. We also like to thank all local beneficiaries for sharing their experiences and information regarding impact of the project activities on the forest and on their livelihood. We like to thank all who provided constructive comments/suggestions in the draft report.

The views expressed in this report are intended to offer an overview of, and some of the lessons learned from this project. We have tried to balance our thoughts and to offer fair perspectives of what was learned from people and reports.

Finally, we are very happy to learn with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in managing Forests. We would like to thank them and wish them every success in their continuing endeavours.

Mid-Term Review Team

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CPF	Country Programme Framework
CE	Carbon Estimation
CO_2	Carbon di Oxide
ESS	Environment and Social Safeguard
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FF	Forest Fund
FGC	Field Gender Coordinator
FI	Forest Inventory
FIS	Forest Information System
FMS	Forest Inventory and Monitoring System
FO	Forest Organization
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	German Development Agency
KPI	Key performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MTR	Mid-term Review
NFP	National Forestry Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PIR	Project Implementation Report (for GEF)
PMO	Project Management Office
PPR	Project Progress Report (for FAO)
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee

SCF	State Committee on Forestry
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
VGGT	Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure

Executive Summary

1. The Mid-term Review (MTR) of the project "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)" was undertaken to provide an assessment of the project performance and progress of implementation for planned project activities and planned outputs against actual results. The review also examined the extent and magnitude of the project outcomes to date and determined the likelihood of future impacts of the intervention. It identified, recommendations for improving the project implementation and lessons learned that may help in the design and implementation of future FAO and GEF initiatives in the field of sustainable management of forests in mountains and valleys and biodiversity conservation within these forests for supporting rural livelihood.

2. The MTR assessed and provided ratings for (i) relevance; (ii) achievement of the project results (effectiveness), including the capacity development dimensions of the project and likely progress to impact; (iii) efficiency, (iv) sustainability; (v) factors affecting performance including the project design and readiness, the project implementation and execution as well as financial management and co-financing, stakeholder engagement, knowledge management and communications, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E); (vi) and Cross-cutting issues like gender, indigenous people, human rights, environmental and socio-economic safeguards and mitigation provisions.

Main Findings of the MTR

Overall rating of the project performance and achievement of outcomes – Moderately Satisfactory.

3. Of the activities set to achieve the objective of introducing sustainable forest management and thereby contributing in sequestrating carbon through improved forest quality, the project has achieved less than the mid-term point targets (as per work-plan and log frame). Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is introduced in 12,465 ha in 4 Forest Organizations (FOs) (target was 36,530ha), contributing to sequestrate 510,100 tons of CO_2 annually. To support evidence based planning for SFM, it has installed GIS equipment and the GIS lab and data center are ready for operation. The project contributed in training 20 technicians (from SCF) from four pilot sites to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. The project has also conducted several workshops, seminars and trainings to enhance capacity and promote knowledge sharing. The project also conducted trainings, workshops and seminars to disseminate knowledge on SFM practices for economic tree species. The project also organized tree-planting events targeting local populations including women and children at the demonstration sites. A number of proposals have been developed to the draft Presidential Decree on Amendments to the legislation, which legalized the long-term lease of forestland. Amendment has been made to the forest legislation permitting the transfer of the forest fund lands to long-term lease for up to 49 years. The National Forest Program developed and reflected in the Concept for the development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 and approved by Presidential Decree. The project also developed Gender Action Plan (GAP) as well as Gender Strategy and discussed with the management team of State Forestry

Committee (SFC) and FOs during the workshop and the final versions endorsed by the SFC. The monitoring and evaluation system for the project is prepared and implemented. A communication plan has been developed. All above mentioned accomplished activities together with the remaining ones will contribute to achieve the objectives of the project. Some activities like, training for 100 officers to use Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) , Training and capacity development in the field method (data collection and mapping), training on enterprise level data collection, processing, analysis and result generation was not done. Similarly, data collection at forest enterprise level and entry in the database (remote sensing and survey), data processing and analysis was not done.

Relevance: Satisfactory

4. The project's overall objectives and interventions were in line with the FAO Strategic Framework (SO1-Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; SO2-Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; SO3-reduce rural poverty; and SO5-Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises). It will also contribute to regional result/priority areas: food security and nutrition, natural resources management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation and policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade standard setting and organization of regional economic cooperation. It will also contribute to the Country Programming Framework outcome: Priority Area E: Sustainable natural resources management and Outcome 1: "Development of forestry for sustainable management of natural resources and increased income-generation opportunities for rural population supported". The project will also contribute to GEF strategic Objectives: CC-M2, Programme 4: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in the forest, and other land-use, and support climate smart agriculture; LD2, Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration; SFM 3: Restore Forest Ecosystems. The project will address forest degradation that has been ongoing for at least one century in Uzbekistan affecting forest-based livelihood. Similarly, establishment of the GIS and inventory system will help to generate updated information to support evidence-based management of the forests. The project is in line with the priority areas of the government of Uzbekistan.

Achievement of the project results: Moderately Satisfactory

5. The MTR level targets in the Result Framework (RF) were moderately achieved (i.e., around 40%). Since many activities are still to be completed in the remaining period of the project (by January 2023), it is difficult to confirm their contribution to the project objectives. The project activities were affected by the COVID19 situation in 2020, delay in procurement of equipment, difficulties to find national experts, which delayed recruitment process, delay in recruitment of international consultant and delay in initiating field data collection for developing forestry database. The project is moving towards achieving its objectives and is on the track but the implementation speed needs to be improved.

Effectiveness (Progress towards results)

The project results are coherent to the outcomes and objectives of the project. The project achievement are on the way to contribute to various targets for Global Environmental Benefits. The Outcome 2 contributes to achieve GEF core indicator of restoring and bringing areas of landscapes under improved management practices. By the mid-term point 12, 465 ha in 4 FOs were brought under Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices. Similarly project was also able to contribute to core GEF indicator of mitigating Green House Gas Emission by sequestrating 510,100 tCO_2eq. It also contributes to core indicator 11 by improving livelihoods of local people including female headed households.

Outcome 1: **An operational Forest Inventory and Monitoring System (FMS): Moderately Satisfactory**

6. The project completed purchasing of tools and materials for effective operation of the GIS laboratory. However, the GIS and remote sensing activities were not initiated. Similarly, inputs for Manual I (compilation of base map production methodology) and working instructions for Carbon Estimation (CE) survey were prepared. Testing of Manual I at the forest enterprise level was not done and Manual II development was not initiated yet. The project conducted two trainings, which was attended by 20 technicians from 4 pilot FOs and they were trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. The project conducted online training on base map development. Training and capacity development on field methods (data collection and mapping) was not done and the field data collection was also not initiated. Similarly, training on enterprise level data processing, analysis and result generation was not done.

Outcome 2: SFM operationalized at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods at least 500 local households: Moderately Satisfactory

7. The project has introduced SFM (as a co-financing) in 12, 465 ha in 4 FOs (about 40% of the target) and this will contribute to sequestrate 510,100 tons of CO_2 annually. The mid-term level target was 36,530 ha. The project conducted seminar to discuss on the role of management plan in the forestry activities. The project also conducted 2-days seminar on "Scientific basis for afforestation/reforestation, 2-days training on "seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures and non-wood products and 2-days informal workshop on the project purposes among local stakeholders to review management planning. Seminar on "Development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities for rural women living in forest areas" was held in Kitab Forestry office. Concepts on Forest Restoration, Nursery, Non-wood forest products and Strategy on the Pasture Management have been developed and approved by the SFC for their implementation.

8. A draft action plan for the Pasture and Rangeland is developed which need substantial revision and a training was held in each pilot FOs on "Rational pasture management in accordance with the Law on

Pastures and other legal acts". The knowledge from these trainings helped in implementing SFM and manage forests sustainably for carbon sequestration. In the future, it will also provide economic benefits from the economic trees to the local communities and FOs. The project had contributed to address water problem in the Dekhkanabad and Pap FOs by supplying water through 5 km long polyethylene pipes and stored 40 tons reserve on the mountain slopes to grow plants. However, except some preparatory work (training, seminar, workshop etc.), SFM in 16,200 ha for economic tree species was not done. Similarly, SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts in 2,995 ha were not done.

Outcome 3: The policy and enabling framework is conducive to state and private investment in SFM: Moderately Satisfactory

9. The project events were shown in more than 60 programs on TV and also published in electric and print media. The training of 100 officials to use VGGT and preparation of NAMA was not done. The project contributed in amending policies and frameworks to create environment for investment supporting SFM for sequestration of carbon and improving local economy. The project conducted meeting to discuss "National Forest Programme". During the meeting with relevant Ministries and Stakeholders, it was decided to reflect the NFP into the Concept for the development of the Forestry Sector until 2030. Currently, National Forest Programme has been reflected in the "Concept for the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030" and approved by the Presidential Decree of October 6, 2020. Gender action plan and Gender Strategy are developed, discussed with State Forestry Committee management and with FOs and the final version of GAP is endorsed by SFC.

Outcome 4: Project implementation based on RBM and lessons learned/good practices documented and disseminated: Moderately Satisfactory

10. Monitoring and evaluation system of the project is prepared and implemented. PIR and PPR are developed and reported annually and every six months respectively. Similarly, semi-annual financial reports were submitted and six PSC meetings were conducted. A communication plans has been developed and implemented. The project produced 4 brochures summarizing key ideas of the documents on forest restoration concept, nursery concept, Non-timber forest product and Pasture Management Strategy. The project information was also disseminated among the National Partners and pilot FOs and through print and electronic media to a wider audiences. Several workshops and seminars organized by the project also contributed to disseminating knowledge generated by the project. Since FAO projects are not allowed to open a separate social media accounts due to one corporate social media account policy, the project activities were highlighted through UN in Uzbekistan's social media. Development of SFM manuals and guidelines for different forest types was given to the green World future under LoA and it is under development.

Efficiency: Moderately Satisfactory

11. The executing agency had limited technical knowledge to implement the project activities and it had difficulty to find competent consultant and the service provider for research and training services. The project had to spend long time in searching national consultant and competent service provider. The recruitment of international consultant and procurement of equipment for component 1 took long time. The restriction on mobility due to COVID-19 also added difficulties to the project implementation. Due to change in the government, the future of the Forestry Institution (service provider) was uncertain for quite some time and staff turnover after the new government affected the project implementation. The staff of the service provider who were trained by the project were transferred by the new government which affect the project activities. The PMO is also found weak in sequencing the project activities and this has also affected implementation of several activities. The data collection supposed to be initiated earlier with priority because this is needed for developing evidence based planning of SFM. The field data collection may need 12 months and because of delay of field data collection, the SFM activities are affected. The project has completed a few activities and still large amounts of works are left to be completed. The project had spent US$1,855, 580 by 30 June 2021 i.e., 58.2% of total GEF grant while work accomplished is about 40%.

Sustainability: Moderately Likely

12. To make evidence-based planning sustainable, the project has established GIS laboratory and trained 20 technicians from 4 FOs to establish an operational Forest Inventory (FI) and Monitoring system. Similarly, to systematize management practices beyond the project life, the guidelines for preparation of multipurpose management plans for sustainable forest and pasture management and draft action plan for pasture and rangeland management is developed. The project has plans to train staff from the forestry sector in data collection and analysis so that the updating of the forest related information would continue in the future also for supporting evidence-based planning. Rangeland and pasture management action plan, which is under development, will support to protect these resources from over exploitation even beyond the project period. The project contributed to the amendment of the forest legislation permitting the transfer of the forest fund lands for long-term lease i.e., up to 49 years. This will encourage state and private sector investment in SFM activities and make SFM sustainable. The economic tree plantation will provide economic return to communities to improve their household economy and to local FOs to bear the management costs in the future i.e. even beyond the end of this project. The project also trained rural women in handicraft making which will also help to improve their household economy making them affordable to alternatives of the forest products to reduce pressure on the forest. Training staff from forestry institution and local communities in various aspects of SFM will assure technical backup for SFM beyond the project life. The project facilitated review and revision of "National Forest Program" and by reflecting NFP in the Concept for the "Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030". Now, National Forest Program is reflected in the "Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030" and approved by the Presidential Decree of October 6, 2020. This will make SFM activities sustainable beyond the project life. Training forestry staff and community members in various aspects of SFM strengthen institutional sustainability (make it likely). Similarly, the long leasing

period of the forest encourage private sectors as well as government investment in SFM and also economic returns from the economic trees to communities and the forest organizations supports SFM and due to these activities socio-economic sustainability is likely. Several trainings conducted for communities and government staff contributes in socio-economic sustainability as well as governance beyond the project life. The improved forest health and management through SFM practices will contribute to reduce carbon from the carbon sequestration process. Also it contributes in reducing landslides in the mountain areas so environment sustainability aspect of the project is likely.

Factors Affecting Performance: Moderately Satisfactory

13. In general, the project design is suitable to delivering the expected outcomes. The theory of change was brief and information on drivers and immediate objectives were missing. The project objectives and components are clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe, but the field data collection and evaluation could not take place due to the COVID19 situation in 2020. Also low participation and no initiative of O'rmonloyikha, unmet 2020 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of National Consultants (which hampered handover to Ormonloyikha) and delays related to the recruitment of the international consultant delayed implementation of the project activities. There was gender specific targets in the result framework and the project document emphasised gender considerations in the project implementation. The project involved communities, farmers, FOs, civil society organization (e.g., Makhallya), Business Women Association and its local branches, local self-governing communities/Makhallya Foundation, Rayon Councils, Centre of Hydro meteorological Service, Agro bank or Ipak Yuli commercial bank, Michael Succow Foundation etc.

14. The executing agency, State Committee on Forestry (SCF)) and the implementing agency (FAO) discharged their role and responsibilities effectively. The potential risks were well identified in the project document and they were reviewed annually. The project implementation always considered mitigation measures outlined in the project document.

15. The SCF was fully engaged in the decision-making process and the implementation of the project activities and monitoring of the project results. The project has engaged a range of national, local and community level stakeholders. Local communities were involved in implementation of activities related to the tree plantation, nursery management and handicraft development.

16. The Project's Communication Plan was developed by a communication expert hired by the PMO and cleared by relevant REU department. The aim of this plan is to promote knowledge products and the results of the project, raise awareness at local level and among relevant institutions and to disseminate information related to the project through electronic and print media to wider audiences. The project documented and shared its results and experiences through its PIR and annual reports, webpage of the executing agency, the UN social media, national TV and print Medias. Generation of awareness among the community members helped to generate their support to conserve the forest biodiversity of the 4 pilot sites because they helped in afforestation/reforestation and protecting forests from excessive grazing. Sharing of its lessons to relevant institutions should help to generate funding for replicating success stories from this project to other areas with similar problems.

17. The M&E system is practical and was developed as per the standard provisions. The PMO, SCF and FAO were involved in different monitoring activities as per the plan. The field monitoring activities were affected by the COVID19 pandemic situation in 2020 because the movement was restricted.

Crosscutting issues: Satisfactory

18. Gender considerations were taken into account while designing the project. Attention was given to gender equality in the project design and provisioned involving various stakeholders with strong emphasis on the gender equality throughout the project implementation processes. The project has given importance to GEF policy on Gender Mainstreaming and the GEF-6 approach on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. The role and potentiality of women in the forestry sector was analysed and based on that activities were identified to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The project activities like plantation of economic plants and promotion of handicrafts supports household economy making women living comfortable. During the project development, women were actively involved, and the selection of farmers followed the criteria developed to ensure gender and social concerns. The project also developed gender action plan (GAP) and implemented. Detail assessment was carried out to explore opportunities for economic development of women and understand the needs, priorities and approach to achieve the target. These information were utilised in GAP. The project hired gender expert who visited all project sites and assessed problems of women and their needs. The project developed ToR for gender coordinators and based on that FOs appointed Field Gender Coordinators (FGC) and their status is institutionalised by the special decree of the SCF.

19. The project was developed to address the environmental and socio-economic issues of the Target Mountains and valleys; hence, the environmental and social concerns were taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project activities. The project implementation continuously reviewed environmental and social risks and always kept in mind the precautions to social and environmental aspects. The project design identified only low level risks of environmental and social dimensions. Annual risk review also didn't observe any environmental and social risks. MTR team found no change in environmental and social risk status i.e. risk was low.

20. The MTR gave overall ratings on achievements as follows (see also summary evaluation table below):

Progress towards achieving the project's development objective: **Moderately Satisfactory**

Overall progress on implementation: **Moderate Satisfactory**

Overall risk rating: **Moderately likely** to achieve Sustainability

Summary of the evaluation (detail rating is available in Annex VIII)

Criteria	Rating	Justification for rating
Strategic relevance	S	Relevant to needs of the Uzbekistan as the forest degradation is serious problem and is threatening important biodiversity and rural economy. In addition, the project helps to address FAO and GEF priorities.
Achievement of project results / outcomes (Effectiveness)	MS	The project achieved only about 40% of the target.
Efficiency	MS	The executing agency was weak in technical capacity. The project had difficulty to find competent national consultant and procurement of the equipment was delayed. The recruitment of national and international consultant to support the executing agency in implementing the project activities was delayed. The PMO is not able to sequence activities properly due to which there is risk of achieving SFM targets.
Overall likelihood of the risks to sustainability	ML	Government officers and local communities are trained on various aspects of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), which will assure technical supports will continue to the project results or to replicate in other areas. Plantation of economic plants and income generation from different crafts will contribute in financial sustainability.
Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	Procurement was delayed, hiring of national and international consultants was delayed and Covid-19 affected the implementation of the project activities.
Cross-cutting Issues	MS	Targets are gender-disaggregated in result framework. Socio-economic survey also assessed gender sensitivity and gender specific needs, which was considered developing and implementing the project activities. At policy level, gender mainstreaming was not a part of forestry normative framework. Gender Action Plan was developed and introduced to implementation by hiring gender consultant. The project staff were also trained on gender aspects at the beginning of the project. Need to increase women participation in the project activities and

		in decision making or leadership building. SFC has appointed on each FO focal points by its decree.
Overall project rating	MS	The project has achieved less than 40% of the final target. The project has not initiated data collection, analysis and interpretation and this will affect evidence-based management planning of Sustainable Forest Management. This may risk the SFM activities of the project.

21. **Conclusions:**

Relevance. The project is relevant to address the forest degradation problem of Mountains and valleys of Uzbekistan. It contributes to achieve FAO Country Framework outcomes, FAO strategies and GEF priority areas. The implementation of Sustainable Forest Management will contributes to address the deforestation/forest degradation problem of Uzbekistan. The forestry sector of Uzbekistan is very weak in technical knowledge and had no system to update database for supporting evidence-based planning. The project has activities to establish Forest Information System (FIS) and enhance capacity of the forestry sector.

Effectiveness (**Progress towards results**). The project has contributed to establish GIS laboratory but field data collection was not initiated. The development of manuals and testing in the forest enterprise were delayed. Trainings were conducted for 20 technicians from 4 pilot forest organizations to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. The SFM was introduced in 12,456ha in 4 FOs (40% of target) and conducted seminars on afforestation/reforestation, seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures and non-wood products. Training was also conducted targeting rural women in "development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities. A draft Action Plan for Pasture and Rangeland are developed which need substantial revision. The project contributed to address water problem in the Dekhkanabad and Pap FOs by supplying water through 5km long polyethylene pipes and stored 40 tons reserve on the mountain slopes to grow plants. However, SFM in 16,200ha for economic tree species and SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2995ha was not done.

The project events were shown in more than 60 programs on TV, published in electric and print Medias. The project conducted meeting to discuss National Forest Programme and the Concept for the development of the Forestry Sector until 2020. Currently, National Forest Programme has been reflected in the "Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030" and approved by the Presidential Decree, Gender action plan is developed, discussed with State Forestry Committee management and with FOs and the final version of GAP is endorsed by SFM management of SFC. Development of NAMA for forestry sector was not done. Overall the project is on the track and heading towards achieving its outcomes but the implementation speed slower than expected.

Efficiency. The equipment related to GIS and remote sensing is procured, but activities related to GIS and remote sensing were not initiated because process of field data collection and evaluation has not started due to COVID 19 situation in 2020, low participation and no initiative of O'rmonloyikha due to high turn-over of staff, unmet 2020 KPIs of national consultants (which hampered handover to O'rmonloyikha) and delay in recruitment of the international consultant. The project conducted two trainings, which was attended by 20 technicians from 4 pilot FOs and they were trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. The project conducted online training on base map development. The O'rmonloyka was tasked with methodological and technological preparation of surveys (indoors and outdoors) and its staff were trained by the project for this job. But high turn-over of staff of O'rmonloyikha and limiting of actual work created problem.

Sustainability. The sustainability of the project is likely. Establishment of GIS lab with trained technicians will support the Forest Inventory and monitoring system and contribute to evidence-based planning. Development of multipurpose management plan for sustainable forest and pasture management, management plan for rangeland and pasture (not completed yet), revised National Forest Program will contribute in making the project result i.e. SFM sustainable. An amendment of legislation to lease forest fund lands for up to 49 years encourage investment from State and private sector in SFM. Training forestry sector staff and local communities will establish technical backup for post project periods. Plantation of economic trees provide sustainable financial support to communities as well as local Forestry Organizations. The only risk is that the project may not be able to complete its targeted activities even in the extended timeframe. If they are left incomplete then that may affect the sustainability of the project results. Also uncertainty of Service provider's future may risk the project implementation.

Factors affecting the performance. M&E plan was good and comprehensive in its depth and scope. The result-framework with clear objectives, components and appropriate to issues and design considered the timeframe of the project. Targets also considered gender-disaggregated indicators. The project worked with the relevant institution with permanent structure, which develops ownership making results sustainable. The capacity of the executing agency was assessed at the time of the project development and programs to enhance their capacity was included in the project. The project oversight and implementation was affected by the COVID19 situation in 2020.

Cross-cutting issues. The project involved relevant government institutions (national & local), civil society organization (e.g. Makhallya), Business women Association and its local branches, local self-governing communities/Makhallya Foundation, Rayon Councils, Centre of Hydro meteorological Service, Agro bank or Ipak Yuli commercial bank, Michael Succow Foundation etc. in the project development to implementation. This has developed strong ownership over the project results. Gender equality consideration is reflected in the design that includes enhancement of participation of women in training programmes and generation of income through economic plants and promotion of traditional crafts skills. The project developed gender action plan and implemented.

22. **Main Recommendations:**

Relevance

I. Study tour and knowledge exchange program was found effective so it is recommended to continue study tour and knowledge exchange visits in the second half of the program by PMO and FOs if budget allows.

Effectiveness

II. GIS laboratory is established and 20 technicians were also trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. But training and capacity development on field methods for data collection and mapping was not done. Similarly, training on enterprise level data processing, analysis and result generation was also not done. The data collection and analysis had to be done in the first year because all other activities need information from data analysis and mapping. Hence, it is recommended to initiate data collection and analysis immediately i.e. from February 2022.

Sustainability

III. It is recommended that the PMO should initiate development of the exit strategy including information on all potential assistance to carry on the project results beyond the project period. In 2022-23.

IV. It is recommended to mainstream the SFM in the Forestry sector policies and planning so that it will continue as their regular activities. PMO/FAO need to initiate effort from the beginning of 2022.

Factors affecting performance (project execution and implementation)

V. It is recommended to monitor the project implementation very closely (increase supervision) by PMO, FAO and SFC so that problems could be addressed timely and also improve speed of the project implementation.

VI. The SFM project has not met its mid-term level targets (as per result framework and work-plan). The remaining activities demand more time then what is left. Hence, at least one year no cost extension is recommended. The PMO and FAO should discuss this with the GEF for no cost extension immediately i.e. in February 2022.

Cross-cutting Issues

VII. Women play key role in the forestry or agro-forestry and in this project also they made significant contribution in the sustainable forestry programs. The project conducted various trainings to improve their skills for income generation. But, still large number of women are not covered by the income generation and livelihood programs. Hence, it is recommended to diversify income generation and alternative livelihood programs and involve more women in those programs. PMO should work with the Gender and livelihood experts to revise the GAP for confirming the potentiality of the proposed activities and revise as per need. (February 2022).

VIII. It is recommended to consider Gender Action Plan while planning annual work plan and implementing the project activities. PMO and FOs should initiate considering from the February 2022.

(Complete list of recommendations is available on page 34)

Introduction

23. The Mid-Term Review for FAO/GEF projects has two overarching objectives, namely to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management and to improve knowledge and performance. With this in mind, FAO Uzbekistan as the GEF Implementation Agency for the FAO-GEF "Sustainable management of forest in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)" project, to assess progress towards expected outcomes and identify areas in need of improvement and/or corrective actions in order to achieve its target results, has initiated this Mid-Term Review (MTR).

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1 Purpose of MTR

24. The main purposes of the MTR are to:

- provide accountability – to respond to the information needs and interests of policymakers and other actors with decision-making power, for example, FAO management and the FAO GEF CU;
- improve the project/programme – project/programme improvement and organizational development provide valuable information to managers and others responsible for regular project/programme operations (for example, the PMO, PTF, FAO GEF CU and PSC); and
- contribute to knowledge – in-depth understanding and contextualization of the project/programme and its practices, of particular benefit to the FAO GEF CU, FAO staff and future developers and implementers.

1.2 Objectives of MTR

25. The Mid-term Review is an independent review and the team, wherever possible, tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the FAO-*GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy* and adhere to the *Guide for planning and conducting mid-term reviews of FAO-GEF Projects and programmes*. It aimed to assess the following key criteria:

- Relevance – the extent to which the project is suited to local and national development priorities and organisational policies, including changes over time.
- Effectiveness – the extent to which the project objectives, outcomes and outputs have been achieved or the extent to which they are likely it is to be achieved.
- Efficiency – the extent to which project results have been delivered in the most cost- and time-efficient manner.

- Sustainability – the likelihood of the project results to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion of the project. The project needs to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.
- Factors affecting performance – the main factors to be considered are:
    - Project design and readiness for implementation (e.g., sufficient partner capacity to begin operations, changes in context between formulation and operational start);
    - Project execution, including the project management (execution modality as well as the involvement of counterparts and different stakeholders);
    - Project implementation, including supervision by FAO (BH, LTO and FLO), backstopping, and general PTF input;
    - Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing;
    - Project partnerships and stakeholder involvement (including the degree of ownership of project results by stakeholders), political support from government, institutional support from operating partners (such as regional branches of agricultural extension services or forestry authorities);
    - Communication, public awareness and knowledge management; and
    - Project M&E system, including M&E design, implementation and budget.

26. **Cross-cutting dimensions** – These include considerations such as gender, indigenous-peoples and minority-group concerns and human rights, as well as the environmental and social safeguards applied to the project require, a review of the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) risk classification and risk-mitigation provisions identified at the project's formulation stage and considered while implementing the project activities.

27. The MTR undertook in keeping with the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement as outlined in the *Guide for planning and conducting Mid-term Review of FAO-GEF Projects (2020)*.

28. GEF is placing increased emphasis on gender concerns and how its programmes and the projects contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEF, 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b). Consequently, the MTR, as much as possible, collected and reported on sex disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators and results. GEF is also paying more attention to stakeholder engagement and development, the use of the project knowledge products and the identification of good practices. Hence, these were focused on the MTR process.

1.3 Intended Users

29. The main beneficiaries of the MTR report are:

- The State Committee on the Forestry, which will benefit from improved management status of the forest estate and enhanced institutional capacity.
- The Dekhkanabad, Kitab, Syrdarya and Pap Forest organizations which will benefit through enhanced capacity and from the practices under outcome 3.

- The Forest Research Institute, which will benefit from the project's capacity building activities.
- The State Unitary Enterprise Ormonoloyikha will benefit from the technical design of the project activities and implementing them.
- The State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection, Center for Hydro meteorological Services and Association of Women Entrepreneurs and its local divisions will benefit from capacity building activities.
- FAO as it serves as the GEF Agency for this project.

1.4. Evaluation Approach and Method

i. This MTR was planned to be conducted through field missions by the national consultant and online interviews by the evaluation team with all stakeholders individually. Since March 2020, all non-critical international travel has been suspended across the globe to avoid further expansion of the Covid-19 virus and only limited flights are operating. Moreover, Uzbekistan has also restrictions on foreigners to visit the country from last year and it is still not changed. Therefore, it was planned to make field visits by the national consultant only. In light of this and taking into consideration that this project mainly implemented in partnership with the government at district level, the majority of stakeholders were interviewed directly by the national consultant and international consultant joined through the virtual means.

ii. The evaluation adopted a qualitative and theory-based approach. Making use of methods such as documentation review, semi-structure interviews and zoom meetings and face-to-face interactions to collect data from secondary and primary sources, the major analysis method is content analysis.

iii. Data collected was stored, interpreted and analyzed to answer the evaluation questions and sub questions as designed in the evaluation matrix. The Results' Framework was yardsticks to guide the assessment of the evaluative dimensions. The MTR team also developed the Theory of Change to guide the assessment dimensions.

iv. The evaluation entirely adheres to the GEF-FAO Norms and Standards and in line with the *Guide for planning and conducting Mid-term Review of FAO-GEF Projects (2020)*. The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach with the internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. The evaluation also follows the GEF and FAO Guidelines for Evaluation. The evaluation team members safeguard and ensure ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle.

30. The Mid-term Review was initiated on 21st October 2021 and the first draft report was submitted in January 7th 2022.

31. The Evaluation was evidence-based wherever possible and conducted through the following participatory approach:

- extensive face-to-face interview by national consultant and virtual interviews with stakeholders by MTR team with the project management and technical support staff, including some members of the Project Management Office (PMO). Throughout the evaluation, particular attention was paid to carefully explaining the importance of listening to stakeholders' views and in reassuring staff and stakeholders that the purpose of the evaluation is not to judge performance in order to apportion credit or blame but to measure the relative success of implementation and to suggest ways to deliver and impact for the rest of the project work. The confidentiality of all interviews was stressed and remain paramount. Wherever quotes from interviews are used in the report, they will be unattributed to an individual unless they wish otherwise. Wherever possible, and within time constraints, information collected were crosschecked between various sources to ascertain its veracity.
- face-to-face interviews with local stakeholders, particularly local government staff, community members, experts from the Northeast Institute of Geography and Agro-ecology, FAO CO, staff and regional office team, other entrepreneurs and private sector and the beneficiaries (households and farmers);
- a thorough review of the project documents and other relevant texts, including the Project related documents, revised result framework, and monitoring reports, such as progress and financial reports prepared for FAO and annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) and the Project Progress Report (PPR) for GEF, minutes of the Project meetings, relevant correspondence, and other project-related material produced by the project staff or partners (Annex V); and

32. MTR evaluation Matrix and evaluation guidelines were used to guide the interviews.

33. MTR reviewed progress towards results. This was assessed based on the data provided, amongst others, in the project document, the project work plan, GEF Tracking Tools, and PIRs, as well as results verified in the course of the MTR mission.

34. **MTR Team composition and profile**

i. The MTR team is composed of Dr. Arun Rijal (Team Leader) and Mr. Bakhodir Kuziyev (Team Member).
ii. Team members have experience in the project evaluation, the project program management, policy development, capacity assessment/development, Gender and social inclusion (gender equality and gender mainstreaming), economics of climate change and forestry, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, result-based management evaluation.

35. **Limitations and Risks**

i. The main limitation posed by Covid-19 relates to travel and access restrictions to international consultant which had impacted his ability to conduct in person the field level data collection. The planned face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders while other were carried out using Skype, Zoom and other communication technology. The MTR team does not anticipate a significant impact of limitations caused by Covid-19 in the quality of the data collection and thus in the results of the review.

ii. The MTR team could not visit all project sites and had interaction with only few beneficiaries, so they relied on the information provided by the key informants from the project, limited informants and the information from the project reports/documents, as well as from other evidence provided by the stakeholders (picture, videos of the sites etc.).

iii. Due to language barrier, international consultant could not make direct conversation with the stakeholders and has to rely on interpretation by the national consultant.

2. Project Background and context

36. Uzbekistan is facing forest degradation for at least one century and this has threatened the biodiversity within these forests. The root cause of deforestation is (i) the expansion of agricultural land, and (ii) the increase in the livestock population. This has affected all forest land, notably desert and mountains, and has greatly reduced the possibility of natural succession or regeneration. This has also reduced the ability of forests to store and sequestrate carbon, and leads to loss of carbon in forest ecosystems. Agriculture expansion is no longer a threat to remaining high quality forests. However, it does remain a barrier to the natural regeneration of forests and the successful design and implementation of reforestation and afforestation schemes. The drivers of degradation, and the barriers of natural forest regeneration and to the successful implementation of reforestation and afforestation schemes, vary greatly from site to site and depend very much on the forest types. The common threats like livestock raising in and near the forests, increasing demand for timber and wood-fuel, unsustainable harvesting of non-wood forest products, pests and disease and climate change impacts continue to cause degradation and a barrier to natural forest regeneration and to the successful implementation of reforestation and afforestation schemes.

37. The FAO-GEF project "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP) was endorsed by the GEF CEO on 5 December 2017. The GCP Agreement Letter and Execution Agreement were signed on 15 December 2017 and 18 November 2016, respectively. Its official starting date is February 2018 and its closing date is 28 February 023 (in some documents it is January 023). The executional partner is the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The project has a GEF budget of US$3,187,023 USD and US$18,666,151of co-financing.

38. The project's global environmental objective is to mitigate climate change impacts, reverse land degradation processes and manage forest sustainably. The project's development objective is to introduce sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan, thereby sequestering carbon and improving the delivery of ecosystem services and the quality of forest and tree resources.

39. Approximately 11.3 million hectares area is classified as Forest Fund (FF) land, and this is managed by the state forestry agencies. Of this, approximately 3.2 million hectares may actually be covered with forests. From the non-Forest Fund land, both agricultural and reserve land may contain considerable areas of forest. This land is neither managed by forest agencies nor managed for forestry-related objectives. No updated information regarding forestland is not available to develop evidence-based management of the forest. Due to degradation of the forest, much of it is losing both its production and protection values.

40. Uzbekistan's rich forests represent a vast untapped potential in terms of carbon sequestration and delivery of ecosystem services important for human wellbeing and the environment. Moreover, there are vast areas of land in Uzbekistan that currently have little or no forest cover yet are suitable for forestry. This project is to remove the barriers to sustainable forest management and contribute to the reversal of the current situation of degradation and help switch forestry in Uzbekistan onto a path of increased forest cover, increased social and economic benefits from forest, increased carbon sequestration and an improved quality of existing forest.

41. The strategy of the project is to address the above-mentioned barriers by establishing information management system for evidence based forest management, multifunctional forest management for carbon sequestration and other benefits and upscale sustainable forest management by strengthening the enabling environment.

3. Theory of Change

42. The project has global environmental objective of demonstrating systematic impacts of mitigation options to promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture. The project's development objective is to introduce sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan to contribute to maintaining quality of forest and tree resources and provide carbon sequestration function and economic benefits to local households and farmers. To achieve its objectives, the project has strategy to strengthen capacity of the relevant institutions, promote evidence-based planning, protect forest with better management practices and provide socio-economic benefits to the farmers/forest users. The Theory of Change (ToC) pathway that will bring about these outcomes is based on four different medium-term outcomes: an operational forest inventory and monitoring system, including capacity development; operationalizing SFM at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable

benefits; making policy and enabling framework conducive to state and private investment in FSM, change in behavior and working modality due to change in awareness.

43. The project planned to utilize government's existing institutional setup to implement the project activities. During designing phase, it has identified institutions, assessed capacity, and reviewed existing policies to identify gaps. The baseline scenarios were used to develop appropriate project and implementation modality. The component 1 expect to achieve its outcomes of establishing an operational forest inventory and monitoring System (FMS) through 4 outputs and component 2 expect to achieve its outcome of operationalizing SFM at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households through 4 outputs. Likewise, component 3 expect to achieve its outcome of creating conducive environment through policy and enabling framework for state and private investments in SFM through 6 outputs and component 4 expect to achieve its outcome of practicing the project implementation based on result- based management and documentation and dissemination of lessons learned and good practices through 4 outputs. Component 1 contributes in harmonizing methodology for data collection, establishing forest information and monitoring system, establishing geo-referenced database and enhancing capacity of technical staff; component 2 establish sustainable forest management (SFM) at 4 demonstration sites with generation of benefits to local farmers; component 3 enable environment to up scaling of sustainable forest management, and component 4 contributes in knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation under component 4 also provide information for improvement of component 1, 2 and 3. Impact of outcome 1 and outcome 2 will be contribution in learning and behavioral change among policy makers and other forest stakeholders from local to national level while outcome 3 and 4 will contribute to scaling up of SFM practices in the forest ecosystems generating global environmental and socio-economic benefits. These will ultimately contribute to achieve the project objective of "Sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan sequestrates carbon and improves the quality of the forest and tree resources, while improving local livelihoods." The project design identified three categories of risks viz. ecological risks, socio-economical risks and institutional risks. The ecological risks includes impact of climate change. These impacts will The socio-ecological risks includes lack of capacity with the relevant government experts, less attractive carbon market, less chances of developing financial sustainable models, potential conflict with the community regarding the forest conservation strategy. Similarly, the institutional risks includes less chances of assurance of mainstreaming, up scaling and replicating due to insufficient level of participation by the government and insufficient enabling legal and institutional framework for creating conducive environment for the project objectives. The project design has provisioned mitigation measures to address these risks and has provision of reviewing risks annually to update risk status and identify new risks if any observed. Institutional weaknesses of the executing agencies, financial limitation, methodological weaknesses and information gaps and limitation by legislation to lease

forest for long terms are challenges of forestry sector to address the deforestation/forest degradation problems and inability to make economic gain from the forests. The driving force of the project is that the project is in line with the national policy, FAO CF, GEF focal area and it is designed to address the problem that the forestry sector of Uzbekistan is suffering. It is assumed that the project interventions will get priority in the future government programmes as these are to support government in its efforts to resolve soil erosion, landslide and deforestation problems. It also help government to fulfil its commitments to various international forum on climate change and protected area management, it will strengthen capacity of relevant institution of the government.

44. The project plans to achieve this goal through four main outcomes:

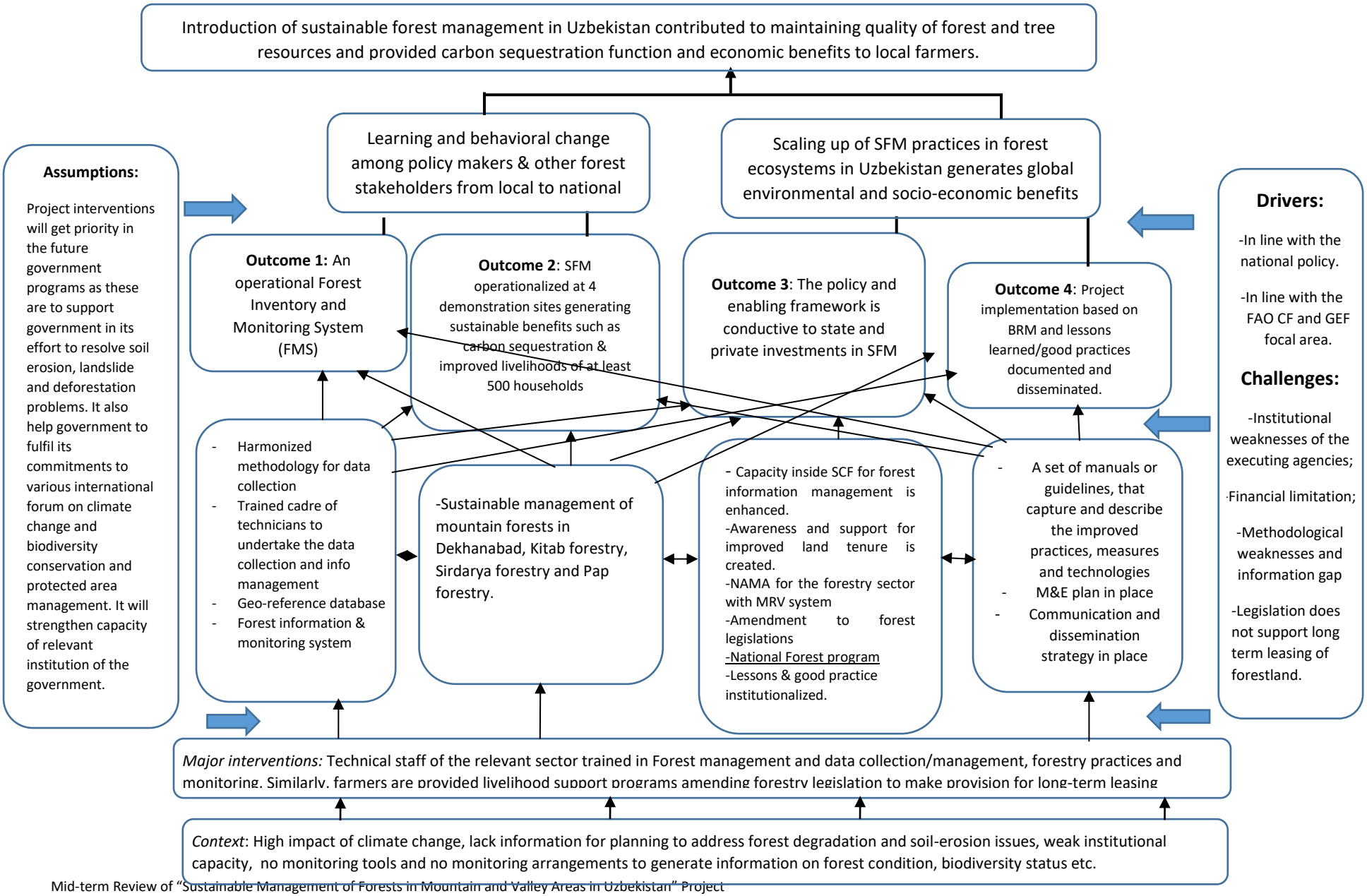
Component 1: Information management systems for sustainable forest management.

Component 2: Multifunctional forest management leading to carbon sequestration, improvement in forest and tree resources, and other benefits.

Component 3: Up scaling of sustainable forest management – with carbon sequestration – by strengthening of the enabling environment.

Component 4: Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing of the project activities, dissemination of knowledge and information and public awareness raising.

Presentation of the findings: Serial numbers of Evaluation Questions follows as per in the Inception report. Some evaluation questions and findings are shifted to different categories (more relevant) than in the Inception Report. Hence some of the numbers are not in serial order.


Introduction of sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan contributed to maintaining quality of forest and tree resources and provided carbon sequestration function and economic benefits to local farmers.
Learning and behavioral change among policy makers & other forest stakeholders from local to national
Scaling up of SFM practices in forest ecosystems in Uzbekistan generates global environmental and socio-economic benefits
Assumptions:
Project interventions will get priority in the future government programs as these are to support government in its effort to resolve soil erosion, landslide and deforestation problems. It also help government to fulfil its commitments to various international forum on climate change and biodiversity conservation and protected area management. It will strengthen capacity of relevant institution of the government.
Outcome 1: An operational Forest Inventory and Monitoring System (FMS)
Outcome 2: SFM operationalized at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration & improved livelihoods of at least 500 households
Outcome 3: The policy and enabling framework is conductive to state and private investments in SFM
Outcome 4: Project implementation based on BRM and lessons learned/good practices documented and disseminated.
Drivers:
-In line with the national policy.
-In line with the FAO CF and GEF focal area.
Challenges:
-Institutional weaknesses of the executing agencies;
-Financial limitation;
-Methodological weaknesses and information gap
-Legislation does not support long term leasing of forestland.
- Harmonized methodology for data collection
- Trained cadre of technicians to undertake the data collection and info management
- Geo-reference database
- Forest information & monitoring system
-Sustainable management of mountain forests in Dekhanabad, Kitab forestry, Sirdarya forestry and Pap forestry.
- Capacity inside SCF for forest information management is enhanced.
-Awareness and support for improved land tenure is created.
-NAMA for the forestry sector with MRV system
-Amendment to forest legislations
-National Forest program
-Lessons & good practice institutionalized.
- A set of manuals or guidelines, that capture and describe the improved practices, measures and technologies
- M&E plan in place
- Communication and dissemination strategy in place
Major interventions: Technical staff of the relevant sector trained in Forest management and data collection/management, forestry practices and monitoring. Similarly, farmers are provided livelihood support programs amending forestry legislation to make provision for long-term leasing
Context: High impact of climate change, lack information for planning to address forest degradation and soil-erosion issues, weak institutional capacity, no monitoring tools and no monitoring arrangements to generate information on forest condition, biodiversity status etc.

4. MTR questions and Key findings

Relevance

EQ. 1: To what extent FAO and GEF's support to targeted areas has been relevant? How did the project design respond to the needs, priorities and capacities of the project's main counterparts?

Finding 1. FAO and GEF's support to target areas has been relevant and the project is designed as per needs, priorities of Uzbekistan and design has also considered capacity of the main counterparts.

45. The Forest degradation in Uzbekistan is not a new issue but has been ongoing for at least one century. The root cause of deforestation/forest degradation is expansion of agricultural land and the increase in the livestock population. This has affected all types of forestlands from desert and mountains and greatly reduced the possibility of natural regeneration or succession. Though agriculture expansion is no longer a threat to remaining forests, it does remain a barrier to the natural regeneration of forests and to the successful design and implementation of reforestation and afforestation schemes. Depending on the forest types, the drivers of degradation and barriers to natural forest regeneration and success of implementation of reforestation and afforestation schemes varies.

46. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) could reverse degradation, facilitate natural regeneration and lead to large areas being reforested and afforested. SFM would make significant ecological and economic changes, as it would lead to multiple ecological, economical and global benefits, including for local forest users. This also contributes to significant carbon sequestration and return forest cover in Uzbekistan to historical levels. But there are several barriers to SFM in Uzbekistan and they are: i) Inadequate data on forests and the forest cover, ii) Inadequate monitoring capacity, iii) Incomplete forest management plans, iv) Short-term incentives prevailing over long-term objectives, v) Limited land tenure, and vi) Administrative attitude. The design of this project included activities to address these barriers and creates environment to promote SFM. The project design has assessed capacity of the implementing institutions and provisioned trainings to enhance their knowledge on various aspects and relevant institutions are equipped with equipment to enhance their technical capacity. The project also trained local community members in various aspects related to SFM and income generation. The project is fully consistent with the FAO and GEF targets in the field of eradicating hunger, food and nutrition deficiencies, reducing poverty, increasing the resilience and living conditions.

EQ 2: How did the project design respond to the priorities of the FAO country programming Framework and the GEF focal areas/operational project strategies?

Finding 2. The project design responds to the priorities of the FAO country programming Framework and the GEF focal areas and operational project strategies.

47. The project support to the Country Programming Framework (2014-2017) Outcome: Priority Area E: Sustainable management natural resources, Outcome 1: Development of forestry for sustainable management of natural resources and increased income-generation opportunities for rural population. It contributes to Output 1.1: National capacities for afforestation increased, increasing delivering support to nurseries, seed breeding development and staff capacity building, Output 1.3: Support provided to the formulation of GEF project on sustainable management of forests and trees resources based on the broad landscape approach and to the demonstration of new technologies for enhanced processing of wood

and non-wood products. The project also contributes to the Outcome 2: Promotion of sustainable land management supported, and specifically its output 2.1: Best practices on sustainable land management mainstreamed and up-scaled – DLDD and SLM best practices assessed, mainstreamed into national sector policies and programs and implemented in local sites for adoption by key stakeholders.

48. The project contributes to four Strategic Objectives SO1: Contribute to the erudition of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; SO3: Reduce rural poverty; and SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. The project also contributes to FAO's regional result/priority areas: i) food security and nutrition; ii) natural resources management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation; iii) policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade standard-setting and organizations of regional economic cooperation.

49. The project contributes to GEF strategic objectives like: Climate Change Mitigation Program 4- Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in the forest, and other land-use, and support climate change agriculture; Land Degradation 2, Program 3-Landscape Management and Restoration

EQ. 3: Is project expected outcomes congruent to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, indigenous communities etc.)

Finding 3. The project expected outcomes are congruent to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries.

50. The project design thoroughly assessed the problems related to deforestation and capacity of the relevant institutions and communities. Similarly, the project explored opportunities for economic development of the forestry institutions and communities. Several consultations were held with wide range of stakeholders while designing the project. The project was designed based on those information and activities included are relevant to address the gaps in the forestry sector and local economic development. Hence, the project design was able to capture needs and priorities of the local communities as well as forestry sector institutions. Communities who were suffering from degradation of the forest resources were benefited from the activities under component 2, which included community based forestry and economic development activities. The project also had income generating activities like handicraft training for women (e.g., 22 rural women from Kashkadarya and Syrdarya regions trained in environmentally friendly carpet weaving value chain). Similarly, 260 households were trained and involved in SFM within 4 FOs, of which 122 are women. Communities were also trained and supported in mother tree plantation, seed production and medicinal plant cultivation and these activities will provide economic benefit to the communities living close to the forests.

51. The existing 10 years leasing policy was not beneficial to the public so they were not showing interest in managing forests or investing in forestry sector. As per interest of the communities, the project contributed to drafting and approving presidential decree that allowed lease period up to 49 years. After this amendment, several private party applied for leasing forests and showed willingness to invest in the forestry sector. This has also created environment that encourage private sector and government to invest in the forestry sector which contributes to make SFM sustainable beyond the project life.

EQ 4: To what extent was the technical support provided by FAO relevant to the country?

EQ 5: To what extent were FAO's comparative advantages and existing complementarities with other partners taken into account in the project design?

Finding 4 & 5. The technical support provided by FAO was relevant to the country. The project design has considered FAO's comparative advantages and existing complementarities with other partners.

52. FAO promotes sustainable forest management by placing technical expertise in forestry at the disposal of member countries through field projects. It provides guidance to the forest landscape restoration activities and provide intensive experiences to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and the forest degradation as well as from agricultural practices. FAO also supports member countries on a wide range of complementary sustainable forest and land management technologies and approaches (such as integrated forest, land and water management, community based forest management, participatory forestry) by providing training, information, communications, tools and equipment, advisory services for institutional strengthening, policy reform and national programming. FAO is the leading agency in gathering and disseminating data and information related to SFM, which are built upon scientific knowledge, local experience and innovation, available through FAO's web sites and information systems such as FAOSTAF. FAO is also a leading partner in several international initiatives, such as CPF (Collaborative Partnership on Forests) and UNFF (United Nations Forum on Forests). This project was also benefited from these expertise and programmes of FAO.

53. The FAO has considerable experience, expertise and a proven comparative advantage in sustainable forest and land management, the climate change and land degradation focal areas of GEF. FAO has worked extensively on a global, regional and national levels to support sustainable forest management through implementing wide range of the projects in Uzbekistan on the National Forest Programme Development, Strengthening the forest legislation, Development of the National Strategy on non-wood forest products.

54. Since the times of the Soviet Union, forestry sector has suffered from underfunding for reforestation, afforestation, protection and creation of nurseries[1]. Technical support from FAO and funding support from the project to various activities of the 4 FOs has improved the situation and this made the local forestry sector technically strong, equipped and are able to produce more than 400 thousand seedlings for planting more than 2 thousand hectares of lands.

EQ 6: Has there been any changes in the relevance of the project since its formulations? Is there any need to make change in the design/activities to make it more relevant?

Finding 6. The relevancy has not changed since the project formulation and it is still very important and relevant to the project sites and for the country.

55. The problems of the forestry sector and also forest dependent communities explained in Finding 1 and 3 has not changed since the project formulation. The activities identified in the project document to address the issues of forestry sector are still valid so there is no need to make changes in design/activities. Only

[1] ProDoc of Sustainable Management of forests in Mountain and valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP), Project Code: GCP/UZB/004/GEF.

changes needed is in its implementation speed which is slower than expected. Also need to confirm if the service provider (Ormonloyikha) will be able to provide uninterrupted support to the project or not. If future of service provider is still uncertain then better to change the service provider or conduct activities by hiring individual experts.

Effectiveness- Progress towards results

56. To achieve the objective of introducing sustainable forest management for sequestration of carbon and improving the ecosystem services and quality of forest and tree resources, this project had activities like plantation, institutionalize SFM and enhance capacity of forestry sector of the government and local communities to support SFM activities. The project contributed in policy amendment which has created environment for investment in SFM from private sector and also government. The establishment of forest information system will contribute to evidence-based planning for sustainable forest management. The project also conducted various income generation trainings for economic development which will also contribute to decrease dependency on the forest. Of the activities proposed to achieve the objective of the project, by the Mid-term level only about 40% of the activities were accomplished. Finding 11 to 23 explains status or progress of activities set for achieving objective of the project. The project activities will also contribute in achieving four FAO strategic objectives (erudition of hunger, improve services from forestry, reduce rural poverty, and increase resilience of livelihood to threats and crises). It also contributes to GEF strategic objectives like Climate Change Mitigation, enhance carbon stocks in the forest, land management and restoration. It also contribute the country framework outcomes like sustainable management of natural resources.

EQ 11. Has methodology been harmonized for data collection?
EQ 12, Are cadre of technicians trained to undertake the data collection and information management?
EQ 13. Is Geo-referenced database developed?
EQ 14. Has forest information and monitoring system been established?

Finding 11, 12, 13 &14. The harmonization of methodology is partly completed. Field Data collection and evaluation is not initiated yet.

57. Components of the Forest Information system (FIS) are in place. However, they were not activated yet, because the process of data collection and evaluation could not start due to COVID-19 situation in 2020, and also because of delay in hiring National Consultants (difficult to find national consultant that meets criteria) and delayed in recruiting the international consultant. Purchase of tools and materials for effective operation of the GIS laboratory was completed during the MTR period and equipment were installed and data center as GIS lab was in ready position.

58. Compilation of base map production methodology prepared to provide input for Manual I. Similarly, working instructions for Carbon Estimate (CE) survey is prepared. Two trainings were held for the participants from 4 pilot forest organizations (FOs) and 20 technical staff were trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. In the meantime, server of the former TCP/UZB/3503 was found and made available to SCF. However, testing of the forest enterprise level of the 'manual I' was not done. 'Manual II' was not developed. Training and capacity development in the field method (data collection and mapping) was not done. Similarly, training on enterprise level data processing, analysis and result generation was not done. Furthermore, the data acquisition and quality control and data storage and processing was not initiated.

EQ 15. Is sustainable management of mountain forest in Dekhanabad, Kitob forestry, Sirdarya forestry and Pap forestry practiced improving livelihoods of the farmers?

Finding 15. It will take time to show impact of SFM in improving livelihoods of the local farmers. The activities will provide benefits in the future which will improve livelihoods of households and farmers.

59. SFM was introduced (as a co-financing) in 12, 465ha in 4 FOs (target was 36,530ha) and this will lead to the sequestration of 510,100toms of CO_2 annually. This will help to generate money from the global carbon market. To support SFM, training seminar on "Scientific basis for afforestation/reforestation, technology for creating pistachio plantations from planting material with a closed root system, pasture management" and 2-days training on "seed production, soil preparation, management of watershed and pasture, as well as non-wood products" were conducted. Of the 368 households surveyed, 260 household were found involved in activities of SFM within 4 FOs and 122 women from these household were found taking part in the project activities.

60. A draft Action Plan for Pasture and Rangeland is developed but needs substantial revision. The project conducted workshop on "Pasture Management", "Shelterbelt establishment, creation of walnut plantation, seed production, soil preparation and using non-wood product", "sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan" and "washing, disinfecting, scratching the raw wool available locally". The knowledge gained from these workshops and trainings help communities in their economic development activities. The target of the project was to involve 500 households in the process of sustainable forest management and improve their wellbeing. Between 2018-2021, more than 1740 rural residents (Dehkanabad 1020, Kitob 320, Pap 280, Syrdarya Forestry 220) were directly involved in the process of sustainable forest management and the forestland they had leased for 49 years for growing crops, medicinal plants and creating pistachio plantation which will provide economic benefits improving livelihoods of these farmers.

EQ 16. Has the capacity inside SCF for forest management enhanced?

Finding 16. Few trainings on various subjects were conducted to enhance capacity of the SCF for forest management. Also SCF is equipped with GIS lab and field devices.

61. A 2-days seminar was conducted for 46 SCF staff at central and provincial levels on "the role of Management Plan in Forestry Activities in 2019. An online training on base map was also conducted in June 2020. Some trainings already explained above (finding 15) will also enhance capacity of the Forest Organizations in various aspects related to SFM. However, training of 100 officers to use Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) was not conducted. These training, workshops, seminar will enhance capacity of the officers from relevant institution but no assessment was conducted to measure change in knowledge of those officers. The project also established GIS lab and trained 20 technical staff. Similarly, field equipment were provided to generate information for updating the database which support evidence-based planning of forestry activities.

EQ 17. Has awareness and support for improved land tenure is created?

Finding 17. The project conducted some promotional activities to create awareness and support for implementation of the land tenure guidance.

62. The existing leasing provision limits lease period for 10 years for Forest Fund forests users. The existing acts became barrier to non-state investors in investing in any forest activities that require more than 10

years to gain profit. The project contributed to amend in Decree to increase lease period up to 49 years. Various events were conducted to convey this message to the public. The project events were covered in more than 60 programs on TV, published on the internet and print media. Similarly, it is disseminated to 100 forestry enterprises of SFC, ministries, departments, NGOs and international organizations (ICARDA, UNDP, TIKA, and USAID). However, the awareness raising training for 100 officers in the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) was not conducted.

EQ 18. Has the NAMA for the forestry sector or pistachio forest sub-sector, including a national MRV system established?

Finding 18. NAMA was not developed.

63. As per the plan, by the mid-term review point, a draft NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV supposed to be completed but it was not done. Uzbekistan has draft NAMA, which was prepared in 2012 and is under review but does not include MRV. However, to address present situation, the old NAMA need complete revision.

EQ 19. Has the forest legislation amended for legalizing long-term lease of the forest fund land?

Finding 19. The forest legislation is amended for legalizing long-term lease of the forest fund land.

64. There was no state policy in place for sustainable development of forestry in Uzbekistan. In addition, insufficient funding to the sector made forestry sector seek additional funds by leasing of pastures but this has resulted in overgrazing problem. To address these problems, the project made provision to revise forestry policies. The project team prepared a draft resolution, which was approved by the government. This resolution determines norms and procedure for the provision of leasing the forestland up to 49 years. The project experts also contributed to the development of Presidential Decree on the "Convention to Combat Dissertation". An amendment has been made to the forest legislation permitting the transfer of the forest fund lands to long-term lease for up to 49 years. The project team facilitated the process of amendment of Presidential decree. The procedure for leasing the forest fund lands was approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministries, No. 993 dated 13, 2019. Still some project activities related to this, like workshops and preparation of standards and guidelines are yet to be completed. Similarly, the law on pastures has been adopted. This law allows creating associations of pasture users to regulate the issuance of tickets for grazing in the State Forest Fund land.

EQ 20. Has National Forest Program been approved?

Finding 20. The National Forest Program is reflected in the Concept for the development of the forestry system until 2030 and approved.

65. Drafting of National Forest Program (NFP) was initiated in 2008 but was not reviewed and updated. The project included revision of the NFP and facilitation of approval process in its activities. A 2-days meeting organized on 11-12 November 2019 reviewed and revised the NFP and proposed to reflect into the "Concept for the development of the forestry sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030". NFP has been reflected in the development of the forestry sector 2030 and agreed with relevant ministries and agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The "National Forestry Program of Uzbekistan" which was reflected in the "Concept for the development of the forestry system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030" was approved by the Decree of the President No. 4850 of 6 October 2020.

EQ 21. Are Lessons and best practices for component 2 are institutionalized in policy and program?

Finding 21. No lessons and best practices identified for institutionalization in policy and program. Only Gender Action Plan (GAP) and Gender Strategy were developed and endorsed.

66. The target for the mid-term point was to identify 5 lessons and best practices from implementation of component 2 and institutionalize them in policy and program. However, the project has not identified any lessons or best practices to institutionalize in the policy and programs. The project has developed Gender Action Plan (GAP) for 2021-2022 and discussed on it during the workshop organized on 21 June 2019 with the State Forestry Committee management and FOs. The State Committee management endorses the GAP. The GAP was developed based on the assessment of gender related issues, opportunities, needs, priorities and approach to implement the gender programs.

67. The position of Field Gender Coordinators (FGC) is institutionalized by the special decree of the State Committee on Forestry with 30% salary increase. FOs appointed FGCs based on the detailed endorsed ToR and their knowledge on gender equity and women empowerment was enhanced through workshops organized in all 4 FOs. A network of FGCs is also established through online group in Telegram App. and regular communication is maintained. Sex-disaggregated database of FOs' staff, seasonal workers, grazing tickets owners and farmers is developed. FGCs are also trained in maintaining and updating the database. For the monitoring purpose, the baseline information of FOs, human resources of the forestry sector and related community small holders collected in June 2019.

EQ 22. Has a set of manual or guidelines capturing and describing the improved practices, measures and technologies developed?

Finding 22. No manuals or guidelines capturing and describing the improved practices, measures and technologies developed.

68. There was no manuals or guidelines related to SFM in different forest types existed in Uzbekistan. Hence, the project planned to develop and publish at least 2 manuals and 2 guidelines by mid-term point and apply at the project demonstration sites and beyond by the end of the project. However, no manual or guidelines were developed at the time of MTR.

Efficiency

EQ. 24. To what extent the programme implemented efficiently and cost effectively?
EQ 25. How does the project's cost efficiency (cost/time) compare to that of similar projects?
EQ 26. To what extent did the programme implementation mechanism contribute to efficient implementation of main outputs of the project?

Finding 24, 25, 26. The project implementation is moderately cost-effective. The project activities were delayed and not completed the mid-term targets.

69. The project is able to complete few activities and still large amounts of works are left to complete. But

the project spent US$1,855, 580 by 30 June 2021 i.e., 58.2% of total GEF grant while work accomplished is less than 50%. The project activities were delayed because the executing agency did not had sufficient knowledge to implement the project activities like GIS establishment, Forest Information System, SFM practices etc. and this also increased the management costs. In addition, the project had difficulties to find competent national consultant to carry on the project activities and service providers that applied for implementation of activities were weak. The project had to spend long time for searching national consultant and competent service provider. The COVID-19 also affected the project activities. This delay increased administrative costs. The project then decided to sign contract with the Forestry Institution (Ormonloyikha) to implement various activities. However, due to reformation plan of the new government, the future of Forestry Institution was uncertain for quite some time as the new government was planning to dissolve it. Somehow, this institute was saved but massive staff turnover took place, which also affected the project activities. The staffs that were trained by the project were transferred to other places and now project had to train new staffs again. Now the same person is re-elected as president of Uzbekistan and he always wanted to make changes so people suspect on future of the Forestry Institution once again. This uncertainty of service provider and delay in executing activities will increase management costs (administrative staff salary, office expenses, rents etc.).

EQ.32. Has the all partners fulfilled the commitments they made in agreement efficiently?

Finding 32. Most of the partners fulfilled their commitment in agreement partly.

70. The co-financing amount made available to the project is presented in the table below. More detail on government funding is explained following the table.

Source of Co-financing	**Name of Co-financer**	**Type of Co-financing**	**Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement/approval (USD)**		**Actual amount materialised as of MTR (USD)**		**Expected total disbursement by the end of the project**
			Cash	**Kind**	**Cash**	**Kind**	
GEF	GEF		3,187,023	-	1,855,580	-	
FAO	FAO		953,000	100,000		608,000	
Gov. Uzbekistan	GoU		-	17,370,620	-	12,736,310	
Donor	GIZ		227,531	-	200,000*	-	
Research Institute	ICRAF		-	15,000	-	-	

*Contribution recorded in Euros

- SFC provided co-financing amount of US$4,748,009 between 2018 and 2021 i.e., 65% of the total committed in-kind contribution amount ($7,301,107). The First Deputy Chairman of the Committee was responsible for the implementation of the project activities on the ground and the Head of the Department of International Projects and Ecotourism, chief foresters, a cadaster specialist and gender specialist in each of the 4 Forest Organizations of the project sites were involved in the project

implementation. The government also provided building of the Design Institute "O'rmonloyikha" for the Data Center and the GIS laboratory of the project. The Regional Training Center in the Kitab forestry office is being renovated for the use of the project.

- Between 2018 and 2021, the Syrdarya forestry sector provided US$1,723,773 in-kind co-financing, which is 66% of the total committed amount (US$2,594,819). This covered activities like creation of the forest shelterbelts in an area of 115 ha reforestation work on 200 ha and more than 10 ha of fuel wood plantations.
- Between 2018 and 2021, the Kitab forestry office provided in-kind co-financing of US$2325691 i.e., 66% of the total committed amount (US$3,531,587). This covered activities like reforestation work in 2,225 hectares, new pistachio and almond plantations in 125 hectares, fuel wood more than 65 hectares, forest shelterbelts in 150 hectares.
- Dehkanabad forestry office provided in-kind co-financing of US$2,325,979 during the period of 2018 to 2021. This amount is about 86% of the total committed in-kind co-financing amount (US$1,526,364). This support contributed to activities like new plantations of pistachio and almond in 2,100 hectares and more than 100 hectares of plantations of medicinal plants.
- Between 2018 and 2021, the Pap forestry office provided in-kind co-financing of US$1,612,858 i.e., 67% of the total committed co-financing (US$2,416,743). In particular, reforestation work was carried out on an area of 1,250 hectares, new plantations of pistachios and almonds were created on an area of 200 hectares, more than 86 hectares of plantations of medicinal plants.
- GIZ Regional Program on Sustainable and Climate-sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia confirmed their contribution of Euro 200,000 by the end of February 2021 for SFM program and was disbursed for training and the project support activities according to Implementation Agreement with SFC.
- ICRAF supported in research activities related to mulberry and silk production in the Republic of Uzbekistan and this is widely adopted by the forest organizations.
- FAO CO provided administrative support, office facilities and equipment, which will be equivalent in-kind US$55,000, and in-kind contribution of US$553,000 for implementation of 3 TCP project.

Sustainability

EQ 23. Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the achievement of the project's outcomes and objectives?

Finding 23. Few risks could prevent future progress and the achievement of the project's outcomes and

71. The SFM planning needs information on forests and socio-economic aspects related to the forest. The outdoor data collection activity of the component 1 was not initiated and it could take about 12 months for data collection, analysis and conclusion drawing. The delay in initiation of data collection could risk SFM activities. The project end in January 2023 i.e., about 14 months left for the remaining activities.

72. Due to the president's reconciliation plan, the Forestry Institution (Ormonloyikha) was almost demolished and was inactive for long time which affected the project implementation. Latter it was not demolished but staff turnover took place which removed staff that were trained in data collection and analysis. Same president is re-elected so there is fear among stakeholders from the forestry sector that he may change structure of the forestry sector and that could affect the project implementation. An amendment of the forestry policy regarding leasing of the forests created suitable environment for private and government

investment and this will make economic sustainability of SFM in Uzbekistan. Similarly, enhancing capacity of the forest staff through training and also equipping the forest organization with equipment and training local communities on various aspects of SFM strengthen institutional and governance sustainability.

EQ 33. What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?

EQ 34. What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and its benefits (financial, socio-economic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects), as well as risks identified in the project document?

Finding 33 & 34. Sustainability of the project results and its benefits are likely beyond the project life.

73. The project trained forestry staff and also community members in various aspects of SFM, so its institutional sustainability is likely. Similarly, the long leasing period of the forest encourage private sector as well as government investment in SFM and also economic returns from the economic trees to communities and the forest organizations supports SFM and due to these, socio-economic sustainability is likely. The project conducted several trainings to communities as well as government staff. These trainings also contributes in socio-economic sustainability as well as governance beyond the project life. The project is developed to improve the forest health and manage it in a sustainable way which through sequestration contributes in reducing carbon dioxide from the air. Also it contributes in reducing landslides in the mountain areas so environment sustainability is also likely.

74. The project has established a GIS laboratory and trained 20 technicians for 4 FOs to establish an operational Forestry Inventory (FI) and Monitoring System to support evidence-based planning. 20 people were trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. The project also conducted various trainings, workshops and seminars to train on mother tree plantation, soil preparation, nursery management, tree plantation, watershed management, pasture management, shelterbelt establishment, seed production etc. The project developed methodology for monitoring forest to support SFM and various aspects of SFM. Developed guidelines for preparation of multipurpose management plans for sustainable forest, pasture management, and draft action plan for pasture and rangeland management. Special trainings targeting women was conducted on handicrafts making and weaving carpets. A three - year road map to establish a Center of handicrafts and carpet weaving is also developed. The project has plan to train 100 government staff in Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT). Similarly, 4 farmers (including 1 women) provided with mini tractor to support their agricultural activities. Besides local government staff, local farmers were also involved in the trainings on various aspects of SFM. These activities will help to establish technical knowledge and capacity at the government institutions (national & local) and community levels which will contribute in making the project result sustainable beyond the project life.

75. The project also contributed to amend the forest legislation permitting transfer of the forest fund lands for long-term lease i.e., up to 49 years. This will encourage state and private sector investment in SFM activities. The project also trained rural women in handicraft making which help to improve their household economy, make them affordable to alternatives of the forest products, and thereby reduce pressure on the forest. Training staff from forestry institution and local communities in various aspects of SFM will assure technical backup for SFM beyond the project life. The project facilitated review and revising of the National Forest Program and the Concept for the Development of the Forestry Sector until

2030. Now, the National Forest Program is reflected in the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 and approved by the Presidential Decree. This will make SFM activities sustainable beyond the project life. These activities will help to create conducive environment for SFM and investment of private sector.

76. The only risk is that the project may not be able to complete its targeted activities even in the extended timeframe if the implementation speed is not improved. If they are left incomplete then that may affect the sustainability of the project results.

EQ 35. Has any project results, lessons or experiences have been replicated (in different geographic areas) or scaled up (in the same geographic area, but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources)? What results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated or scaled up in the near future?

Finding 35. The project's good practices are not replicated yet.

77. The project has not replicated good practices yet. The learning from implementation of SFM in the first half of the project will be used to implement remaining forestry programs in the second half of the project. By the MTR point, the SFM was introduced in 12,465 ha (5,125 ha in Dekhkanabad, 4,750 ha in Kitab, 1,730 ha in Pap and 860 ha in Sirdarya) and in the remaining timeframe of the project with the experience from the implementation of SFM in first half, it will be introduced in the remaining 72,270 ha area in the second half of the project. Based on learnings from the income generation activities, it will be expanded to cover more communities in the second half.

78. World Bank and ADB used the results obtained by the project in development of various forestry projects. Mainly, information related to the creation of GIS laboratory and information systems, technical maps for the creation of plantation of pistachio, almond and nut crops, maps for the creation of fuel wood plantations, reforestation technologies for the mountain areas, the procedures for selection of pilot sites, the gender strategy of the project will be used by the new projects. The project experience was also used in the development of the project document for the GEF-7 grant "Sustainable Forest and Rangelands Management in the Dry land Ecosystem of Uzbekistan".

EQ 36. Has the project established sustainable institutional arrangements or cross-sector partnerships?

Finding 36. The project has established sustainable institutional arrangements and cross-sector partnerships.

79. The project strengthened forestry sector institutions by providing trainings and equipment. Data Center and a GIS laboratory was developed and trained 20 specialists to run it. Similarly, community based institutions were also strengthened though training on various subjects related to Sustainable forest management and economic development. Various policies like leasing forest for 49 years to local communities and concept for the development of the forestry system until 2030 and the Gender Strategy and Action plans were approved and they will contribute to institutionalize the results from this project beyond the project life. Several project proposals were developed utilizing the experience from this project and these will also contribute to make results from this project sustainable or further contribute to establishing sustainable institutes.

EQ 37. Has project developed exit strategy or planning to develop?

Finding 37. The project has not developed exit strategy yet but planning to develop in the future.

80. The project has only completed first half of the project timeframe. As per information received from the project team, the exit strategy will be developed in the second half of the project. They assured that they would include information regarding arrangements for sustainability of the project results in the exit strategy.

Factors affecting Progress

Financial management and co-financing

EQ 38. Is the co-financing being made available to the project as planned to contribute to meeting the project outputs, outcomes and objectives?

EQ 39. What have been the financial-management challenges of the project? To what extent has pledged co-financing been delivered? Has any additional leveraged co-financing been provided since implementation?

Finding 38 & 39. The co-financing was made available to the project as planned to contribute to meeting the projects outs, outcomes and objectives. Committed amount against the amount received by mid-term level is provided in Annex VII.

81. The co-financing was made to the project as per planned. There was no complain from PMO regarding disbursement of money from FAO. By the MTR point, GEF made US$2,150,000 available and FAO provided US$55,000 for administrative support, office facilities and equipment. The project also received US$553,000 from FAO for the project implementation. The GIZ made Euro 200,000 for the project activities. The ICRAF provided research support for research on mulberry and silk production. The information from this research is being used widely by the forestry organizations. The government of Uzbekistan made in-kind contribution equivalent to US$11,723,210 for the project implementation (detail on co-financing is provided in Finding 32 and also in Annex VII). Besides these, there was no additional leveraged co-financing made available to the project. There was no financial challenge experienced by the project team besides initial confusion regarding fund allocations, which was resolved after coordination with GEF.

Project execution

EQ 27 Has project management been able to adopt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of programme implementation?

Finding 27. The project changed its implementation strategy to adopt the changing condition owing to post presidential election situation.

82. The project had plan to conduct trainings related to the forestry (e.g., nursery management, reforestation/afforestation etc.) by hiring consultant but due to lack of competent national consultants and also changed political situation it was decided to conduct these activities through service providers like Forestry Institution. Unlike the project's strategy to improve efficiency through service providers, it was more delayed due to political reasons, which affected Forestry Institution. There is limitation of competent service provider and national consultants in Uzbekistan so choice to improve efficiency of programme implementation is also limited. The project development team should have assessed

availability of service providers (for research, training, data collection and analysis) and consultant within the country and made strategy and arrangements to address these problems.

EQ 29. Has communication and dissemination strategy developed and implemented?

Finding 29. A communication plan has been developed and implemented.

83. The project has developed a communication and dissemination plan. A communication consultant was hired in June 2019 to develop and lead communication activities. Communication strategy was developed for June 2019 to December 2020. In accordance with FAO guidelines, the project webpage was located inside corporate FAO.org website. However, due to the prolonged migration of corporate site from one platform to another (Drupal), the process has been delayed.

84. Leaflets with the project information has been developed and disseminated during every training and field programs to the local community and representatives of various ministries and agencies. FAO projects are not allowed to open separate social media accounts because one corporate social media account policy does not allow. Hence, the project activities were highlighted through UN in Uzbekistan's social media. Communication priorities and channels were identified to disseminate the information to various stakeholders including national partners, policy makers and rural population near the project demonstration sites as well as public. The project developed contact list of mass media representatives for increasing outreach. Through the interviews in mass media and press release on activities of the project, the project disseminated information on the project activities to wide audiences. The project also invited Freiburg University team to visit the project sites and the Dunyo Bo'ylab national TV channel covered it on 12 October 2019 (https://youtu.be/46t_ssKzK5Y). The importance of concept proposal for restoration of degraded forests was highlighted in the media to generating awareness among wide audience (https://youtu.be/LpaReStVdMM).

85. To generate interest of researchers, professors and postgraduate students at the Tashkent State Agrarian University, an interaction program was organized on 30 September 2019 and was widely covered by the national media (list of links provided in Annex IX). The International Day of Forest 2020 with a tree planting was organized to raise awareness about the importance of the forests for biodiversity conservation. A photo archive of the project was established covering seminars, trainings, meetings and tours conducted by the project. The FAO Uzbekistan newsletters also cover the project activities.

EQ 30. To what extent has the project built on synergies and complementarities with other forestry or biodiversity projects, partnerships, etc. and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?

Finding 30. The project had built on synergies and complementarities with other forestry or biodiversity projects.

86. The synergies built for complementarities were as follows (level of involvement of stakeholders is available in the Annex VI, result matrix showing achievements at mid-term level):

- Within the framework of the FAO / GEF project (CACILM-2) "Integrated natural resource management in drought-prone and saline agricultural landscapes of Central Asia and Turkey", the following joint activities were implemented:

- Seminar trainings on the creation of pistachio plantations and a nursery in the Kamashi forestry enterprise of the Kashkadarya region with the involvement of the local population.
- Joint work on sustainable pasture management with specialists from the Samarkand Institute of Pastures and Desert Ecology.
- Organization of a study trip to USA to study the pasture management
- Assistance in organizing the "Million Fruit Trees" campaign.

- Within the framework of the Central Asia Desert Initiative (CADI) project implemented by FAO "Conservation and Sustainable Use Cold Winter Deserts in Central Asia", the following activities were jointly implemented:
  - Joint construction of greenhouses in the forest organizations of Bukhara, Navoi, Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan regions.
  - joint development of the model on the joint use of the forest lands on the basis of public-private partnership."
  - Joint holding of a training seminar for employees of the forestry organizations to teach the program "Interpretations of high-resolution images using Collect Earth software tools"
  - Organization of a study tour to the United States on the sustainable management of national natural parks and urban forests.

- Within the framework of cooperation with the GIZ project, a study trip to Turkey was conducted to teach sustainable forest management, the creation of forests, nurseries and plantations of fast-growing tree species, landscaping of desert areas, combating degradation and desertification.

- Within the framework of the TCP/UZB/3601 project: Demonstration of diversification and sustainable crop production intensification, the project team took part in the International conference "Strategies for promoting conservation agriculture in Central Asia" to study the experience of foreign countries with "zero" tillage.

- Within the framework of the TCP / UZB-3802 project, participation in the development of the "FAO Methodology for Inventory of Lands in Desert Zones of Uzbekistan"

- Together with the NGO FOUNDATION "Meros" participation in events within the framework of the campaign for planting trees in the settlements of the republic, more than 10 thousand people involved in planting seedlings.

- Together with the International Public Organization "Zamin", the development of the "Social Health Park" project for young people and the local population. Participation in an environmental campaign to attract the youth of Uzbekistan for the protection of the flora and fauna of the country.

- Organization with Tashkent Agrarian University:

  - action "Getting to know FAO Goals of the project" Sustainable management of mountain and valley forests in Uzbekistan ",
  - Organization of the holiday "Day of mentors and teachers" with a quiz for the 1st year of the forestry faculty.

- Organization together with the American Forest Service and SFC:

- "Summer forest camp" for students of the forestry faculty of the Tashkent Agrarian University on sustainable forest management and ecotourism.
- Study tour to the United States on the sustainable management of national natural parks and urban forests.
- Study trip to the USA to study pasture management experience
- Online negotiations on the development of a program of cooperation in the field of forestry with FAO and SFC.

- Together with SFC, the annual holding of: "International Day of Forests", "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought" and other events.

- Organization together with the UNDP/GEF project "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Forest Management" joint roundtable on sustainable forest management in Dekhkanabad forestry.

EQ 40. Has the execution partners' agreement been applied efficiently?
Finding 40. The execution partner's agreement was applied with some shortcoming.

87. The State Commission on Forestry is the executing agency of this project. It has also contracted service provider like the Forestry Institution to deliver services in training Forestry staff and communities on forestry related areas. The project implementation was delayed due to weak technical capacity of the executing agency and uncertainty created in the future of the Forestry Institute due to change in the government. The Forestry Institute was inactive for some time and that has delayed implementation of the project activities. Similarly, late start of the project implementation, delay in hiring of international and national consultants, delayed procurement processes, and COVID-19 restriction has resulted in significant delay in implementation of the project activities. Lack of knowledge with the executing agency regarding sequencing activities has also affected the project implementations e.g., component 1 supposed to be completed first because it affects SFM planning process under the component 2. The component 1 includes long fieldwork (12months), and delay of activities of this component has affected the planning process of the SFM of component 2.

EQ. 41. How do the various stakeholders see their own engagement with the project?

Finding 41. The various stakeholders involved in the project were satisfied from their engagement with the project.

88. The various stakeholders involved in the project took this an opportunity to learn various techniques related sustainable forestry. They were happy to be part of this project and willing to contribute more in the coming days. The local authorities Khokimiyats expressed their interest to expand these activities to train more local people of their areas. Villagers showed interest in installing water tanks in arid mountain areas for promoting plantations, nursery development, agro-forestry and afforestation. The NGOs involved in this project are interested to involve in more activities of the project and involvement in joint implementation of the project activities.

EQ 42. Were local actors – civil society or private sector involved in the project design or implementation and what was the effect on the project results?

Finding 42. Community members, civil society organization, NGOs and private sectors were involved in the project design and implementation.

89. The project design involved wide range of stakeholders including NGOs, Civil society organizations, community members and private sectors. They were also involved in the project implementation as per their relevant expertise. Their involvement in the project design contributed to bringing various issues related to forestry sectors in the design, which helped to identify appropriate activities to address them. Similarly, various risks were identified with their help and provisioned appropriate mitigation measures. Their involvement also contributed in implementation of the project activities. Community involvement in plantation, nursery management, afforestation and reforestation were very effective and their involvement made the process very smooth. Voluntary contribution from communities and other stakeholders also made the project activities cost-effective. Their involvement also contributes in making outcome of the project sustainable.

EQ 43. Is project on track as it was originally designed or have there been delays in the project approval, implementation and reporting process? What are the major reasons of the delay?

EQ 44. To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and administering the project?

EQ 45. How well is the PMO functioning?

EQ 46. Are there sufficient human resources, financial resources, etc. for the PMO operation and does it have the capacity to support the project implementation?

EQ47. What have been the main challenges in terms of the project management administration?

EQ 48. How well have risks been identified and managed?

Finding 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48. The project implementation is behind the schedule. PMO was functioning slowly in the beginning but latter gaining speed. Risks were identified and mitigation measures are provisioned.

90. The project implementation was scheduled to start from March 2018. No change was made in the project activities or the pilot sites. However, in the initial year, the executing agency (including its departments) was in lack of necessary equipment and technical knowledge to implement the project activities. The procurement of machinery and equipment for component 1 of the project was not finalized. Allocation of funds for the procurement of equipment and inventory for the Regional Training Centre (Kitab FO) was not stipulated in the budget of the project. In addition, the budget did not stipulate the cost of hiring or acquiring an additional 2 cars for the project team and field works. There was no budget to provide financial support and material incentives (support) for activities with households/farmers. Latter Skype meeting was arranged with the GEF unit FLO (Hernan Gonzales) and LTO (Peter Pechacek) and received their approval to make changes in the budget of 2019 for addressing the financial problem. The delay in hiring of international consultant to conduct GIS trainings delayed the training activities and data collections. Latter consultant to train on various aspects related to forestry and evidence based planning were hired and initiated the activities. Similarly, the procurement of GIS related equipment was initiated and staff were also trained in data collection, analysis and GIS techniques.

91. In 2020, due to COVID-19 the field data collection and other field activities were affected. Because of these problems, the project was not able to meet the MTR targets. The project analyzed potential risks during the project design and proposed mitigation measures. Risks were monitored every year and

updated mitigation status. The mitigation measures were effectively applied while implementing the project and this helped the project to avoid risks.

92. The project team was able to receive strong support from the leadership of SFC at the high level i.e. Chairman of the State Committee, deputy chairman, heads of Departments and Directors of the forest organizations. The project produced reports as per the provision and information was ventilated to the project steering committee regularly. The project also conducted awareness generation activities as per the plan and used print as well as electronic Medias.

Project implementation and oversight

EQ 49. To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and operational) during the project identification, formulation, approval, start-up and execution? What kind of support or changes do the execution partners expect from FAO?

Finding 49. FAO delivered oversight, supervision, and backstopping. FAO is GEF agency of the project.

93. FAO has long experience from Forestry and agriculture sectors. Its support to this project was relevant and its comparative advantages were considered while development of this project. The project is benefited from FAO's expertise and experience in developing methodologies and practices and providing technical assistance and capacity building in the sustainable management of the forest and the agriculture resources. Capacity of the relevant department within the State Committee on Forestry (STF) was assessed in the beginning of the project design and based on that capacity enhancement programs were provisioned.

94. As financial and operational executing agency, FAO provided procurement services and financial management services for GEF resources. FAO supervision was accomplished through standard procedures and undertaken competently. FAO supervised and provided technical guidance for the overall implementation of the project. The administration of GEF grants was in accordance with FAO rules and procedures and in accordance with the agreement between FAO and the GEF Trustee. FAO team were involved in the project implementation monitoring in accordance with the project document, approved work plans, budgets, review of progress and performance against the work plans, and completion of the tracking tools. FAO support was focused towards achieving targeted results, support was appropriate, adequate and timely, and the project staff were satisfied by the quality of FAO support. Annual planning was done on time (except the 1st year because inception workshop was delayed) with active participation of stakeholders. Similarly, risk management options were identified in close consultation of partners and experts and the project was able to manage risk efficiently.

95. The project had difficulties in finding suitable candidate for the position of National Consultant on Forest Restoration. Due to this, development of appropriate technical specifications for procurement of seeds, seedlings and cutting for the 4 pilot sites was affected. In addition, the project missed the fall of 2020 for implementing the forestry related activities. Similarly, the forest organizations had financial problem at the regional level, weak institution base and technical equipment. Delay in procurement of items for component 1 also affected the establishment of Data Centre and this will also affect component 2 as these components are interrelated.

Stakeholder relationship and partnerships

EQ 50. How do the various stakeholders see their own engagement with the project?

Finding 50. Stakeholders are happy to have this project. They are satisfied from their engagement with the project.

(Due to template of the report and subject criteria, some questions repeat in more than one subject category. This question is already answered in finding 41.)

Knowledge Management, awareness raising and communication

EQ 51. How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience?

Finding 51. The project was communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and public.

96. The project has hired communication consultant to develop and lead the communication activities. The communication strategy (communication plan) was developed and implemented. The project reports were disseminated to all stakeholders on a regular basis. The communication plan has clear strategy regarding communication priorities and channels to disseminate the project information to various stakeholders including national partners, policy makers, and rural population near the project demonstration sites as well as other public. The contact list of mass media representatives was formed for increasing outreach.

97. The project steering committee (PSC) which is represented by various stakeholders were regularly briefed on the progress of the project and issues or challenges faced by the project were discussed. The project also produced 4 brochures summarizing key ideas of the project and disseminated among National Partners, pilot COs and communities. As per FAO guidelines, it was decided to locate the project webpage inside corporate FAO.ORG website. Leaflets on the project information has been published and disseminated during training and filed visit programs to communities and representatives from various ministries and agencies. Key ideas on nursery concept, forest restoration concept, Pasture Management Strategy were summarized and published in four brochures and disseminated among the National partners and pilot FOs. A special workshop was held from 3 to 5 September 2020 for women from the Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan to make them aware on non-wood crafts. The Uzbekistan media (links of Medias are provided in the Annex VI & ix) also covered it.

98. The project has not developed social media account because FAO projects are not allowed to open a separate social media accounts due to one corporate social media policy. Hence, the project activities were highlighted through UN in Uzbekistan's social media. Besides airing news or documentary on the project activities, several live interviews on television were organized on subjects related to decrees and the project activities and strategies.

Design and M&E (design and implementation)

EQ 7: To what extent is the project's results framework/log-frame (i.e., theory of change, intervention logic, indicators etc.) appropriate to reach the project's goal and objectives?

EQ 8: Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes?

EQ 9: Is the project's casual logic coherent and clear?

EQ 10: To what extent are the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed?

Finding 7, 8, 9, 10. The result framework (RF) has clear objective, component, outcome and outputs. The project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes.

99. The forest degradation situation in Uzbekistan has not changed since the formulation of the project. Similarly, the barriers to SFM (explained in finding 1) are also not changed. Hence, the relevancy of the project has not changed and still important to the forestry sector of Uzbekistan.

100. The Theory of Change (ToC) was briefly presented in the project document. The concept and strategy with which the project was developed was appropriate to reach the proposed goal and objectives. The project was designed to address deforestation/forest degradation problems in Uzbekistan and the design has included activities that are needed to address the shortcomings in the management of the forest. The activities included in the project design helps to create environment for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) for economic as well as ecological benefits (including climate change). The objective, components, outcomes and overall logic of the project is coherent and clear. It is understandable, verifiable, testable, plausible and inclusive. The result framework (RF) was appropriate to address country's specific needs and priorities and the State Committee on Forestry selected programs as per their needs. The objectives, components and outputs are clear and appropriate to the issues. The mid-term level target indicators were also in the result framework so the MTR team used them for the judgment of mid-term level achievement. The activities and outputs were clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe of the project. Inception workshop did not make any change of activities or targets of the result framework. In addition, no suggestion was made to change indicators or targeted activities based on the implementation experience. The objectives of the project and components are clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe.

101. The logic of the SFM project as expressed in its concept was as follows: if (a) information management systems for sustainable forest management is established; if (b) multifunctional forest management is practiced; (c) if sustainability and upscaling of SFM is ensured; and if (d) monitoring, evaluation and knowledge-sharing of the project outcomes is maintained; then (e) the objective of the reversal of the current situation of degradation and switching forestry in Uzbekistan onto a path of increased forests, increased social and economic benefits from forests,, increased carbon sequestration and an improved quality of existing forest will be achieved.

EQ 28. Is project's M&E plan and system in place?

EQ 52, Is the project's M&E system practical and sufficient? How has stakeholder engagement and gender assessment been integrated into the M&E system?

EQ 53. Was the project M&E system operating as per the M&E plan? Has information been gathered in systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies?

Finding 28, 52 & 53. The M&E plan was in place and providing inputs to PIRs, PPRs and ongoing MTR. The project M&E system was operating as per the plan and the information gathering was done according to the appropriate methodologies?

102. The monitoring system was established and monitoring was done by Program associate from FAO CO on a regular basis. PIR and biannual reports are submitted regularly GEF coordination Unit.

103. The project design included good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan that is comprehensive in its depth and scope. The project had a Result Framework (RF) with clear objectives, components to monitor achievement and appropriate to the issues and designed considering the timeframe of the project. The output targets were realistic compared to the budget and timeframe. A baseline scenario was clearly developed to compare the achievement of the interventions. Roles and responsibilities of the partners were made clear from the project design phase. The indicators of the RF were SMART.

104. The project had a regular monitoring and reporting systems and they were very practical and sufficient. Monitoring also assessed gender aspects and monitoring was done as per M&E plan. FAO had responsibility of monitoring progress against the work plan and financial monitoring. The progress monitoring was done through half-yearly and annual reporting to FAO. The annual work plans have been developed at the end of each year with inputs from the project staff. The major findings and observations of all half-yearly reports have been given in an annual report covering the period July to June, the Project Implementation Review (PIR), which is also submitted by the project team to FAO for review and comments, followed by final submission to GEF. All reports were presented to the Project Steering Committee members and through these means, the key national government partners have been kept abreast of the project's implementation progress. The project produced 3 AWP, 3PPR and 2 PIR submitted and one PIR was in draft form. Similarly, 6 semi-annual financial reports and 3 PSC were also submitted. The project team visited field on regular basis to monitor the program implementation and progress (except the period of Covid19 restriction on mobility). Since COVID19 pandemic, field visits were affected. The project findings will contribute to sustainable management of forests of mountain and valley of Uzbekistan of global significances. It will also contribute in conservation of biodiversity of global significances including conservation of forests of corridor functions. The introduction of SFM will ensures sustainability of forests and its biological resources of global significances.

Cross-cutting issue

EQ 54: To what extent were gender equality considerations and Human Rights reflected in the project design?

EQ 55: To what extent were gender consideration (equality) 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? How was Gender in decision making?

Finding 54 & 55. The gender equality is considered and reflected in the project design and gender action plan was developed.

105. Due to immigration of males to cities and to other countries in search of labor, a large number of households are headed by female. In line with the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and the GEF-6 approach on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, gender considerations are given

importance in this project. The project designed to empower women and to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the forestry sector. The project acknowledging gender differences it has assessed and comprehensively understood them. The role and potentiality of women in the forestry sector was analyzed and based on that activities were identified to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Throughout the project implementation, gender equality was given priority. Since the project activities improves household economy through plantation of economic plants and promotion of handicrafts, its design contributes to the human right of living comfortable life with better economy.

106. The project recognized that women are a significant actor in the forestry, agricultural and handicrafts sectors, and more specifically, the important role they could play in slowing down impact of climate change if involved. During the project preparation, local communities including women were actively involved in the project related decision-making processes. Participatory practice was strongly adopted with emphasis on gender equality throughout the project implementation processes. Selection of farmers followed the criteria developed to ensure gender and social concerns are met.

107. The project developed Gender Action plan with concrete targets and indicators to measure the progress against the goals and tasks set in the Gender Strategy. The achievement of the gender component of the SFM project were reflected in the regional FAO newsletter and available on FAO regional website (http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/ru/c/1339036/). The project hired gender expert who visited all project sites and assessed problems of women and their need. The assessment also explored economic development opportunities available in those areas and based on the assessment finding, income generation activities targeting women were developed and implemented. Based on the 4 workshops gender equality and women empowerment, a ToR for gender coordinators was developed and based on that FOs appointed Field Gender Coordinators (FGC). The FGCs status is institutionalized by the special decree of the SCF with 30% salary increase. On September 3-5, 2020, workshops were held for women from the regions of Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan, where they learnt to produce non-wood crafts. Out of 4 mini tractor drivers trained in technical aspects of its use, one was female driver from Dehkanabad, who also received mini-tractor from the project. Of the total 260 household actively involved in SFM (in 4FOs), 122 women besides SFM, also took part in various activities of the project.

Environmental and Social issues

EQ 57. To what extent was environmental and social concerns were 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 exits) has been adhere to?

Finding 57. The project has taken into consideration to environmental and social concerns in the design and implementation.

108. Forest degradation has been ongoing for more than a century in Uzbekistan. This has affected all types of forestland and has reduced the possibility of natural succession or regeneration. This has also reduced the ability of the forests to store and sequestrate carbon leading to loss of carbon in the forest ecosystem. The project is designed to address environmental and socio-economic problems of Mountain and valley areas of Uzbekistan. The project has activities to address these environmental problems. These environmental problems have also created several socio-economic problems in the rural communities' livelihood because their livelihood is highly dependent on natural resources including the forest and rangeland. The project design analyzed both environmental and socio-economic issues and identified

suitable activities to address them. Each year, the project reviewed risks including environmental and social and mitigation measures were carefully adopted. While doing that it also ensured Environmental and Social standards for social and environmental sustainability in programmes. The project design provisioned activities to establish operational Forest Inventory and Monitoring system for encouraging evidence based management. Similarly, the project included capacity enhancement programmes and income generation activities for households to support Sustainable Forest Management. To create conducive environment for state and private investment, the project has activities to amend policies and plans. With the support from the project, amendment has already been made to the forest legislation permitting the transfer of the forest fund lands to long-term lease for up to 49years and this has created environment for investment from private and government in the forestry sector making forest management sustainable. The project conducted trainings on various income generating aspects like medicinal plant cultivation, traditional handicrafts which provided economic benefits to the communities and will also reduce dependency on the forest. The economic trees will provide more economic benefits to the community and also to local forest organizations. SFM is piloted in 12,465ha in 4FOs.

EQ 58. Does project contribute to SDGs?
Finding 58. The project contributes to several SDGs directly or indirectly.

109. The cultivation of economic plants, improvement in rangeland, increased tenure of leasing forestlands and other income generation activities (handicrafts) help to increase income of the farmers. Increase in economic status of communities contributes to SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 8 (Economic growth). Similarly, the project implementation has given equal priority to women's participation and involved women in every activity. Therefore, the project also contributes to SDG 5 (Gender equity). The reforestation/afforestation helps in biodiversity conservation and in carbon sequestration which contributes to SDG 13 (Climate action) and 15 (Life on land). Indirectly with increased economic return from economic plants and handicrafts, it also contributes to health (SDG 3) of beneficiary household and their children's education (SDG 4).

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

110. **Conclusion 1- Strategic relevance**: The forests of Uzbekistan have been suffering from deforestation/forest degradation from many years. The expansion of agriculture land and the increase of the livestock population were the cause of deforestation and this pressure had affected regeneration or succession of forests. To address these problems, the responsible authority had limited technical strength and budget. SMF could reverse degradation, facilitate natural regeneration and lead to afforestation. However, there are several barriers to SFM in Uzbekistan e.g., data gap, lack of incentives, weak forest management plans etc. This project was designed to address these barriers and introduce SFM to decrease deforestation and support carbon sequestration and economic benefits for local communities and government agency.

The project's overall objectives and interventions were in line with the FAO strategic Framework (SO-1, SO-2, SO-3 & SO-5). It also contributes to regional result/priority areas and the Country Programming Framework outcome 1. The project also contributes to GEF/LDCF/SCCF strategic objectives CC-M2 (programme 4) and support climate smart agriculture LD2 (Program3), SFM3.

111. **Conclusion 2- Effectiveness** (progress towards results)

The project is heading towards achieving its outcomes and is on the track but the implementation speed is less than expected. The project has established GIS laboratory but field data collection was not initiated. The development of manuals and testing in the forest enterprise were delayed. Trainings were conducted for 20 technicians from 4 pilot forest organizations to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. Training and capacity development on field methods (data collection and mapping) was not done. Training on enterprise level data processing, analysis and result generation was also not done. The SFM was introduced in 12,456 ha in 4 FOs (40% of target) and conducted seminars on afforestation/reforestation, seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures and non-wood products. Training was also conducted targeting rural women in "development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities. A draft Action Plan for Pasture and Rangeland is developed which need substantial revision. The project contributed to address water problem in the Dekhkanabad and Pap FO by supplying water through 5km long polyethylene pipes and stored 40 tons reserve on the mountain slopes to grown plants. However, SFM in 16,200ha for economic tree species and SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2,995 ha was not done.

112. The project conducted seminars and workshops to discuss on the role of management plan in the forestry sector and baseline map etc. The project events were shown in more than 60 programs on TV, published in electric and print Medias. The project conducted meeting to discuss the National Forest Programme and the Concept for the development of the Forestry Sector until 2020. Currently, the National Forest Programme has been reflected in the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 and approved by Presidential Decree. Gender action plan is developed, discussed with State Forestry Committee management and with FOs and SFC; management endorses the final version of GAP. Development of NAMA for forestry sector was not done. The project developed M&E system and implemented. PIR, PPR and semi-annual financial reports were developed and reported every six months. A communication plan was also developed and implemented. The project produced 4 brochures summarizing key ideas of the documents on the forest restoration concept, nursery concept, Pasture Management Strategy. The project information was disseminated to wide audiences through distribution of reports, brochures, program information through electronics and print media. It also used UN Uzbekistan's social media to disseminate information on the project.

113. **Conclusion 3- Efficiency**: In the starting phase, the executing agency had limited technical knowledge and capacity to implement the project activities. The executing agency (including its departments) was also in lack of necessary equipment and technical knowledge to implement the project activities. The procurement of machinery and equipment for component 1 of the project was not finalized for long time and that has delayed the component 1 activities. Moreover, allocation of funds for the procurement of equipment and inventory for the Regional Training Centre (Kitab FO) was not stipulated in the budget of the project. Allocation of translation services, driver was not stipulated in the current budget of the project. Furthermore, the budget did not stipulate the cost of hiring or acquiring an additional 2 cars for the project team and field works. There was no budget to provide financial support and material incentives (support) for activities with households/farmers. Latter Skype meeting was arranged with the GEF unit (Hernan Gonzales) and LTO (Peter Pechacek) and received their approval to make changes in the budget of 2019 for addressing the financial problem.

114. The Project also had difficulty to find appropriate consultant and service provider for long time. The recruitment of international consultant had also delayed activities of the Component 1. The Covid-19 pandemic also added difficulties in the project implementation. Moreover, the service provider (Forestry Institute) was inactive for long time due to impact of new government's policy to dissolve this institute. Luckily, Forestry Institute was not dissolved but staff turnover took place, which also affected the project implementation. The PMO is also not able to understand the sequencing of activities implementation. The

data collection was not initiated until the MTR, which may affect the SFM program because evidence-based management planning needs socio-economic, and forestry data. The project spends 58.2% of GEF money while achievement was less than 50%.

115. **Conclusion 4 – Sustainability**: The project has established GIS laboratory and trained 20 technicians from 4 Forest Organizations (FOs) to establish an operational Forest Inventory (FI) and Monitoring system to support evidence-based planning. Developed guidelines for preparation of multipurpose management plans for sustainable forest and pasture management and draft action plan for pasture and rangeland management is developed. The project has plan to train staff from the forestry sector so that the updating of the forest related information would continue and this arrangement will continue supporting evidence-based planning. The rangeland and pasture management action plan will support to protect these resources from over exploitation even beyond the project period. An amendment is made to the forest legislation permitting the transfer of the forest fund lands for long-term lease i.e., up to 49 years. This will encourage state and private sector investment in SFM activities. The economic tree plantation will provide economic return to communities and to local FOs to bear the management costs. The project also trained rural women in handicraft making which help to improve their household economy, make them affordable to alternatives of the forest products, and thereby reduce pressure on the forest. Training staff from the forestry institution and local communities in various aspects of SFM will assure technical backup for SFM beyond the project life. The project facilitated review and revising of the National Forest Program and the Concept for the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030. Now, the National Forest Program is reflected in the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 and the final version is approved by the Presidential Decree. This will make SFM activities sustainable beyond the project life.

116. **Conclusion 5 – Factors affecting performance**: The project design is suitable to deliver the expected outcomes. The theory of change was brief and information on drives and immediate objectives were missing. The project objectives and components are clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe. The result framework had gender specific targets and the project document emphasized gender consideration in the project implementation. The project involved various institutions within SCF, communities, FOs, civil society organization (e.g., Makhallya), Association of Businesswomen and its local branches, Agrobank or Ipak Yuli commercial bank, Michael Succow Foundation etc. The potential risks were identified at the project design phase and mitigation measures were outlined in the project document. The SCF was fully engaged in decision making process and the implementation of the project activities and monitoring of the project results. The project developed communication plan and implemented. The M&E system was practical and was developed as per the standard provisions. The PMO, SCF and FAO were involved in different monitoring activities as per the plan.

117. **Conclusion 5 – Cross cutting dimensions**: The project design has considered gender aspects and attention was given to gender equality and provisioned involvement of women with strong emphasis during implementation process. The project has given importance to GEF policy on Gender Mainstreaming and the GEF-6 approach on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. Women's role and available potential opportunities to provide economic benefits were analyzed and developed activities using that information. The plantation of economic plants and training on handicrafts strengthen women economically. Women were involved in the project development and implementation. The project also developed Gender Action Plan (GAP) and implemented. The project also contributed to developing ToR for gender coordinators and based on that FOs appointed Field Gender Coordinators (FGC) and their status is institutionalized by the special decree of the SCF.

118. The project activities are designed to ensure environmental and socio-economic issues of the targeted mountain and valleys. The project implementation continuously reviewed environmental and social risk and adhered to mitigation measures identified to address them.

119. **Conclusion 6 – Risk Assessment**: Mitigation measures for risks were applied effectively while implementing the project activities and risks were monitored every year to update the status and to explore if any new risks rose. The project risks are rated unlikely.

The overall MTR assessment of the project is Moderately Satisfactory.

5.2 Recommendation

Rec, no.	Rationale for recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
Strategic Relevance				
1.	Local species suits well in local climatic conditions. The project was found using local species in plantation.	It is recommended to continue using local species for plantations.	PMO/FOs	All plantation activities from February 2022.
Effectiveness				
2.	GIS laboratory is established and 20 technicians were also trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth. But training and capacity development on field methods for data collection and mapping was not done. Similarly, training on enterprise level data processing, analysis and result generation was also not done. The data collection and analysis had to be done in the first year because all other activities need information from data analysis and mapping.	The main problem was turn-over of staff of the service provider which transferred trained staff. It is recommended to analyze the status of service provider. If their situation is okay then train staff to conduct data collection and initiate outdoor data collection and analysis. If the situation of service provider is not stable then find reliable service provider to conduct data collection and analysis.	PMO	Immediately i.e., from January 2022.

3.	The Project had spent 58.2% of GEF money but achievement was around 40%.	It is recommended to make implementation cost effective by improving implementation speed. Assure that the service provider is in a position to provide trainings on time and also conduct data collection. Don't just wait for the fate of the service provider. If their situation is uncertain then find another service provider or hire individuals and train to collect and analyze data. Besides, improve monitoring and feedback mechanism i.e. monitor very frequently and resolve issues timely. Develop realistic work plan and implement effectively. Mobilize students, NGOs and other grassroots level organizations for awareness generation and in plantation activities for massive plantation to cover the targeted areas.	PMU and whole project team.	From February 2022 to end of the project.
4.	Plantation could not take place in all seasons. It has to be done in summer and mainly the rainy season.	It is recommended to continue consider plantation season (during rainy days) while	PMO	From February 2022.

		developing annual work-plan. Plantation should be planned for the rainy season.		
Efficiency				
5.	The Project has only completed around 40% of the target. There is huge amount of activities to be completed in the remaining period.	It is recommended to improve implementation speed. It is also recommended to improve monitoring of the project implementation and provide feedback for improvement. More effort is needed to increase involvement of local people in management of the forest fund lands in Syrdarya and Kitab forestry. Actions of recommendation 3 also helps to address this issue.	PMO should work to speed up activities and FAO should increase its monitoring and feedback to complete activities in the remaining timeframe.	Immediately i.e., from February 2022.
6.	There should be elaborated and introduced GIS for 2,000 ha by the project. Only the GIS forest resources stocktaking part of the process would take at least six months. Then, based on the results of this stocktaking, there will be activities for the development of the Forest and Pasture Management Plan. Upon elaboration and approval of the Forest and Pasture Management Plan in December 2022, it will take one more year for its application till the end of 2023.	It is recommended to extend the project period by at least one year.	GEF/FAO	Immediately communicate with GEF for approval. Feb 2022.

	The establishment of Association of Pasture Users of the Forestry Organizations based on the American experience was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This work could be resumed in 2022. The Implementation of the Gender Strategy in 96 forest organizations (4 of them already implementing) by the end of 2022. The amount of work is very high and time left to complete them is about one and half year,			
7.	Study tour and knowledge exchange visits were found very effective to transfer knowledge.	It is recommended to continue study tour and knowledge exchange visits in the second half of the program if funding is available.	PMO/FOs	In the second half of the project i.e. starting from February 2022.
8.	Several trainings, Manual development, NAMA development that were targeted to complete within first half of the project were not completed.	It is recommended to immediately initiate development of training manuals and NAMA.	PMO/FOs	Immediately from February 2022.
Sustainability				
9.	To continue support for SFM activities, it is necessary to acknowledge it in policy documents to ensure priority in annual work plans of the government.	It is recommended to mainstream the SFM in the Forestry sector policies and planning so that it will continue as its regular activities. FAO country Office needs to continue lobbing with the SFC for including SFM in Forestry sector planning guidelines, and also in policies.	PMO/FAO	Need to initiate effort from the beginning of 2022.

10.	Large area of mountains and valley of Uzbekistan need support to address threats of the forestry sector and also to support rural poor communities who are highly dependent on forest for their living.	Explore more donors to support implementation of SFM activities in wide areas of Uzbekistan in the future.	SFC/PMO/FAO/	Initiate to explore and develop proposals from the beginning of 2022.
11.	To make the project results sustainable, all possible ways to generate support need to be explored.	It is recommended to develop exit strategy including information on potential ways or supports to continue results of this project after the close of the project.	PMO	Before the end of the project.
Factors affecting performance				
12.	SDG includes various goals like economic development, life on land, no poverty, climate action, zero hunger, gender equality. The goal 17 also encourage partnership to achieve these goals.	The project contributes in biodiversity conservation, economic development through economic trees, with economic development also contributes to zero hunger, contribute in carbon action by sequestrating carbon, with gender action plans to gender equity. Hence it is recommended that FAO and SFC should work with other relevant institutions to develop programs for achieving these SDGs in the forestry sector i.e., through integrated SFM programs.	PMO, FAO	From February 2022.

13.	Timely feedback to improve gaps or weaknesses will help to move the project activities on track smoothly and also avoid wastage of valuable time of the project.	It is recommended to monitor the project implementation very closely so that problems could be addressed timely.	FAO, PMO, SFC	From February 2022.
Cross-cutting Dimension				
14.	Gender Action Plan (GAP) is developed to address issues in the project activities and to make sure of the FAO Gender equity policy. Women from the rural areas could benefit from this only if it is effectively implemented.	It is recommended to consider gender equity and GAP while planning annual work plan and implementing the project activities.	PMO/FOs	Immediately i.e. from February 2022.
15.	Women play key role in the forestry or agro-forestry and in this project, also they made significant contribution in the sustainable forestry programs. The project conducted various trainings to improve their skills for income generation. Still large number of women are not covered by the income generation and livelihood programs.	It is recommended to diversify income generation and alternative livelihood programs and cover more women in those programs. PMO should work with the Gender and livelihood experts to revise the GAP for confirming the potentiality of the proposed activities and revise as per need.	PMO/FOs	Immediately from February 2022.
16.	The present government once tried to shut down Forest Institute so there is risk that they may try to close it again. If this institute is closed or made heavy turnover of staff then that may affect the project activities.	It is recommended to analyze the situation of the institute and if risk still exists then better to explore alternatives to execute the activities that were assigned to it. The recommendation no. 3 also contribute to this issue.	PMO, FAO	From February 2022

6. Lessons Learned

Strategic

- Some project activities will be connected to each other and delay of one activity may affect another. Hence, activities must be implemented on its right sequence otherwise many programs will be hampered. Weakness in realization on sequence of priorities of work affects whole activities of the project. In this project also, data collection was very important because that supports all SFM activities planning and delay in collection of data has delayed several activities.

Design

- Detail assessment of strength and weakness of the implementing partners, availability of experts within the country and provision for addressing weaknesses is very important to implement activities smoothly. These need to be analyzed properly at the time of the project design.

Management

- Involvement of communities makes implementation easier and it also contributes in ownership building and sustainability of the results.
- Implementing the project by the existing government structure make the project cost effective and also build ownership.

Appendices

Appendices I. Terms of reference for the MTR

Terms of reference for the mid-term review of Project GCP/UZB/004/GFF "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan" (FSP)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

February 2021

Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

AWP/B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BH	Budget holder
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CPF	Country Programming Framework (FAO)
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FF	Forest Fund
FI	Forest Inventory
FLO	Funding Liaison Officer
FMP	Forest Management Planning
FMS	Forest Inventory and Monitoring System
FPMIS	Field Project Management Information System
FO	Forests Organization
FPE	Forest Project Enterprise
FSP	Full sized Project
FRA	Forest Resources Assessments
GAP	Gender Strategy and Action Plan
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoU	Government of Uzbekistan
HQ	Headquarter
LOA	Letter of Agreement
LTO	FAO Lead Technical Officer
LTU	FAO Lead Technical Unit
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR)
SCF	State Committee on Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSE	Micro and Small Entrepreneurship
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Products
OWL	Other Wooded Land
PC	Project Coordinator
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTF	Project Task Force (FAO)
RM	Mid-term review manager

SEC	Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SO	Strategic Objective
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (of the GEF)
TOR	Terms of Reference
TT	Tracking Tools
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar

1 Project background and context

PROJECT TITLE: Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)	
PROJECT CODE: GCP/UZB/004/GFF	
COUNTRY: Uzbekistan	
FINANCING PARTNER: GEF	
FAO Project ID: 635216	**GEF/LDCF/SCCF Project ID: 9190**
EXECUTING PARTNERS: State Committee on Forestry (SCF) of the Republic of Uzbekistan	
Expected EOD (Starting Date): February 2018	
Expected NTE (End Date): January 2023	
Financing Plan: GEF/LDCF/SCCF allocation:	
GEF financing:	**3, 187,023**
Co-financing:	
SCF	7,301,107
Forestry Organizations	10,069,513
FAO	1,053,000
GIZ	227,531
ICRAF	15,000
Sub-total cofinancing:	**18,666,151**
Total Budget:	**21,853,174**

1.1 Description of project, project objectives and components

Description of the Project

i. The project is implemented by FAO (Uzbekistan country office), and was developed in collaboration with country partner.
ii. The project is financed by Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and implemented by FAO Representation in Uzbekistan.
iii. Project milestones: The period of project is estimated to be 5 years (EOD from June 2018 and NTE Jan 2023), MTR is expected in February 2021
iv. Human resources, budget including contributions from FAO and other stakeholders are given in the Annex 3.

Description of the context and rationale for the project

1. Uzbekistan's rich forests represent a vast untapped potential in terms of carbon sequestration and delivery of ecosystem services important for human wellbeing and the environment. Moreover, there are vast areas of land in Uzbekistan that currently have little or no forest cover yet are suitable for forestry. If brought under sustainable forest management this land could make a major contribution to carbon sequestration as well as local livelihoods and protection of nature.

2. Approximately 25% of the country, or 11.3 million hectares, is classified as Forest Fund (FF) land, and this is mostly managed by the state forestry agencies. Of this, approximately 3.2 million hectares may actually be covered with forests. From the non-Forest Fund land, both agricultural and reserve land may contain considerable areas of forest. This land is not managed by forest agencies, it is not managed for forestry-related objectives, and data/information on the forests is not available. In Uzbekistan, a modern, statistically based National Forest Inventory has never been implemented. The last forest inventory was carried out during Soviet times (1987-1988) and forest inventory methods were largely relying on ocular and subjective assessments, and the spatial coverage was restricted to only Forest Fund land.

3. Much of the existing forest is currently being degraded, thereby losing both its production and protection values. The alternative proposed through the Project GCP/UZB/004/GFF "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain and Valley areas in Uzbekistan (FSP)" is to remove the barriers to sustainable forest management. This will contribute to the reversal of the current situation of degradation and help switch forestry in Uzbekistan onto a path of increased forest cover, increased social and economic benefits from forests, increased carbon sequestration and an improved quality of existing forest.

4. In 2016 FAO and the Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) launched a technical cooperation project (TCP) named "Integrated Forest Land and Tree Resources Assessment". The expected outcome is "Informed and evidence-based decision-making on forestry-related issues using a landscape approach and focusing on livelihoods". So far, the results indicate that:
    - The total area of Forest according to FRA definition is much lower (450.2 ± 81.8 thousand ha, about 1% of Uzbekistan's extent, see figure 1) than previously estimated. The total area of OWL (Other Wooded Land) is much larger (9230.4 ± 257.8 thousand ha, about 20.6 %, see Figure 1) compared to a recent FRA report i.e., 115 thousand ha. These lands

typically display a bushland physiognomy and are mainly found in the western part of the country (steppes and Kyzyl-Kum dessert). Though the density of wood resource (biomass, carbon stock etc.) is rather low in these stands, the overall importance is high because of the very large total area and many protective, ecological and socio-economic functions of these stands).

- A significant part of forests and bushlands suffer from overgrazing which makes any natural regeneration of stands next to impossible. This is by far most serious in the natural, mountainous forests (mainly Archa i.e. Juniperus sp. and Pistachio i.e. Pistacia sp.), which need long time to regenerate but are extremely important from the point of view of protection against soil erosion as well as biodiversity and conservation of genetic resources of the autochthonous populations. Lack of awareness of the long term impacts of grazing is obvious. Forest enterprises generate significant if not major parts of their revenues from land leases – for the purpose of grazing.
- Afforestation figures reported at the national level may not appropriately reflect the share of areas where afforestation failed. A Collect Earth survey estimated that 216 ± 62 thousand ha of unsuccessful afforestation (mainly by Haloxylon sp.) or an afforestation with an inappropriate density i.e. not reaching canopy cover threshold of 10 % (minimum for a piece of land to be classified as OWL for shrubs or their mixture with trees).

Description of the project objective and components

5. The Project objective is to introduce sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan, thereby sequestrating carbon and improving the quality of forest and tree resources. The FSP has 4 components:

   i. **Component 1: Information management systems for sustainable forest management.** Under this Component, the Project supports the development of a system to provide reliable, up to date information on forests and forest cover and of trends at the project site / Forest Organization (FO) level, including trends in carbon stocks and delivery of other ecosystem services, such as provision of habitats for biodiversity, retention of sediments and regulation of water. The Project has been developing a basis for a modern Forest Inventory (FI) system based on statistically sound methods, which on the one hand makes it possible and affordable to generate the necessary information with reasonable frequency, and on the other hand largely eliminates potential bias (systematic errors) of the information provided. This includes accurate forest inventorying at the FO level. The FI system will provide the basis for development of the management plans to implement multifunctional forest management. It will be also possible to use inventory results as part of national reporting (UNFCCC, UNCCD, CBD, IPCC and FAO/FRA) without any conversion.

   ii. **Component 2: Multifunctional forest management leading to carbon sequestration, improvement in forest and tree resources, and other benefits.** Under this Component, the Project is working closely with the State Committee on Forestry (SCF), Forest Project Enterprises (FPEs) and four Forest Organizations (FOs) to develop and implement strengthened forest management at four diverse locations across the country. Strengthened forest management planning and implementation will lead to enhanced provision of ecosystem services, increased carbon sequestration

as well as many other economic and ecological benefits. SFM will be operationalized at 4 demonstration sites representative of the different types of forest ecosystems in Uzbekistan generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households: Site 1: Sirdaryo Forestry Organization (valley forest area) – the intention is to establish shelterbelt plantations together with private landowners and farmers. The technical knowledge and participatory planning processes are not available in the forest enterprises to do this; Sites 2, 3 and 4 (Mountain forest area): Dekhkanabad, Kitab and Pap Forestry Organizations– the objective is tree planting, especially for mountain forest restoration applying watershed management principles as well as pistachio forestry development through an agro-forestry approach. Available knowledge on site and climate requirements for production of tree products and timber is limited. Planning processes to include the local population in rangeland management and protection of natural forests will be strengthened and social benefits and gender sensitivity and responsiveness will be ensured throughout the process at all four project locations.

iii. **Component 3: Upscaling of sustainable forest management - with carbon sequestration – by strengthening of the enabling environment.** The Project promotes changes in the enabling environment that either directly lead to or greatly facilitate broader investment in sustainable forest management, including government investments and non-government investments. Some of the required changes are already known others are dependent on the findings and lessons learnt from Components 1 and 2, including a functioning forest monitoring and assessment system. The Project has been supporting to strengthen the policy and enabling framework and make it conducive to state and private investment in SFM. SFM will be integrated into sector policies and legislation related to forest management, agriculture, combating land degradation and shelterbelt management. Institutional structures and legislation will be strengthened, especially with respect to ownership and management responsibility. Measuring, reporting and validation (MRV) systems will be strengthened with the help of remote sensing and geospatial data, and improved access to information leading to improved assessment of carbon stocks.

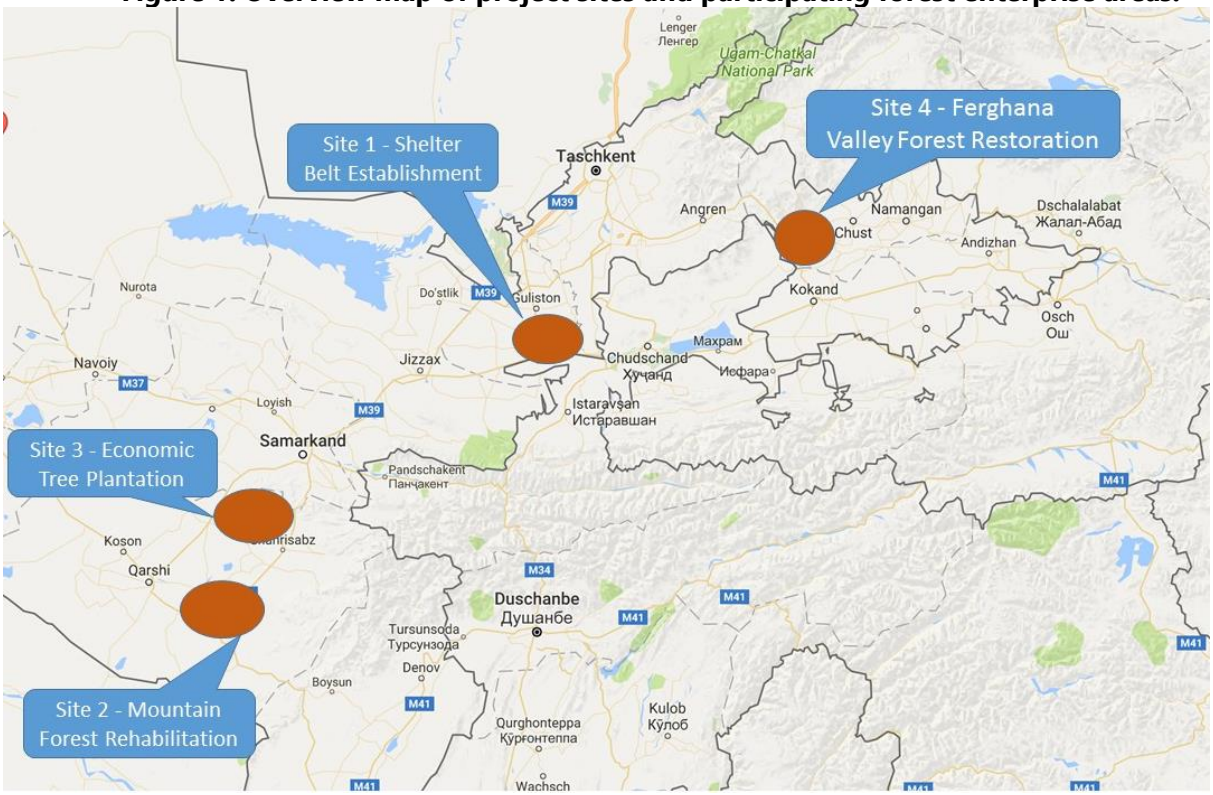
iv. **Component 4: Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing.** The Project implementation and M&E systems has been agreed and supported by National Partner of the Project (State Committee on Forestry). The project's progress is tracked and periodic evaluations conducted for learning and adaptive management.

In addition, development of guidelines and extension material is used by technicians and forestry extension workers in Uzbekistan also supported under this component. Some of the knowledge generated will be of use across the Central Asia region and in other regions. Project results, innovative approaches and achievements is being disseminated amongst the beneficiaries and other Forest organizations for replication and scaling up.

6. The project demonstration areas are located both in mountain forests and in valley forests of Uzbekistan. Based on the analysis of baseline investments and opportunities to influence both the institutional, legal and policy enabling conditions as well as management interventions on-the-ground, the following demonstration sites were selected (Figure 1):

- **Sirdaryo** – shelterbelt plantations and tree nursery
- **Dekhkanabad** – high mountain plantation of Almond and Pistachio, mountain natural forest of *Juniperus zeravshanica* in combination with rangeland
- **Kitab** – Mountain natural forest with Juniper (Zarafshanica), tree nursery and plantation of Pistachio on mountain slopes using grove terracing system for water collection and erosion control
- **Pap** – plantation of medicinal and aromatic plants and pistachio in combination with agricultural crops on irrigated lands in otherwise very dry soils, tree nursery. This FO is specialized for the conservation and production of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Figure 1: Overview map of project sites and participating forest enterprise areas.



7. The approach and goals of this Project are central to the following national development and sectoral plans and strategies:

- **Forestry:** The following laws have directly or indirectly influenced the forestry of Uzbekistan: the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1992); Laws and Regulations on "Nature Protection" (1992); "Protection and Use of Flora" (1997); The Forest Act of 1999; the Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1998), and; the Law on Protected Areas" (2004). The Forest Act (1999, with two subsequent amendments) regulates all matters concerning the management and protection of forests is the most important. In 2006, the SCF developed and approved a Forestry Development Program for the period of 2006 - 2010. The program included sections devoted to reforestation, afforestation, enhancement of the environmental and protective functions of forests, and expanding the forest cover. Subsequently, with support from FAO and other partners, the Government is developing a follow-up National Forest Programme. In addition to maintaining the strategic priorities of the early program, the draft for the follow-up program includes important policy initiatives, for example in the area of

land tenure and participation in forestry. In this sense, the Uzbekistan forest sector can be considered to be on the eve of significant reforms. This proposed Project, while fully supporting the objectives and priorities set out in the Forestry Development Program, has also been designed to be able to help facilitate policy reforms, should opportunities arise.

- The **Regional Environmental Action Plan for Central Asia** (REAPCA, issued in 2004) which highlights the degradation of mountain ecosystem as one of its priority problems;
- The **Uzbekistan Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2008 -2010 (WIS)** that targets transformation of the agricultural sector by the improvement and sustainable use of natural resources.

8. The Project contributes to national engagements of the Country with the following conventions/international agreements :

- UNFCCC: Uzbekistan prepared a *National Strategy on GHG Emission Reductions* in 2000. This document prioritized the increasing use of GHG sinks in forest ecosystem through afforestation, reforestation and improvement of existing forests. This proposed Project is aligned to that priority. Subsequently, the *Second National Communication* (2008, SNC) validated the above-mentioned National Strategy and further developed the priorities. The SNC identifies that currently the forestry sector is not a major sector in GHG emissions in Uzbekistan but clarifies that it has the potential to significantly increase sequestration. Further, it notably promotes the widespread application of local tree species in order to increase GHG removals, as well as to generate other benefits such as land recreation, environment protection and biodiversity conservation.

- The proposed project will support the implementation of the Uzbekistan's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC).2 In the INDC, the country commits to reducing carbon intensity (i.e., GHG emissions per unit of GDP) by 10 percent by 2030 relative to the 2010 level. The proposed project will support a series of climate change mitigation measures related to forestry included in the INDC. These are: (i) conservation and restoration of forest resources, including afforestation of the dried Aral Sea bottom and (ii) the development of a system for inventory, reporting and control over greenhouse gas emissions. With respect to climate change adaptation measures included in the INDC, the proposed project will support the restoration of forests in mountain and piedmont areas, and conservation of indigenous plant species in semi-deserts and deserts as a way to enhance the resilience capacity of ecosystems.
- UNCCD: The proposed Project responds to the priority actions identified in the National Action Program to Combat Desertification (NAPCD, 2002). In particular, the proposed Project will address the following NAPCD general recommendations: Improving land organization in order to prevent its degradation and secure environmentally and economically productive patterns based on landscape and environmental norms; Restoring forests and growing them on lands of the state reserve and other territories suitable for it, and; Developing economic mechanisms for ensuring more sustainable use of natural resources. With support from UNEP, the Government of Uzbekistan is currently preparing an updated National Action Program to implement the UNCCD. The unapproved draft prioritizes assessment and monitoring of land degradation and sustainable forest management. Hence, this proposed Project is in line with the draft document.
- CBD: The Project is aligned with National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation (1998) which included the following priorities (i) Protection of biological resources, including forests and grasslands and (ii) restoration of structures and functions of degraded ecosystems. With support from

[2] http://www4.unfccc.int/Submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Uzbekistan/1/INDC%20Uzbekistan%2018-04-2017_Eng_20170419093154_171926.pdf

UNDP/GEF, Uzbekistan is currently updating this action plan. This proposed Project – with its focus on sustainable forest management and sustainable use of forest resources - is aligned to the recommendations and priorities in the draft updated action plan. Finally, in January 2015, the Government issued a Protocol related to medicinal and aromatic plants requiring that production of these increase rapidly to contribute to exports. This is also supported through the present proposed Project.

9. The Project must be consistent with three focal areas of the GEF. This will be evaluated or confirmed by the MTR:

- Climate Change Objective 2 (CCM-2): Demonstrate systemic impacts of mitigation options/ Program 4: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture. The Project, through introducing improved forest management over 121,750 hectares and therefore sequestrating Carbon, and by creating the conditions for upscaling, will lead to direct and indirect benefits in terms of carbon sequestrated and avoided carbon emission.

- Generate sustainable flows of ecosystem services from forests, including in drylands (LD-2)/Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration. The proposed Project, through addressing trees and forests mostly in production landscapes, and making the linkages with carbon sequestration, will contribute to this program. Notably it includes landscape regeneration through use of locally adaptive species, including agroforestry and farmer-managed natural regeneration; and SLM approaches to avoid deforestation and forest degradation in production landscapes - including practices for sustainable supply of wood.

- Sustainable Forest Management Objective (SFM-3): Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded. The Project in line with GEF 6 programming guidance, is using the restoration of forest lands to support the maintenance and rehabilitation of forest ecosystem services. It will also build technical and institutional capacities to identify degraded forest landscapes and monitor forest restoration, helping to build a foundation for forest landscape restoration at a large scale.

10. The Project must be in line with FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs), specifically: SO1: Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; SO3: Reduce rural poverty; and SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. The project must be consistent with FAO's regional priorities as well as FAO's Country Programming Framework for Uzbekistan and will contribute to the following objectives/priorities of the organization. This will be evaluated or confirmed by the MTR:
    a. **FAO Strategic Objective/Organizational Result:** SO1: Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; SO3: Reduce rural poverty and SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises
    b. **Regional Result/Priority Areas:** Regional Priority 3: Natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation
    c. **Country Programming Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2014 to 2017:** Priority area E. Sustainable natural resources management and increasing the resilience to climate change; Outcome 1. Development of forestry for sustainable management of natural resources and increased income-generating opportunities for rural population supported.

11. The project will directly benefit to approximately 500 households, of which at least 30% will be female headed, located in the local communities at the four sites supported by the Project by increasing revenue and improving the quality of the natural resource base (land and forest).

12. All land is currently being utilized by local communities, most of which are remote and not well integrated into the national economy. The Project will include interventions on possibilities for micro and small entrepreneurship (MSE) development for NWFP, including FSC certification, and required capacity building within the forest related local communities with a focus on women. Replication and upscaling under Component 3 will help spread these approaches, benefitting more local people across the country. Indicators that will be considered for monitoring of benefits include: (i) increase in local community's income, (ii) change in type and quantity of forest products (wood and non-wood) obtained from target areas, and (iii) increase in productivity from sustainable forestry and multi-benefit industrial plantations.

1.2 Project stakeholders and their role

Table 1. Project stakeholder and their role

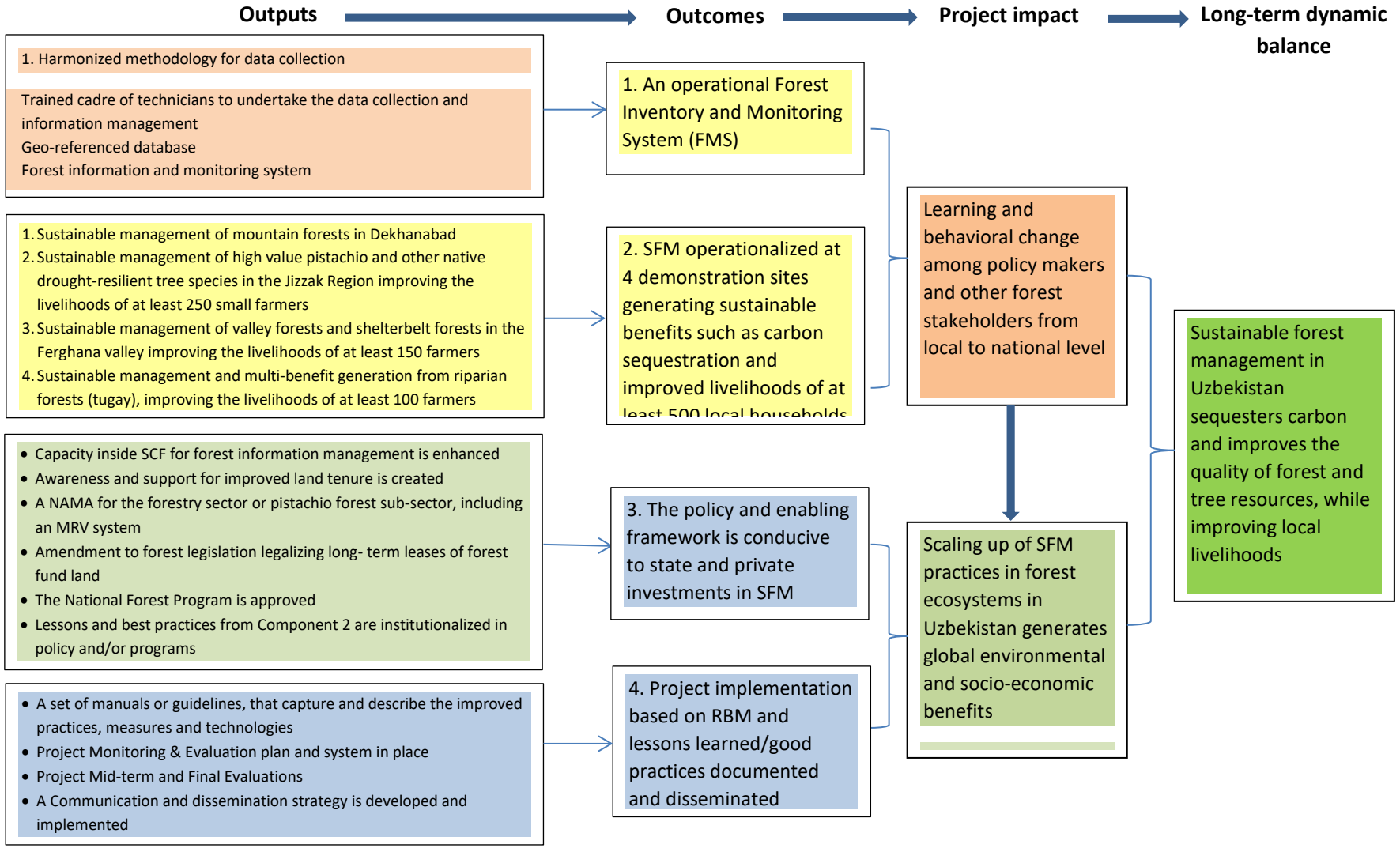
Key stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)	What is their role in the project?	What is the reason for their inclusion in or exclusion from the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[2]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR?
1. Active stakeholders with direct responsibility for the project, e.g., FAO, executing partners				
FAO Representation	FAO has extensive experience in supporting agriculture and forestry reform in Uzbekistan	Project is operationally run by FAO Representation office. Program support is also provided by FAO Uzbekistan	1	Since the beginning of the MTR
State Committee on Forestry	• Overall coordination and organizational management of the project • Responsible for the success of the project to the government of Uzbekistan • Provides technical and logistic support, and is also a co-financing organization • Facilitates project impact assessment	Execution Partner of the Project	1	Since the beginning of the MTR
Dekhkanabad, Kitab, Syrdarya and Pap Forest organizations	• Four forestry organizations of the SCF are partners in operational activities at the site level • These FOs are benefiting significantly from capacity building	All FOs are benefiting from some of the results of capacity building and possibly increased practice under Outcome 3	2	During the inception report of MTR
2. Active stakeholders with authority to make decisions on the project, e.g., members of the PSC				
State committee of the Republic of	Operational Focal Point of the Project	OFP, at the same time is the	1	During the

Key stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)	What is their role in the project?	What is the reason for their inclusion in or exclusion from the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[2]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR?
Uzbekistan on ecology and environmental protection	designated from the Committee	member of the PSC		inception report of MTR
3. Secondary stakeholders (only indirectly or temporarily affected)				
Forest Research Institute	Technical partner for FO strategy definition and intervention	Benefits from related capacity building (including on financial, socio-economic and carbon sequestration issues)	3	During the interviews of the MTR
State Unitary Enterprise Ormonloyikha (This organization is under State Forestry Committee of Uzbekistan)	• Technical partner to design and implement many of the project activities at the site level • Promote capacity-building, in particular in forestry planning, forest monitoring and carbon monitoring	Technical partner	3	During the interviews of the MTR
State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection	Use of knowledge and data from the project on sustainable forest management, including data on forest biodiversity	Benefits from capacity building	3	During the interviews of the MTR
Center for Hydro meteorological Service (Uzhydromet)	Use of data obtained within the framework of the project as a result of forest inventory.	Benefits from capacity building.	3	During the interviews of the MTR
Association of Women Entrepreneurs and its Local divisions (TBD)	Execution partner for strengthening local capacity of micro and small entrepreneurship (MSE);	Recipient of better information and capacity-building results	3	During the interviews of the MTR
Commercial Bank Agrobank or Ipak Yuli Bank	Assist in improvement of information on microcredit opportunities and bank loan procedures		3	During the interviews of the MTR
Michael Sukkov Foundation	Potential co-financier Potential technical and operational partner		3	During the interviews of the MTR
GEF Small Grants Programme	Collaborating partner on project sites to support living standards and reduce dependence on wood fuel.		3	During the interviews of the MTR
4. Stakeholders at grassroots level who benefit directly or indirectly from the intervention (gender disaggregated where possible)				
District (Rayon) councils	Technical partner in defining strategies at the FO level (in particular		3	During the interviews of

Key stakeholders (disaggregated as appropriate)	What is their role in the project?	What is the reason for their inclusion in or exclusion from the MTR?	Priority for MTR (1-3)[2]	How and when should they be involved in the MTR?
	on the availability of irrigated land, etc.) and in the implementation of project activities Promote public awareness campaigns at the local level on SFM processes with a focus on women; Participate in the selection of beneficiary households and allocation of mini-grants; Promote relevant capacity building (including on socioeconomic and carbon sequestration issues)			the MTR
Local Self-governing communities/ Makhallya Foundation	Implementation partner for local, participatory, forestry activities Will contribute on the local level to public outreach campaigns on SFM processes with special focus on women; Will participate in beneficiary household selection and mini-grants process; Will benefit from related capacity building (including on socio-economic and carbon related issues)		3	During the interviews of the MTR
Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) (TBD)	Implementation partner for local capacity building activities on micro and small entrepreneurship (MSE) basic package; Beneficiary of improved information and some capacity building		3	During the interviews of the MTR

1.3 Theory of change

13. The PRODOC includes a schema about the Theory of Change (TOC). It considers that the alternative proposed through the Project is to remove the barriers to sustainable forest management. This will contribute to the reversal of the current situation of degradation and help switch forestry in Uzbekistan onto a path of increased forest cover, increased social and economic benefits from forests, increased carbon sequestration and an improved quality of existing forest.
14. During the MTR, the consultants will evaluate this TOC and propose some changes that will be validated with the Project team during the MTR.


Outputs
Outcomes
Project impact
Long-term dynamic balance
1. Harmonized methodology for data collection
Trained cadre of technicians to undertake the data collection and information management
Geo-referenced database
Forest information and monitoring system
1. Sustainable management of mountain forests in Dekhanabad
2. Sustainable management of high value pistachio and other native drought-resilient tree species in the Jizzak Region improving the livelihoods of at least 250 small farmers
3. Sustainable management of valley forests and shelterbelt forests in the Ferghana valley improving the livelihoods of at least 150 farmers
4. Sustainable management and multi-benefit generation from riparian forests (tugay), improving the livelihoods of at least 100 farmers
Capacity inside SCF for forest information management is enhanced
Awareness and support for improved land tenure is created
A NAMA for the forestry sector or pistachio forest sub-sector, including an MRV system
Amendment to forest legislation legalizing long- term leases of forest fund land
The National Forest Program is approved
Lessons and best practices from Component 2 are institutionalized in policy and/or programs
A set of manuals or guidelines, that capture and describe the improved practices, measures and technologies
Project Monitoring & Evaluation plan and system in place
Project Mid-term and Final Evaluations
A Communication and dissemination strategy is developed and implemented
1. An operational Forest Inventory and Monitoring System (FMS)
2. SFM operationalized at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households
3. The policy and enabling framework is conducive to state and private investments in SFM
4. Project implementation based on RBM and lessons learned/good practices documented and disseminated
Learning and behavioral change among policy makers and other forest stakeholders from local to national level
Scaling up of SFM practices in forest ecosystems in Uzbekistan generates global environmental and socio-economic benefits
Sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan sequesters carbon and improves the quality of forest and tree resources, while improving local livelihoods

1.4 Implementation progress and main challenges to date

15. The Project began its work in June 2018 with active cooperation with the national partner SCF. The project team is aware of all the transformations and changes in the industry, participated in all the main activities of the State Committee for Forestry, organizes educational and training programs for forestry specialists, and involves forestry workers in the process of implementing project assignments. Taking into account the transformations that have taken place in the forestry industry, Uzbekistan has made a number of changes to the project activities, taking into account the requirements of the management and the National partner of the project SFC. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been established, regular PSC meetings are held and decisions are coordinated with FAO and GEF technical staff.

16. With the support of the FAO SEC office in Ankara (Turkey), capacity building and support for the international cooperation of SFC with foresters in Turkey and the United States were carried out. The participation of the leadership of the SFC in the FAO summit in Italy was organized. Study tours of forestry specialists to Turkey and the USA were organized.

17. According to the project document, 4 forestry organizations (pilot sites) are assigned to the project: in the valley zone of the Syrdarya FO (Syrdarya region), in the mountain zone Kitab and Dekhkanabad FOs (Kashkadarya region) and Pap FO (Namangan region).

18. In order to effectively implement the project's activities, the State Committee for Forestry provided financial support for the overhaul of the building of the State Unitary Enterprise " Ormonloyikha " in which the GIS laboratory and the DATA forest inventory center began to work today. At the expense of the "Forestry Development Fund", the renovation of a two-story building in the Kitab forestry enterprise is being completed, in which the creation of a Regional Training Center is planned. By the order of the Chairman of the Committee, for the full implementation of the project's tasks and ensuring the sustainability of activities in 4 leshozes, 2 specialists are additionally assigned to the project (chief forester and cadastre specialist), in addition, in each pilot site of the project, 4 gender specialists are separately appointed responsible for the implementation of gender activities project. All assigned specialists are provided with a 30% bonus to the basic salary.

19. According to the project document, the main task is to develop practical recommendations, mechanisms and directions for ensuring sustainable forest management in 4 pilot sites of the project. These recommendations will make a huge contribution to reducing carbon sequestration, as well as improving the living conditions of local people and protecting nature.

a. Main achievements Component 1

i. Draft methodology of forest organization base maps production made available
ii. Three trainings were held with the participation of representatives of 4 Pilot Forest organizations 40 people educated and trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth

iii. Server of the former TCP/UZB/3503 found and made available
iv. Data centre and GIS lab has been established at the SUE "Ormonloyikha" under SFC

b. Main achievements Component 2

i. SFM was implemented in 4 pilot sites (Kitab, Dekhkanabad, Syrdarya and Pap FOs fields) in total area of 6 062 ha, which will lead to the sequestration of 303,100 tons of CO2 annually as a co-financing activity. SFM operationalization started through preparatory work on forest inventory.
ii. Guidelines for preparation of Multifunctional Forest management Planning have been developed. Technical specification for materials (seeds, seedlings and cuttings), which would also support the local households of 4 pilot sites developed.
iii. Technical specification for necessary pasture equipment is under development.

c. Main achievement Component 3

i. Project team facilitated the adoption of a Presidential Decree in which the lease term for Forest Fundland is extended from 10 years up to 49 years
ii. The Law on Pastures has been adopted, according to which associations of pasture users will be created, which will regulate the issuance of tickets for grazing of lands within the State Forest Fund.

d. Main achievement Component 4

i. The following infographics and brochures have been published (2,000 copies) and distributed amongst National Partners and 4 pilot Forestry Organizations:
- Forest Restoration Concept of degraded land of Uzbekistan
- Concept on Nursery Development
- Strategy on Pasture Management
- Concept on Non-wood forest products
- Gender Strategy of State Forestry Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan-

ii. M&E is being conducted on a regular basis

2 MTR purpose and scope

20. The main purpose of the MTR is to:

- provide accountability – to respond to the information needs and interests of policymakers and other actors with decision-making power, like FAO management and the FAO GEF CU;
- improve the project – project improvement and organizational development provide valuable information to managers and others responsible for regular project/programme operations (for example, the PMU, PTF, FAO GEF CU and PSC); and
- contribute to knowledge – in-depth understanding and contextualization of the project and its practices, of particular benefit to the FAO GEF CU, FAO staff and future developers and implementers.

Table 2. Main purpose and intended users of the MTR

Main purpose	Intended User

Accountability: to respond to the information needs and interests of policy makers and other actors with decision-making	Inform decision making Provide accountability	GEF and other donors GCU and FAO management
Improvement: Project improvement and organisational development provides valuable information for managers or others responsible for the regular project/program operations	Improve project	Project management, PMU, PTF, GCU, PSC
Enlightenment: In-depth understanding and contextualised the project/program and its practices Normally caters to the information needs and interest of program staff and sometimes participants	Contribute to knowledge	GCU, FAO staff (national and regional level?) and future developers and implementers

21. The primary intended users of the MTR will be: the BH and designated RM, the Project Management Unit (PMU), the national project counterpart, the PTF (including the funding liaison officer (FLO) and the lead technical officer (LTO) and other FAO technical staff at headquarters), PSC members, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, the GEF and other stakeholders.
22. In case of COVID-19 pandemic related travel restrictions in the project countries, the MTR missions will be conducted only by one national MTR consultant as needed for data collection and with respect to sanitary measures. The meetings will be arranged virtually with the international consultant and with the project stakeholders and beneficiaries to the extent possible during the MTR period.

3 MTR objectives and key questions

3.1 MTR objectives

23. The MTR has the following objectives, according with the GEF evaluation criteria:

A. Relevance: analyse the extent to which the intervention's design and intended results are consistent with local, national, sub-regional and regional environmental and development priorities and

policies and to GEF and FAO strategic priorities and objectives.

B. Effectiveness: asses the project results to date including the overall quality of project outputs, progress towards achieving project outcomes and objectives, and a brief assessment of the likelihood of longer-term impacts resulting from the project.

C. Efficiency: evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the project and timeliness of activities.

D. Analyse the sustainability of Project results, including assessment of the overall likelihood of risks to sustainability from financial risk, Socio-political risk, Institutional risk, Environmental risk, as well as separate consideration of Replicability and Catalytic Role.

E. Examine the factors affecting the performance and delivery of the project results, focused on quality of project oversight, execution and management, including financial management and materialisation of co-financing, partnerships and stakeholder engagement, communications and knowledge management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), with specific attention to M&E Design, and M&E Plan Implementation.

F. Evaluate the consideration of the Cross-cutting dimensions in the project (including gender and equity concerns, Environmental and Social Safeguards, as appropriate).

3.2 MTR questions

24. MTR questions corresponds to the GEF evaluation criteria. They will be refined later in consultation with the MTR team and documented in the inception report.

Table 3. Evaluation questions

1. Relevance (rating required)	Are the project outcomes congruent with country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women,)? Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programmes 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 (rating required)	*(Delivery of results)* To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives? Were there any unintended consequences? *(Likelihood of impact)* 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? *(For programme assessments) (Coherence)* How coherent is the project with its theory of change, indicators and expected/achieved results?

3. Efficiency (rating required)	To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively? To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation? To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects, partnerships, etc. and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?
4. Sustainability (rating required)	*(Sustainability)* What is the likelihood that the project results will be useful or persist after the end of the project? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and its benefits (consider financial, socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects)? *(Replication and catalysis)* What project results, lessons or experiences have been replicated (in different geographic areas) or scaled up (in the same geographic area, but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources)? What results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated or scaled up in the near future?
5. Factors affecting progress (ratings required)	*(Project design)* Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes? Is the project's causal logic (per its theory of change) coherent and clear? To what extent are the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed? To what extent COVID-19 restrictions and other factors affected the implementation/duration of the project? To what extent was gender integrated into the project's objectives and results framework? *(Project execution and management)* To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and administering the project? What have been the main challenges in terms of project management and administration? How well have risks been identified and managed? What changes are needed to improve delivery in the latter half of the project? *(Financial management and co-financing)* What have been the financial-management challenges of the project? To what extent has pledged co-financing been delivered? How has any shortfall in co-financing or unexpected additional funding affected project results? *(Project oversight, implementation role)* To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and operational) during project execution? *(Partnerships and stakeholder engagement)* To what extent have stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society, and the private sector, been involved in implementation? What has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results? What are the mechanisms of their involvement and how could these be improved? *(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 into the M&E system? How could this be improved? *(M&E implementation)* Does the M&E system operate 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, achieve outcomes and ensure sustainability? Are there gender-disaggregated targets and indicators? How can the M&E system be improved?
6. Cross-cutting priorities	*(Gender, Indigenous Peoples/local communities and minority groups)* To what extent were gender considerations taken into account during implementation of the project? Has the project been designed and implemented in a manner that ensures gender-equitable participation and benefits? Was a gender analysis done? *ESS)* To what extent were 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) has been adhered to?

25. It should be noted that GEF is placing increased emphasis on gender concerns and how its programmes and projects contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEF, 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b). Consequently, the MTR should, as much as possible, collect and report sex- disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators and results (further questions for assessing gender concerns are suggested in Annex 12 of the MTR Guide). GEF is also paying more attention to stakeholder engagement and development, the use of knowledge products and the identification of good practices. All of these areas require specific reporting when the MTR report is uploaded to the GEF Portal webpage.

4 Methodology

26. The MTR should adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards (UNEG, 2016) and align with the FAO–GEF MTR Guide and annexes detailing methodological guidelines and practices. The MTR will adopt a consultative and transparent approach, keeping internal and external stakeholders informed throughout the MTR process. The evidence and information gathered will be triangulated to underpin its validity and analysis and to support its conclusions and recommendations.
27. Considering the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions put in the country and also by FAO for international travels, the MTR will be carried out mainly remotely. In this context, the general approach is that International lead consultant will work remotely from his/her home-office doing a desk review of project documents which will be supported by

remote semi-structured interviews using communication tools such as email, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp and other convenient electronic tools. If possible, national consultant will be responsible to conduct interviews face-to-face or by using communication tools such as phone, Skype, Zoom or other means, following guidelines that are in place locally to minimize epidemiologic risks. On the other hand, the review questions related to the project's relevance, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), environmental and social safeguards, knowledge management, and co- financing will be answered primarily through a desk review.

28. The use of videos, photos, etc. is encouraged and is part of collecting evaluative evidence. All collected data (including photos/videos) will be remotely shared with the International consultant. If possible, national consultant will try to organize field video-calls from project sites to help International consultant observing directly relevant project outputs and activities. These field video-calls would be additional opportunities to witness project impacts on beneficiaries. Observations made during these visits accompanied by photos and short videos where possible should be documented in short (point form) reports.

29. Final decisions about the specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the project team, key stakeholders, the MTR consultants and the MTR manager in consultation with the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit on what is appropriate and feasible in order to meet the MTR's purpose and objectives and answer the MTR's questions.

5 Roles and responsibilities

30. The BH is accountable for the MTR process and report and is responsible for the initiation, management and finalization of the MTR process. Depending on availability and commitments, the BH may designate another individual, the RM, to act on their behalf.

31. With the assistance of the project's **LTO** and the **FAO GEF CU, FLO and MTR focal point,** and guidance from this document and the main MTR Guide, the BH/RM is responsible for the drafting and finalizing the terms of reference and providing input to the background and context section. The terms of reference should be based on a document review, discussions with the PTF and, if possible, a face-to-face or Skype meeting with the LTO to get a good understanding of the project. The BH/RM is also responsible for identifying and recruiting the MTR team members, in consultation with the FAO GEF CU and the LTO. In collaboration with the FAO GEF CU, the BH/RM also briefs the MTR team on the MTR methodology and process and leads the organization of MTR missions. The BH/RM and the FAO GEF CU's MTR focal point review the draft and final MTR reports to assure their quality in terms of presentation, compliance with the terms of reference, timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence and analysis supporting the conclusions and recommendations. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the associated follow-up report, supported by the LTO and other members

of the PTF. Further details on the Management Response can be found in the MTR Guide.

32. The **FAO GEF CU** will appoint a focal point to provide technical backstopping throughout the MTR process, including guidance and punctual support to the BH/RM and MTR team on technical issues related to the GEF and the MTR. This includes support in identifying potential MTR team members, [5] reviewing candidate qualifications and participating in the selection of consultants, as well as briefing the MTR team on the MTR process, relevant methodology and tools. FAO GEF CU will also review the MTR inception report, draft MTR report and participate in the debriefing session with the MTR team at the end of the data collection phase. The FAO GEF CU also follows up with the BH to ensure the timely preparation of the Management Response.

33. **PTF** members, including the BH, are required to participate in meetings with the MTR team, make all necessary information and documentation available and comment on the terms of reference and MTR report. However, their level of involvement will depend on team members' individual roles and level of participation in the project.

34. The **National Project Director** (NPD) facilitates the participation of government partners in the MTR process and supports the PMU in ensuring good communication across government. The **Project Steering Committee** (PSC) facilitates government and other partner and stakeholder participation in the MTR process.

35. The **MTR team** is responsible for developing and applying the MTR methodology, producing a brief MTR inception report, conducting the MTR and producing the MTR report as well as **a two-page summary** of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the MTR report. All team members will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions and field visits. They will contribute written inputs to the draft and final versions of the MTR report, which may not reflect the views of the government or of FAO. The MTR team leader will guide and coordinate the MTR team members in their specific tasks and lead the preparation of the draft and final reports. The team leader will consolidate team inputs with his/her own and will have overall responsibility for delivering the MTR report. The MTR team will agree with the FAO GEF CU 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 Guide. The MTR team is free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, and develop its own MTR tools and framework, within the timeframe and resources available and based on discussions with the BH/RM and PTF. Although an MTR report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO, the BH/RM and FAO GEF CU do provide quality assurance checks of all MTR reports.

36. The relevant **GEF Operational Focal Point** (OFP) must be involved in any GEF project evaluation process, in accordance with the GEF Evaluation Policy (2019). The BH will inform the OFP of the MTR process and the MTR team is encouraged to consult with him/her during the review process. The team should also keep the OFP informed of progress and send him/her a copy of the draft and final MTR reports.

37. More detailed guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the key individuals and groups involved in the MTR can be found in Annexes 2 and 3 of the MTR Guide.

6 MTR team composition and profile

38. The skills, competencies and characteristics needed in the MTR team are specific to the MTR. The likely structure and composition of the MTR team, including the roles and responsibilities of its members, should be set out in the terms of reference for individual consultants.

39. The lead international MTR consultant should have the following minimum technical requirements:

- an advanced university degree in forestry, natural-resource management, social and economic development, or a related field;
- five years of relevant experience in evaluation, forestry, designing, planning and/or conducting development evaluations;
- experience in designing and managing projects will be an asset
- Fluency in English, working knowledge of Russian would be a big advantage
- Knowledge of FAO and GEF work/procedures, or other UN agencies, would be an asset as would appropriate language skills.

40. The MTR consultants should be independent of any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising on any aspect of the project being evaluated in the MTR and should not have been involved in any aspect of the project previously.

41. The national consultant should have the following experience:

- a university degree in forestry, social and economic development, or a related field;
- Fluency in English and Russian experience in the field of forestry and a good understanding of the national and/or local context, as appropriate;
- ideally, experience in supporting, designing, planning and/or conducting development evaluations; and
- Knowledge of FAO and GEF work/procedures, or other UN agencies, would be an asset as would appropriate language skills.

42. Both consultants are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

- results focus
- teamwork
- excellent communication skills (both written and oral) in English
- building effective relationships
- knowledge sharing and continuous improvement

7 MTR products (deliverables)

43. This section describes the key deliverables the MTR team is expected to produce during the MTR.

- **The MTR Inception report:** The MTR team should prepare an inception report before beginning data collection. This should detail the MTR team's understanding of what is being assessed and why, and their understanding of the project and its aims (set out in a theory of change). It serve as a map and reference for planning and conducting an MTR and as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the MTR design and methodology in discussions with stakeholders. The inception report details the GEF evaluation criteria, the questions the MTR seeks to answer (in the form of an MTR matrix), the data sources 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 lead responsibility for each task or product (as appropriate).
- **The draft MTR report.** The project team, BH/RM, FAO GEF CU and key stakeholders in the MTR should review the draft MTR report to ensure its accuracy and quality in two review rounds: (a) a first review, taking around 10 working days, by the project team and FAO (BH, LTO, FLO and FAO GEF CU MTR focal point), then a second review, also taking around 10 working days, by the government counterparts, key external partners and stakeholders.

- MTR should review the draft MTR report to ensure its accuracy and quality in two review rounds:

(a) A first review, taking around 10 working days, by the project team and FAO (BH, LTO, FLO and FAO GEF CU MTR focal point), then a second review, also taking around 10 working days, by the government counterpart(s), key external partners and stakeholders.

- **The final MTR report.** This should include an executive summary and be written in an official language of the country where the project is taking place (English is preferred if there is a choice and if the project involves more than one country with no common official language). It is important that the executive summary is presented in both the official national language and in English. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report, if deemed important, to complement the main report. Translations into other official UN languages, if required, will be FAO's responsibility. The executive summary should include the following paragraphs in order to update the GEF Portal: (1)

information on progress, challenges and outcomes on stakeholder engagement; (2) information on progress on gender-responsive measures; and (3) information on knowledge activities and products. The template for the MTR report can be found in Annex 11 and guidance on writing the report in Annex 12 of the MTR Guide.

- **A two-page summary** of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the MTR report, produced by MTR team, that can be disseminated to the wider public for general information on the project's results and performance to date. This can be posted as a briefing paper on the project's website but more creative and innovative multimedia approaches, such as video, photos, sound recordings, social media, short stories (for suitable cases or country studies), infographics or even comic or cartoon format, may be more effective depending on the circumstances.

- **Participation in knowledge-sharing events**, such as stakeholder debriefings, as needed.

8 MTR timeframe

44. This section lists the due date or timeframe of the MTR and describes all tasks and deliverables (such as briefings, the draft report and final report), as well as the associated roles and responsibilities of the key MTR individuals and groups.

Table 4. Preliminary MTR timeline

Task	When/duration (recommended)	Responsibility
Terms of reference preparation	10-25 August 2020	BH/RM, LTO, FLO and FAO GEF CU MTR focal point
Terms of reference finalization	01-05 Sept 2020	BH/RM
Team identification	10-15 August 2020	BH/RM, LTO, FLO and FAO GEF CU MTR focal point
Team recruitment	01 Oct 2021 to 15 Sep 2021	BH with input from the FAO GEF CU for international and national consultants
Travel arrangements and organization of the agenda and travel itinerary in country for the field mission *(In case of impossibility to travel for International consultant due to pandemic restrictions, it will apply to only National consultant*)	02-07 October 2021	BH/RM, project team and MTR team

Reading background documentation	08-13 October 2021	MTR team in preparation for the MTR
Briefing of MTR team	14 October – 18 October 2021	BH/RM, supported by PTF and FAO GEF CU as necessary
MTR inception report	19-23 October 2021	MTR team
Quality assurance and clearance of the MTR inception report	24-29 October 2021	BH/RM and the FAO GEF CU MTR focal point
MTR missions – confirmation of interviews, meetings and visits (*In case of impossibility to travel for International consultant due to pandemic restrictions, it will apply to only National consultant*)	30 October–05 November 2021	MTR team with the support of the PMU
Production of first draft report for circulation	06 -15 November 2021	MTR team
Circulation and review of first draft MTR report	15-25 November 2021	BH/RM, PMU, FAO GEF CU MTR focal point, LTO for comments and quality control (organized by BH/RM)
Production of second draft MTR report	26-30 November 2021	MTR team
Circulation of second draft MTR report	01-05 December 2021	BH/RM and key external stakeholders (organized by BH/RM)
Production of final MTR report and draft of two-page summary of key findings, lessons, recommendations	06-10 December 2021	MTR team
Management Response	11 -13 December 2021	BH
Follow-up reporting in FAO PPR or GEF PIR	14-15 December	BH

Table 5. MTR mission (tentative) agenda to the project sites (October - December 2021)

Date	Time	Name and Designation	Venue
Day 1	TBD	Arrival to Tashkent. Hotel check-in *(It applies only to International consultant)*	Tashkent
Day 2	TBD	Meeting at FAO country office, briefing and discussion about the project and mission plan	FAO Office

	TBD	Meeting with Chairman of State Forestry Committee (SFC)	SFC
	TBD	Wrap-up of the 1st day & planning for the next day	FAO Office
Day 3	TBD	Meeting with the Forest Research Institute	FRI
	TBD	Meeting with the Ormonloyikha	Ormonloyikha
Day 4	TBD	Meeting with the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection	State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection
	TBD	Meeting with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs	Association of Women Entrepreneurs
	TBD	Meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Day 5	TBD	Travel to Syrdarya region	Syrdarya
		Visiting 2 demo sites in Syrdarya	Syrdarya region
		Travel to Kitab FO and Hotel check in	Kitab district
Day 6	TBD	Visiting 2 demo sites in Kitab district	Kitab district
		Travel to Dekhkanabad district	Dekhkanabad district
Day 7	TBD	Visiting 2 demo sites in Dekhkanabad	Dekhkanabad district
		Return to Tashkent and hotel check in	Tashkent
Day 8	TBD	Meeting with Michael Succow Foundation	Michael Succow Foundation
		Wrap up meeting with the State Forestry Committee	SFC
		Meeting with FAO	FAO office
Day 9	TBD	Departure *(It applies only to International consultant)*	Tashkent International Airport

Annexes

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[3]
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[4]
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. 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 analysis and mitigation 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. FAO policy documents e.g. related to FAO Strategic Objectives and Gender
20. All other monitoring reports prepared by the project
21. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools (TT) at CEO endorsement and updated TT at midterm for GEF-5 projects or review of contribution to GEF-7 core indicators (retrofitted) for GEF-6 projects, and GEF-7 core indicators for GEF-7 approved projects
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. GEF Gender Policy, GEF Gender Implementation Strategy, GEF Guidelines on Gender Equality, and GEF Guide to advance Gender Equality in GEF projects and Programs

The following documents should also be made available to the MTR team as requested

24. FAO Country/Countries Programme Framework document; FAO Guide to the Project Cycle; FAO Environment and Social Management Guidelines and Policy; FAO Policy on Gender Equity; Guide to mainstreaming gender in FAO's Project Cycle; and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Manual

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

[4] 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.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Objective: to introduce sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan, thereby sequestrating carbon and improving the quality of forest and tree resources							
Component 1: Component 1: Information systems for sustainable forest management							
Outcome 1: An operational Forest Inventory (FI) and Monitoring System	FI and monitoring systemin place	Inefficient, methodologically inappropriate, spatially, temporally and thematically incomplete system for FI and monitoring.	FI and monitoring systemin place	FI and monitoring systemin place and generating coherent information for planning and decision making at the FO level	Database and maps available in the Cadastral Unit	Sufficient co-financing and capacity available in the Uzlesproject to establish forest database and to undertake the FI	SCF, Uzlesproject
Output 1.1: Harmonized methodology for data collection.	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection FO level field maps	Inadequate methodology for forest monitoring – based on Soviet-time forest management planning approaches, largely depend on subjective assessments	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection in place based on a broader spectrum of information	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection in place and generating coherent data for FI and field maps	Database available in the Cadastral Unit 4 field maps	Sufficient co-financing and capacty available in the Cadastral Unit to establish forest database and to produce maps	SCF, Cadastral Unit
Output 1.2: trained cadre of technicians to undertake the	X number of technicians in SCF,	A serious lack of qualified personnel in SCF,	5 technicians in SCF, Uzlesproject and the Cadastral	5 technicians in SCF, Uzlesproject	Reports and participants lists from training events	Technicians in the SCF have the capacity and	SCF, Uzlesproject, Cadastral

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
data collection and information management	Uzlesproject and the Cadastral Unit trained	Uzlesproject and the Cadastral Unit	Unit trained	and the Cadastral Unit trained		motivation to participate in trainings and gain new knowledge	Unit
Output 1.3: Geo-referenced database	A geo-referenced database for forested land	The information is not available in a digital, georeferenced format - this limits its availability and integration with other data sources.	A geo-referenced database for forested land in place	A geo-referenced database for forested land in place capable of generating maps and other geo-spatial information	A geo-referenced database for forested land	Capacity to establish and maintain the database in place in SCF	SCF
Output 1.4: Forest information and monitoring system	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land	FMP inventories cover only Forest Fund lands, forests and forest-like ecosystems outside FF are not taken into consideration	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land in place	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land in place and operational	Access to FI results through an Internet portal	Capacity to establish and maintain the FI in place in SCF	SCF
Component 2: Multifunctional forest management leading to carbon sequestration, an improvement in forest and tree resources, and other benefits							
Outcome 2: SFM operationalized at 4 demonstration sites generating	SFM operationalised at X sites covering X ha	SFM is not operationalised in the different types of forest	SFM operationalized at 4 demo sites covering 84 735	SFM operationalised on 84 735 ha at 4 demo sites	4 Forest management plans PIRs/PPRs Mid-term and final	FPEs and FOs have capacity and incentives to adopt SFM	FPEs, FOs

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households	of land leading to sequestration of X tCO2eq.	ecosystems in Uzbekistan	ha of land	leading to sequestration of 4 118 451 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	evaluations	practices	
Output 2.1: Sustainable management of mountain forests in Dekhanabad	SFM practices for high mountain forest covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	Available knowledge on site and climate requirements for production of tree products and timber is limited. Planning processes to include the local population in protection of natural forests and pasture management are not applied	SFM covering 36 530 ha of land	SFM covering 36 530 ha of land leading to sequestration of 1 839 056 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	Forest management plan for Dekhanabad FMA reports PIRs/PPRs Mid-term and final evaluations	FPEs and FOs have capacity and incentives to adopt SFM practices	FPEs, FOs
Output 2.2: Sustainable management of	SFM practices for economic tree species	Available knowledge on site and climate	SFM practices for economic tree species covering	SFM practices for economic tree species	Forest management plan for Kitab FMA reports	FPEs and FOs have capacity and incentives to	FPEs, FOs

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
mountain forests and improving the livelihoods of at least 200 farmers/households in Kitab forestry	covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	requirements for production of tree products is limited. Planning processes to include the local population in rangeland management are not applied	16 200 ha of land	covering 16 200 ha of land leading to sequestration of 628 813 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 200 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	PIRs/PPRs Mid-term and final evaluations	adopt SFM practices	
Output 2.3: Sustainable management of valley forests and shelterbelt forests in Sirdarya forestry improving the livelihoods of at least 100 farmers	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	Planning techniques to identify suitable sites for valley and shelterbelt forest enhancement and conservation of biodiversity in forested areas are not widely available	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2 995 ha of land	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2 995 ha of land leading to sequestration of 787 902 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	Forest management plan for SirdaryaFMA reports PIRs/PPRs Mid-term and final evaluations	FPEs and FOs have capacity and incentives to adopt SFM practices	FPEs, FOs
Output 2.4	SFM practices	The technical	SFM practices for	SFM practices	Forest management	FPEs and FOs	FPEs, FOs

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Sustainable management of mountain forests and improving the livelihoods of at least 100 farmers in Fergana Valley, Pap forestry	for forest covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	knowledge and participatory planning processes are no longer available in the forest enterprises to establish more shelterbelt plantations together with private land owners and farmers.	forest covering 29 010 ha of land	for forest covering 29 010 ha of land leading to sequestration of 862 680 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	plan for Pap FMA reports PIRs/PPRs Mid-term and final evaluations	have capacity and incentives to adopt SFM practices	
Component 3: Upscaling of sustainable forest management - with carbon sequestration – by strengthening of the enabling environment							
Outcome 3: The policy and enabling framework is conducive to state and private investment in SFM	SFM principles integrated forest sector frameworks, policies and programs	Weak policy and legal framework for SFM and lack of management plans at local level to implement SFM Lack of long-term leases for sustainable use of FF land	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place SFM principles integrated into key national forest policy frameworks and programs	Strong enabling environment facilitates upscaling of SFM and enhanced carbon sequestration on all forest land	Documented policy revisions legalizing long-term leases of FF land Training reports and participants lists PIRs, PPRs	SCF committed to policy reform and SFM	SCF, FAO
Output 3.1: Capacity inside SCF for forest information management is	Training of X SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of	SCF personnel, notably in the Cadastral Unit, often lack the necessary technical	Training of 25 SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of	Training of 50 SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of	Reports and participants lists from training events Inventory lists of equipment	SCF staff has the capacity and incentives to aquire new knowledge	SCF, Cadastral Unit

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
enhanced	equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	skills as well as equipment to effectively manage and interpret forestry information	equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	PIRs, PPRs		
Output 3.2: Awareness and support for improved land tenure is created	Training and awareness raising of X forestry officials in the application of the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	Currently, non-State forest users are limited to a ten-year lease of FF land. This acts as a barrier to non-state investors investing in any forest activity that requires more than ten years to be profitable. It notably makes any private investment in carbon sequestration on forest land very unprofitable.	Training and awareness raising of 100 officials in the application of the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	Training and awareness raising of 200 officials in the application of the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	Training reports and participants lists PIRs, PPRs	Forestry officials willing to participate in training and awareness raising events	SCF, FAO
Output 3.3: A Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) for the	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	A draft NAMA for the pistachio was prepared in 2012 and is under review	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	NAMA report to the UNFCCC	Activities and FI under Outcomes 1 and 2 will lead to improved forest data at FO	SCF

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
forestry sector or pistachio forest sub-sector, including a national measuring, reporting and validation (MRV) system		No MRV in place				providing the basis for MRV of NAMA	
Output 3.4: Amendment to forest legislation legalizing long-term leases of forest fund land	Amendment to forest legislation legalizing long-term leases of forest fund land	There is no state policy in place for sustainable development of forestry. Insufficient funding to the sector makes forestry seek additional funds from e.g. leasing of pastures, which leads to overgrazing	Proposals for revision of policy legislation	2 revisions to the forestry legislation	Documented policy revisions legalizing long-term leases of FF land	Political will to reform the forestry sector is maintained	MOAW, SCF
Output 3.5: The National Forest Program is approved	The National Forest Program is approved	The draft National Forest Program was initially prepared in 2008. It has since been subject to review and revision.	The National Forest Program is approved	The National Forest Program is approved	Approved document with new national Forest Program	Political commitment to reform of the forestry sector maintained	SCF

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Output 3.6: Lessons and best practices from Component 2 are institutionalized in policy and/or programs	Number of lessons and best practices from Component 2 institutionalized in policy and/or programs Gender Action Plan (GAP)	0	5 lessons and BPs identified from Component 2 1 GAP developed	10 lessons and BPs, including on FSC certification, integrated into policies and or programs GAP implemented	Policy and program documents that refer to lessons and BPs from the current Project GAP and monitoring reports	The assessment and planning process under Component 2 leads to demonstration and testing of many innovative tools or approaches	SCF
Component 4: Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing							
Outcome 4: Project implementation based on RBM and lessons learned/good practices documented and disseminated	M&E system is in place to support adaptive results-based management and monitoring of upscaling resulting from the project.	No system in place	Implemented project based on adaptive results based-management	Project delivers expected results and shares best practices	GEF LD and CC Tracking Tools, PIRs, PPRs Midterm Review and Final Evaluation	National lead agencies and other stakeholders support M&E processes, and are committed to continuous learning and exchange of knowledge on SFM	SCF, FAO
Output 4.1: A set of manuals or guidelines, that capture and describe the	Number of manuals and guidelines on SFM in different forest	No manuals or guidelines exist	2 manuals and 2 guidelines developed and published	Manuals and guidelines applied at project demonstration	Published manuals and guidelines PIRs, PPRs	Project partners have the skills, knowledge and resources to support the	SCF, FAO

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
improved practices, measures and technologies	types			sites and beyond		development of manuals and guidelines for SFM	
Output 4.2: Project Monitoring & Evaluation plan and system in place	M&E system in place	0	M&E system in place and providing inputs to PIRs, PPRs and mid-term evaluation	M&E system in place and providing inputs to final evaluation	Monitoring reports	Adequate funding allocated to monitoring	PMU, FAO
Output 4.3: Project Mid-term and Final Evaluations	Mid-term and final evaluation reports	0	Mid-term project review recommendations implemented	Final evaluation	Evaluation reports (FAO evaluation office)	Adequate funding allocated evaluations	PMU, FAO
Output 4.4: A Communication and dissemination strategy is developed and implemented	Communication and dissemination plan Project website and social media pages X number of project newsletters X number of awareness/	Low awareness of SFM	Communication and dissemination plan in place Project website and social media pages established Outreach event organized in connection with project launch	6 project newsletters 4 outreach events	Awareness/outreach events & materials Statistics of website visitors, Facebook likes, number of Tweets	The PMU is functioning and has adequate capacity in KM and communication	SCF, PMU, FAO

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
	outreach events organized						

Annex II. MTR itinerary, including field missions (agenda)

Due to restrictions for the international travellers in Uzbekistan, National consultant only carried out the field mission and International consultant joined virtually where possible.

Inception Meeting	8 October 2021	BH/RM, supported by PTF and FAO GEF CU as necessary
MTR inception report	19-22 October 2021	MTR team
Quality assurance and clearance of the MTR inception report	22 October 2021	BH/RM and the FAO GEF CU MTR focal point
MTR missions – confirmation of interviews, meetings and visits (*In case of impossibility to travel for International consultant due to pandemic restrictions, it will apply to only National consultant*)	25-30 October 2021	MTR team with the support of the PMU
Meeting stakeholders in Tashkent	22-24 October 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually)
Visit to Namangan (night stay in Kokand)	25-26 October 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually where possible)
Visit to Syrdaryo (Night stay in Gulistan)	26-27 October 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually where possible)
Visit to Kashkadarya (Night stay in Shakhrisabz)	27-28 October 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually where possible)
Visit to Kashkadarya (Night stay in Dehkanabad)	29-30 October 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually where possible)
Meeting with stakeholders in Tashkent and data analysis	1-5 November 2021	National Consultant (international consultant will join virtually)
Data analysis and report write-ups	5-15 November 2021	MTR team
Production of first draft report for circulation	15 -25 November 2021	MTR team
Circulation and review of first draft MTR report	25-30 November 2021	BH/RM, PMU, FAO GEF CU MTR focal point, LTO for comments and quality control (organized by BH/RM)
Production of second draft MTR report	26-30 November 2021	MTR team
Circulation of second draft MTR report	26-30 November 2021	BH/RM and key external stakeholders (organized by BH/RM)
Submission of final draft MTR report	6-10 December 2021	MTR team
Management Response	10 -15 December 2021	BH

Follow-up reporting in FAO PPR or GEF PIR	15-20 December 2021	BH

Annex III. Stakeholders interviewed during the MTR

i. List of the participants interviewed at Chadok State Forestry Enterprise (25 October 2021)

1	Abdusattarov Khurshid	Director
2	Khakimjonov Obidjon	Chief Accountant
3	Ergashev Makhmudjon	Head of maintenance department
4	Madazimov Akmal	Chief Forester
5	Eshmatov Bakhtiyor	Nursery operator/ lease holder
6	Ergashev Akhmadjon	Forest worker/ lease holder
7	Normirzaev Khamidjon	Forest worker/ lease holder
8	Tursunbayev Aminjon	Forest worker/ lease holder
9	Kiyikova Sanobar	Assistant to director
10	Abdullaeva Shoira	Specialist Planning and Economic Department / Gender Specialist

ii. List of the participants interviewed at Sirdarya State Forestry Enterprise (26 October 2021)

1	Amanlikov Khamza	Director
2	Abdullayev Farkhod	Forest Cadaster Engineer
3	Norboyev Eshpolat	Chief Accountant
4	Khalikova Saodat	Foerster/Gender Specialist
5	Muminova Zulkhumor	Assistant to director

iii. List of the participants interviewed at Kitob State Forestry Enterprise (27-28 October 2021)

1	Adilov Sherzod Burxonovich	Director
2	Burxonov Suxrob Obidjon ugli	Chief Forester
3	Xaydarov Faxriddin Askarovich	Forest inspector
4	Shodiyorov Erkinjon Yusupovich	Chief Accountant
5	Zoyidov Izzatilla Ziyatovich	Forest protection engineer
6	Kalandarov Ikrom Amirovich	Agronomist
7	Axmadov Ilxom Akramovich	Forest cadaster engineer
8	Ostonov Shuxrat Gapirjaiovich	Economist
9	Xalilov Kodir Azamat ugli	Inspector
10	Jalilova Roxila Azamovna	Specialist from HR Department
11	Askarova Barno Abduraximovna	Accountant
12	Xolikov Abdumajid Muminkulovich	Forest Protection Department Head
13	Ibragimov Jaxongir Zoyid ugli	Inspector

14	Zokirova Xurshida Narzullaevna	Worker
15	Muxammadieva Marxabo Axmatovna	Worker
16	Zokirova Gulchexra Yaxyoevna	Worker
17	Maxmaraximova Muxabbat Ibodullaevna	Worker
18	Islamov Gofur	Entrepreneur
19	Jabborov Fazliddin	Entrepreneur
20	Turdiev Bexruz	Entrepreneur
21	Rajabov Salim	Entrepreneur
22	Xayrullaev Gayrat	Farmer
23	Nazarov Dilmurod	Entrepreneur
24	Olimova Maxruba	Housewife
25	Rozikov Xusayin	Farmer
26	Karimova Nazokat	Entrepreneur
27	Ashurov Baxtiyor	housewife
28	Omonov Jaloliddin	Farmer

4. List of the participants interviewed at Dehkanabad State Forestry Enterprise (29-30 October 2021)

1	Bozorova Rano	Director
2	Allayorova Dilfuza	Chief Accountant
3	Norqulova Nilufar	Head of HR
4	Qoraqulova Makhbuba	Assistant to director
5	Ynusova Mukhayyo	Laboratory Assistant
6	Bozorova Komila	Handicraft/carpet maker
7	Qurobonova Zukhra	Handicraft/carpet maker
8	Minglimamatova Gulshan	Handicraft/carpet maker
9	Qurbonova Surayyo	Handicraft/carpet maker
10	Khamraqulova Gulnoz	Member of Ecological Party
11	Azimova Muqaddas	Worker at Nursery
12	Khasanova Dilorom	Worker at Nursery

5. List of the participants interviewed in Tashkent.

S.N.	**Name**	**Position**
8 October and 4 November 2021		
1	Mr. Peter Pechacek	Project Technical Leader/FAO
2	Mr. Sherzod Umarov	FAO Assistant Representative
22 November 2021		
3	Mr. Abduvokhid Zakhadullayev	Head of the Department for International Relations and Ecotourism Development
4	Mr. Olimjon Kakhkharov	Project Technical Coordinator/PMO

5	Mr. Rustam Madhimov	Director of the Forest Design Institute

Annex IV. MTR matrix (review questions and sub-questions)

Evaluation Questions	Indicator	Source	Methodology
Strategic Relevance			
1. To what extent FAO and GEF's support to targeted areas has been relevant? How did the project design respond to the needs, priorities and capacities of the project's main counterparts?	Relevant to address issues of the mountains so directly related to needs, priorities and capacities of counterparts.	Project document, Annual/ quarterly reports and key informant interviews	Comparison of project design (outcomes, theory of change) with country/district needs and priorities.
2. How did the project design respond to the priorities of the FAO country programming Framework and the GEF focal areas/operational project strategies?	Relevant to FAO country programme framework and GEF focal area programme strategies.	Project Document, FAO country Programme, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategy document. Interview with FAO and GEF staff.	Comparison of project design (outcomes, theory of change) with FAO country program, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategy.
3. Is project expected outcomes congruent to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, indigenous communities etc.)	Outcome congruent to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries.	Project document, annual reports, Interview with key informants.	Comparison of project outcomes with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. Comparison of activities and outcomes with issues of the area.
4. To what extent was the technical support provided by FAO relevant to the country?	FAO technical support relevant to address issues of the country.	Baseline information technical status from the project document, role of technical support from FAO to various activities and	Comparison of technical support provided by FAO with the baseline technical status of the country and changes after such support from FAO.

		achievement information from annual and quarterly reports. Key Informant Interviews	
5. To what extent were FAO's comparative advantages and existing complementarities with other partners taken into account in the project design?	Consideration of FAO comparative advantages and existing complementarities with other partners in project design.	Project document, Key Informant Interviews.	Analysis of project design (project document) to find out use of knowledge/lessons from FAO and other partners to address the gaps in the relevant sectors.
6. Has there been any changes in the relevance of the project since its formulations? Is there any need to make change in the design/activities to make it more relevant?	Changes in program and inappropriateness of design/activities.	Country document. Project document. Information from Questionnaire survey and key informant interviews	Analysis of the baseline situation (climate change impact, vulnerability, policy, economic situation, technical capacity, knowledge base, CC effect etc.) of the targeted sites.
7. To what extent is the project's results framework/log-frame (i.e. theory of change, intervention logic, indicators etc.) appropriate to reach the project's goal and objectives?	Relevance of outputs and outcomes to attain objectives.	Log-frame and theory of change information from Project document and other reports of the project.	Analysis of indicators (if they are SMART), baselines, analysis of internal and external coherence of RF design and the ToC; testing the ToC logic and assumptions
8. Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes?	Theory of change, result framework and flow chart.	Project document (Theory of change, Result framework and flow chart.	Analysis of theory of change, result framework and flow chart to see the connection of activities and issues.
9. Is the project's casual logic coherent and clear?	Theory of change, result framework and flow chart	Same as above	Same as above.
10. To what extent are the project's objectives and	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above.

components (outcomes) clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed?			
Effectiveness – progress towards results			
11. Has methodology been harmonized for data collection?	Methodology document, information	Project document; annual reports, Key Informant Interviews	Analysis of data collection methodology.
12. Are cadre of technicians trained to undertake the data collection and information management?	Number of people trained and improved knowledge score.	Key Informant Interviews; training report	Analysis of training reports and post training assessment report.
13. Is Geo-referenced database developed?	Improved database with Geo-references.	Post training evaluation report, Interview with trainees.	Training reports, post training evaluation information.
14. Has forest information and monitoring system been established?	Forest information and monitoring system established	Key informant interview, annual reports etc.	Analysis of the report regarding establishment of information and monitoring system.
15. Is sustainable management of mountain forest in Dekhanabad, Kitab forestry, Sirdarya forestry and Pap forestry with improving livelihoods of the farmers?	Mountain forest under sustainable forest management practices and also contributing to livelihood of farmers.	Annual reports, interview with farmers and forest managers	Review work plans, progress reports, Information from forest managers and farmers.
16. Has the capacity inside SCF for forest management enhanced?	Number of forest managers trained. Improvement in	Interview with forest managers and training reports.	Analysis of training report and post training assessment reports.

	knowledge score.		
17. Has awareness and support for improved land tenure is created?	Increased awareness, and improved land tenure	Annual report, land tenure documents.	Review of old and new land tenure documents, interview with key informants.
18. Has the NAMA for the forestry sector or pistachio forest sub-sector, including a national MRV system established?	National MRV system established, developed NAMA for forestry sector or pistachio forest sub-sector	MRV plan and NAMA document	Review of NAMA and MRV documents
19. Has the forest legislation amended for legalizing long-term lease of forest fund land?	Forest legislation amended with provision for long-term lease of forest fund land.	Forest legislation and annual report of the project.	Review progress reports, And forest legislation to see change in provision regarding leasing forest fund land.
20. Has National Forest Program been approved?	Notice on approval of National forest program.	Progress reports, Forest news.	Review of progress reports, and forest related decisions.
21. Are Lessons and best practices for component 2 are institutionalized in policy and program?	Document containing lessons and best practices.	Annual report. Lessons and best practices document	Analysis of annual reports and documents containing best practices and lessons learned.
22. Has a set of manuals, or guidelines capturing and describing the improved practices, measures and technologies developed?	Manuals, guidelines with improved practices and measures.	Annual report and manual/guidelines.	Review of annual report and also manual and guidelines to see if they captured improved practices and measures.

Efficiency			
23. To what extent the programme implemented efficiently and cost effectively?	Project implementation information from PIR and annual reports. Information on cost of implementation.	Annual reports, PIR financial statements.	Assessment of project achievement, actual costs and budget provisioned for the activities. Interview with key informants.
24. How does the project's cost efficiency (cost/time) compare to that of similar projects?	Project implementation information from PIR and annual reports. Information on cost of implementation.	Annual reports, PIR financial statements.	Assessment of project achievement, actual costs and budget provisioned for the activities. Interview with key informants.
25. To what extent did the programme implementation mechanism contributes to efficient implementation of main outputs of the project?	Program implementation information and information from the PMO staff.	Annual project reports, work plans, PIR and key informant interviews	Analysis of Annual Reports and PIR against the work plans and interview with key informants
26. Is project's monitoring and evaluation plan and system in place?	Monitoring and evaluation plan in place for regular monitoring.	Annual project reports, key informants interview and M&E plan.	Analysis of Annual Reports and M&E plan against the interview with key informants
27. Has communication and dissemination strategy developed and implemented?	Communication and dissemination strategy document developed and implemented.	Annual report, Communication and dissemination strategy document.	Review of communication plan and observed dissemination activities and also information from key informants of this regards.
28. Is the co-financing being made available to the project as planned to contribute to meeting project outputs, outcomes and objectives?	Co-financing information in the financial statements.	Project document, financial statements and interview with	Assessment of Project document and financial statements and discussion with the project team.

		project staff.	
29. Has project management been able to adopt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of the programme implementation?	Change in management to adopt the changing condition.	Annual report, M&E reports, work plans and interview with the project staff.	Assessment of work plans against the progress reports, study of justifications for the change in activities and interaction with key informants
30. To what extent has the project built on synergies and complementarities with other forestry/biodiversity projects, partnerships, etc. and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?	Information of synergies and complementarities in the project document, PIR, and annual reports.	Project document, progress reports, and M&E reports.	Assessment of Project document, progress reports, M&E reports and interview with key informants.
31. Has the Operational Partners Agreement been applied efficiently?	Implementation of agreed activities in annual report and PIR.	Work plans, PIR, agreement documents, progress reports. Interview with key project staff.	Assessment of work plan, PIR, agreement documents, progress reports. Interview with partners.
Sustainability (It is earlier to analyze sustainability but MTR will analyze if any commitment to continue technical or financial support to continue outcome of this project or up scaling of the lessons).			
32. What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?	Information on acknowledgement of project outcomes and provision for replication, continuation of technical and institutional supports. Information of replication of	Annual reports, commitment documents from government or other institutions.	Analyze the government or other institutions commitments, replication plans, institutional structure developed by the project and capacity enhancement by the project. Interview the FAO, government partners and other partners to find out if they have any project in pipeline or already approved that replicate results from this

	outcomes of the project and financial arrangements.		project.
33. What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and its benefits (financial, socio-economic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects, as well as risks identified in the project document?	Risk identified during risk review or experienced during implementation.	Annual reports, risk review information, new risks identified in PIR and Key informant interview.	Analysis of the partnership strategy in the project document, financial and/or technical support from the partners, annual reports and information from the partners.
34. Has any project results, lessons or experiences have been replicated (in different geographic areas) or scaled up (in the same geographic area, but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources)? What results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated or scaled up in the near future?	Information on replication of project results.	M&E reports, annual reports, work plans and key informant (project staff) interview	M&E reports, annual reports, PIR will be analyzed to see if lessons from the project is replicated to other areas or not. Similarly information on replication will also be acquired from key informants.
35. Has the project established sustainable institutional arrangements or cross-sector partnerships?	Information on sustainable institutional arrangement or partnerships.	Same as above	Same as above
Factors affecting Progress			
36. Is the co-financing being made available to the project as planned to contribute to meeting project outputs, outcomes and objectives?	Co-financing information in the financial statements.	Project document, financial statements and interview with project staff.	Assessment of Project document and financial statements and discussion with the project team.
37. What have been the financial-management challenges of the project? To what extent has pledged co-financing been delivered? Has any additional leveraged co-financing been provide since implementation?	Information on financial management co-financing in project	Project documents, annual reports, interview with finance staff.	Financial information from annual reports will be analyzed against the project document. Financial statement regarding co-financing

	document and in annual reports.		and delivery of committed amount will be analyzed and issues related to this will be acquired from relevant staff.
38. Has the operational Partners Agreement been applied efficiently?	Implementation of agreed activities in annual report and PIR.	Work plans, PIR, agreement documents, progress reports. Interview with key project staff.	Assessment of work plan, PIR, agreement documents, progress reports. Interview with partners.
39. How do the various stakeholders see their own engagement with the project?	Work plan with division of work, information about the expertise of stakeholders. Information from interview of stakeholders.	Work –plan and Interview with stakeholders.	Analysis of work-plan against the expertise of the stakeholders and their capacity, Interview with stakeholders for their views on their engagement.
40. Were local actors – civil society or private sector – involved in project design or implementation and what was the effect on project results?	Stakeholder engagement plan, Work-plan with information on activities and responsible institution, Annual reports and PIR with progress information.	Project document, PIR, Annual report, work plans, interview with stakeholders.	Review of project document, work plans, stakeholder engagement plan and interview with stakeholders and see achievement of tasks allocated to different stakeholders.
41. Is the project on track as it was originally designed or have there been delays in the project approval, implementation and reporting process? What are the major reasons of the delay?	Information on project progress and planned activities.	Work-plans, PIR, annual reports and interview with key informants.	Review of work plan, PIR and annual report. Interaction with the project staff regarding project implementation issues.
42. To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and	Information on project execution and role and	Same as above	Same as above

administering the project?	responsibilities performed by the executing agency. Performance information in PIR and annual reports.		
43. How well is the PMO functioning?	Information on achievement in PIR, annual reports. Information from stakeholder on PMO function.	PIR, Annual reports and Interview with stakeholders regarding performance of PMO.	Information from the PIR, Annual reports on performance will be cross checked with the stakeholders to find out the role of PMO.
44. Is there sufficient human resources, financial resources, etc. for the PMO operation and does it have the capacity to support project implementation?	Information on human, financial and physical resources with the PMO.	Management structure report, human, financial and physical resources information, M&E reports. Interview with project staff.	Analysis of administration structure, technical and financial capacity and technical assistance from different sector to the PMO to analyze the capacity of PMO. Information from key informants will add to this analysis.
45. What have been the main challenges in terms of the project management administration?	Information on challenges in PIR, Annual reports and from stakeholders.	Same as above	Same as above and analysis of challenges and adaptation made by the project to address them.
46. How well have risks been identified and managed?	Information on risk analysis and mitigation measures adopted.	Project document, PIR and key informant interview.	Review of risks in the project document, PIR and annual reports. Information will be acquired from the implementing agencies on mitigation measures adopted to address risks.
47. To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and	Oversight and supervision	Same as above	Role of FAO in project implementation will be analyzed

operational) during the project identification, formulation, approval, start-up and execution? What kind of support or changes is expected from FAO by the execution partners?	information in annual reports and PIR. Information from stakeholders.		against the provision of FAO's responsibility in the project document. Stakeholders view on this regard will also be collected.
48. How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience?	Communication materials, communication program information, effectiveness, and views of partners, stakeholders and general audience.	Communication plan, communication materials, news on program in local Newspapers, views of partners and stakeholders.	Analysis of the communication plan, communication materials, information on effectiveness of the communication activities from news coverage in Newspapers and from partners and stakeholders views.
49. Is the project's M&E system practical and sufficient? How has stakeholder engagement and gender assessment been integrated into the M&E system?	Information on M&E system and gender assessment provision in Project document and M&E system.	M&E document, progress reports, interview with key informants.	Review M&E document and analyze M&E reports. Generate information from key informants.
50. Was the project M&E system operating as per the M&E plan? Has information been gathered in systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies?	M&E plan and M&E report.	M&E plan, M&E reports and interview with key informants.	Analysis of project M&E plan and M&E reports. Information from key informants on M&E implementation.
Cross-cutting Issues			
51. To what extent were gender considerations and Human Rights reflected in the project design?	Gender consideration in decision making, project design and benefit distribution.	Project document, annual and quarterly reports. Interview with informants.	Analysis of the project design and implementation plans to see gender and human right considerations.
52. To what extent were gender considerations (equality) 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? How was	Gender information in Project document, Implementation plan, gender analysis report,	Project document, Annual reports and PIR. Interview with key informants.	Analysis project document to see if gender analysis was conducted or not, similarly gender participation in project design, implementation, benefit sharing

gender in decision making?			and decision making. Activities will also be analyzed in light of FAO gender equality policy and GEF gender policy.
53. 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? Gender in decision making?	Gender information in Project document, Implementation plan, gender analysis report,	Project document, Annual reports and PIR. Interview with key informants.	Analysis project document to see if gender analysis was conducted or not, similarly gender participation in project design, implementation, benefit sharing and decision making. Activities will also be analyzed in light of FAO gender equality policy and GEF gender policy.
54. To what extent were environmental and social concerns were 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 exits) has been adhere to?	Social and environmental consideration in project document and implementation plans,	Project document, annual reports and interview with key informants	Analysis of environmental and social concerns in project document and in project implementation. Information on this regards will also be acquired from key informants.
55. Does project contributes to SDGs? How other biodiversity project complementing the objectives of this project?	Information on activities that contributes to SDG in Project document and annual reports. Information regarding linkages of activities of this project with other biodiversity project.	Annual Reports, SDGs document, Information from key informants.	Analysis of project outcomes in light of SDGs. Similarly, linkages of the biodiversity objectives of this project with other biodiversity projects will be analyzed.

Annex V. List of documents consulted (Reference list)

1. Project document
2. Comments received from GEF secretariat on project document
3. 6 Month Report of the SFM project 2nd Q, 2020.
4. Project Progress Report, December 2018
5. Project progress Report 2nd Quarter 2019
6. Annual Work plan 2018
7. Annual Work plan 2019
8. Annual Work plan 2020
9. Implementation Strategy
10. PIR 2019
11. PIR 2020
12. PIR 2021
13. 1st PTF meeting minutes 27Sept 2018
14. 2nd PTF meeting minutes 4Dec 2018
15. 3rd PTF meeting Minutes 13 Dec 2019
16. Minutes of Meeting held with LTO 2-6 sept.
17. Skype Meeting Minutes 30 July 2019
18. FAO policy documents.
19. FAO Concept Note
20. Request for GEF CEO Endorsement
21. Project preparation Grant document
22. Project Inception Report
23. Country Programme Framework 2018-2021
24. Country Programme Framework 2021-2025
25. Co-financing Kitab State Forestry Co-Financing Pap state

Annex VI. Result matrix showing achievements at mid-term and MTR observations (Progress towards Achieving Project Objectives and Outcomes)

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-term target[5]	End-of-project target	Mid-term level achievement & assessment (30 June 2021)	MTR rating	Justification for rating
Objective: to introduce sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan, thereby sequestrating carbon and improving the quality of forest and tree resources.							
Outcome 1: An operational Forest Inventory (FI) and Monitoring system	FI and monitoring system in place	Inefficient, methodologically inappropriate, spatially, temporally and thematically incomplete system for FI and monitoring.	FI and monitoring system in place	FI and monitoring system in place and generating coherent information for planning and decision making at the FO level	Components of the system are in place. However they were not activated yet, because the process of data collection and evaluation has not started yet due to: 1) CoViD-19 situation in 2020. 2) Low participation and no initiative of O'rmonloyikha. 3) Unmet 2020 KPIs of National Consultants, which have hampered handover to O'rmonloyikha. 4) Delays related to the recruitment of the international consultant Mr Adolt for 2021 - Purchase of tools and materials for effective operation of the GIS laboratory completed during reporting period and installed, and Data Center and GIS lab are in operation. - Inputs for Manual I – compilation of base map production methodology prepared. Inputs for Manual I – Working instructions for CE survey prepared.	**MS**	GIS lab was ready, but it was not operated because data collection was not carried out. Work related to Manual II was not done.

Outcome 2.: SFM operationalized at 4 demonstration sites generating sustainable benefits such as carbon sequestration and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households	SFM operationalised at X sites covering X ha of land leading to sequestration to sequestration of X tCO2eq.	SFM is not operationalized in the different types of forest ecosystems in Uzbekistan	SFM operationalised at 4 demo sites covering 84,735ha of land	SFM operationalized on 84,735ha at 4 demo sites leading to sequestration of 4118451tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 500 local households of which at least 30% are female headed.	SFM was introduced (as a co-financing) in 12 465 hectares (in 4 FOs), which will lead to the sequestration of 510 100 tons of CO2 annually In particular, in Dekhkanabad forest organization 5125 hectares, 4750 ha in Kitab, 1730 ha in Pap, 860 ha in Sirdarya. SHARP survey documented 368 households out of which 260 households were involved in activities of SFM within 4 FOs, of which 122 women took part in gender and project activities. Guidelines for preparation of Multipurpose Management Plans for Sustainable Forest and Pasture Management in Uzbekistan prepared. Tender for procurement of planting materials for 3 demo sites (Dekhkanabad, Kitab and Pap) in FF was launched. Demo plots planned in 3 areas (Boyovut, Shirin and Guliston areas) to demonstrate SFM, however since the mentioned tender is in progress, demonstrations were not yet initiated. On September 15, 2020, water was supplied to the problem areas of the Dekhkanabad and Pap FO through 5 km long polyethylene pipes, which	**MS**	The SFM was introduced in only 12,465ha while target was 87,735ha.

					made it possible to install 40-ton reservoirs for storing water on the mountains slopes. It created opportunities to grow there plants, shrubs and trees adapted to local climatic conditions. - Draft Action plan for Pasture and Rangeland is developed but needs substantial revision. - Trainings held on each pilot FOs on "Rational pasture management in accordance with the Law on Pastures and other legal acts." - Local women participated in Seminar on "Development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities for rural women living in forest areas", held in Kitab Forestry organization.		
Outcome 3: The policy and enabling framework is conducive to state and private investment in SFM.	SFM principles integrated forest sector frameworks, policies and programs.	Weak policy and legal framework for SFM and lack of management plans at level to implement SFM	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place SFM principles integrated into key national forest policy	Strong enabling environment facilitates upscaling of SFM and enhanced carbon sequestration on all forest land.	- Gender Action Plan (GAP) for SFC (2021-2022) was developed with concrete targets and indicators to measure the progress against the goals and tasks set in the Gender Strategy. - The achievements of the gender component of the SFM project were reflected in the regional FAO newsletter and available on FAO regional website. http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/ru/c/1339036/ - Amendment has been made to the forest legislation permitting the	**MS**	- Training of 100 Officers to use Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure was not conducted. - NANA for forestry sector was not developed. - National Forestry program is revised but not approved yet. - Other than Gender Action Plan, no other lesson or best practices identified.

			frameworks and programs.		transfer of forest fund lands to long-term leases for up to 49 years. The project supported the amendment through its approval It is worth to note that all related activities as envisioned in the Prodoc (i.e. a workshop and preparation of standards and guidelines) were not yet carriet out. Since the legislation has been amanded even without these project activities, they seem to be now obsolete and respective changes in the LFM should be proposed Project team participated in all stages of the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Pastures". In particular, in the development of: Article No. 5, Chapter 2. Regulation in the field of use and protection of pastures; Article 10, Chapter 2. Regulation in the field of use and protection of pastures; Article 13, Chapter 3. Pasture use; article number 29, Chapter 5. Final provisions. In addition, relevant proposals were presented when agreeing on the draft law as a whole. It is woth noting that although the said Law greatly contributes to the overall spirit of the project, it was not considered part of the Prodoc and related works by the project team were not under the project work plan After several discussions held with ministries and agencies, it was decided to incorporate the National		

					Forest Program into the Concept for the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030. The Concept approved by the Presidential Decree dated October 6, 2020 No.PP-4850. The project recruited 2 consultants, who contributed to the facilitation of the revision. It is worth to note that this contribution did not include other associated results envisioned in the Prodoc (i.e. development of the production and finacial plan, and analysis of obstacless), but the overall project result (i.e National Forest Progrma approved) has been already achieved		
Outcome 4: Project implementation based on RBM and lessons learned/good practices documented and disseminated.	M&E system is in place to support adaptive result-based management and monitoring of upscaling resulting from the project.	No system in place	Implemented project based on adaptive results based-management.	Project delivers expected results and shares best practices.	- Project monitoring and evaluation system prepared. - PIR 2020 submitted to GEF Coordination Unit Six-months reports are submitted regulary to GEF CU. - MTR ToR and ToR for recruiment of MTR team prepared. Currently, International MTR consultant based on the results of VA is under selection process. - A communication plan has been developed. - On September 3-5, 2020, within the project, special workshops were held for women from the regions of Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan, where they learnt to produce non-wood crafts. The details of the trainings were covered by many	**MS**	Manual and guidelines on SFM in different forest types not developed and published.

					Uzbekistan media outlets. Below are the links to the coverage: *https://www.uzdaily.uz/uz/post/6582* *https://uzreport.news/society/predstavitelstvo-fao-provelo-seminar-trening-po-povisheniyu-dohodov-selskih-jenshin* *https://uzreport.news/society/ormon-hududlarida-yashovchi-qishloq-ayollari-daromadlarini-oshirish-boyicha-o-quv-seminari* - Several outlets made on the occasion, including: *https://uzreport.news/society/zamonaviy-intensiv-niholxonalar-tashkil-qilinmoqda* *https://t.me/urmon_news* *https://uz24.uz/ru/articles/voda-v-otdalennie-rayoni* - On October 6, 2020 Concept for the Development of Forestry in Uzbekistan until 2030 was approved by Presidential Resolution № 4850. This Concept was initiated by SFM project. Experts of the FAO Representation office in Uzbekistan made significant contribution to the development of the document. - Outreach activities included interview of project coordinator by Uzbekistan-24 national TV Channel for special comment on Presidential Decree № 4850 that was broadcasted within the		

					«Новости-24» and «Ахборот-24» informational programmes: *https://t.me/mtrkuzofficial/20073*		
Output1.1:	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection FO level field maps	Inadequate methodology for forest monitoring – based on Soviet-time forest management planning approaches, largely depend on subjective assessments	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection in place based on a broader spectrum of information	Harmonized methodology for SFM data collection in place and generating coherent data for FI and field maps	Purchase of tools and materials for effective operation of the GIS laboratory completed recently and installed, and Data centre and GIS lab are in operation. Inputs for Manual I- Compilation of base map production methodology prepared. Inputs for Manual I – Working instructions for CE survey prepared.		Testing of the forest enterprise level of the manual I not done. Manual II not developed. 35%
Output1.2:	X number of technicians in SCF, Uzles project and the Cadastral Unit trained	A serious lack of qualified personnel in SCF, Uzlesproject and the Cadastral Unit	5 technicians in SCF, Uzlesproject and the Cadastral Unit trained	5 technicians in SCF, Uzlesproject and the Cadastral Unit trained	Two trainings were held with the participation of representatives of 4 Pilot Forest organizations 20 people educated and trained to work with remote sensing and using Collect Earth		Training and capacity development in field method (data collection and mapping) not done. Training on enterprise-level data processing, analysis and result generation not done. 25% Data collection at forest enterprise level and entry in database not done (remote sensing & survey) Data processing/analysis/generation at forest-enterprise

							level in a central database not done. 10% Data acquisition and quality control not done. Data storage and processing not initiated yet. 20% Less than half of the target forest restoration 40%
Output1.3:	A geo-referenced database for forested land	The information is not available in a digital, georeferenced format - this limits its availability and integration with other data sources.	A geo-referenced database for forested land in place	A geo-referenced database for forested land in place capable of generating maps and other geo-spatial information	Server of the former TCP/UZB/3503 found and made available.	•	
Output 1.4:	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land	FMP inventories cover only Forest Fund lands, forests and forest-like ecosystems outside FF are not taken into consideration	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land in place	Forest information and monitoring system covering FF land as well as other forested land in place	All Consultants recruited, procurement of IT equipment completed (hardware) and largely finalized (software).	•	

				and operational			

Output 2.1:	SFM practices for high mountain forest covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	Available knowledge on site and climate requirements for production of tree products and timber is limited. Planning processes to include the local population in protection of natural forests and pasture management are not applied	SFM covering 36 530 ha of land	SFM covering 36 530 ha of land leading to sequestration of 1 839 056 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	SFM was introduced (as a co-financing) in 12,465ha (in 4 FOs), which will lead to the sequestration of 510,100 tons of CO2 annually. 2-day informational workshop on project purposes among local stakeholders, reviewing management planning (26-27 November 2018); Seminar on "Scientific basis for afforestation / reforestation, technology for creating pistachio plantations from planting material with a closed root system, pasture management", (December 20-21, 2018) 2-day training on "Seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures, as well as non-wood products" on 4 - 5 March 2019 for the representatives of Dekhkanabad Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Consultants have travelled extensively to identify and build relations with local communities and forestry organizations responsible for field implementation and monitoring. Mother tree plantations and plantations have been established, and innovative other concepts have been identified and validated.		

					"Development of traditional crafts and income-generating for rural women living in forest areas" workshop conducted (September 3-5, 2019) in Dehkanabad FO. 22 rural women from Kashkadarya and Syrdarya regions trained in all stages of environmentally friendly carpet weaving value chain with the use of local lamb wool (supply, processing, transportation and sale; processing of wool, spinning, knitting and dyeing);Rural women capacitated on GEWE, impacts of women's economic empowerment on themselves, their households, children and gains for the entire society. A three -year road map to establish a Center of handicrafts and carpet weaving developed. Out of 4 mini tractor drivers one female driver from Dehkanabad participated in technical training and is currently managing SFM donated mini-tractor. SHARP survey documented 368 households out of which 260 households were involved in activities of SFM within 4 FOs, of which 122 women took part in gender and project activities.		

					Draft Action plan for Pasture and Rangeland is developed but needs substantial revision.		

Output 2.2:	SFM practices for economic tree species covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	Available knowledge on site and climate requirements for production of tree products is limited. Planning processes to include the local population in rangeland management are not applied	SFM practices for economic tree species covering 16 200 ha of land	SFM practices for economic tree species covering 16 200 ha of land leading to sequestration of 628 813 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 200 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	2-day informational workshop on sharing information about project purposes among local stakeholders, identification of demonstration sites, reviewing management planning at Kitab Forestry organization and preparation of detailed Work plan for 2019, Kitab district, 29-30 November 2018. Seminar on "Scientific basis for afforestation / reforestation, technology for creating pistachio plantations from planting material with a closed root system, pasture management", (December 20-21, 2018) 2-day training on "Seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures, as well as non-wood products" held in March 6-7, 2019 for the representatives of Kitab Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Training on "Techniques of planting mother tree plantations", held on April 2-3, 2019 for the representatives of Kitab Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Practical seminar training on "The role of Management Plan in Forestry Activities", held on April 22-27, 2019		Preparatory work is done but 16200ha forest management practices for economic tree species not done. 35%

					Workshop on "Pasture Management" held on April 25, 2019 in Tashkent. Workshop on validation of visit suggestions with project team, co-financing partners, and forestry organizations organized in Tashkent, 17 June 2019. Consultants have travelled extensively to identify and build relations with local communities and forestry organizations responsible for field implementation and monitoring. Mother tree plantations and plantations have been established, and innovative other concepts have been identified and validated. Gender Expert conducted consultations with Kitab FO management and a G+FGD with 15 women from Matmon village, the most remote mountainous village to brainstorm additional income generation for them. The life in the village is quite challenging and the women are not employed into any formal jobs. They lead their multi-children HHs, through subsistence farming. It was agreed to organize a workshop on wool blanket production and knitting woolen outwear for women from Matmon village in premises of Kitab FO. Facilitate		

					purchase of equipment for the wool workshop in SFM project		
Output 2.3:	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	Planning techniques to identify suitable sites for valley and shelterbelt forest enhancement and conservation of biodiversity in forested areas are not widely available	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2 995 ha of land	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts covering 2 995 ha of land leading to sequestration of 787 902 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	2-day informational workshop on sharing information about project purposes among local stakeholders, identification of demonstration sites, reviewing management planning Gulistan, 1-2 November 2018. Workshop on "Shelterbelt establishment", Tashkent, 19-20 November 2018. 2-day training on "Shelterbelt establishment, creation of walnut plantation, seed production, soil preparation, and using non-wood products", Syrdarya, 28 February - 1 March 2019 for the representatives of Syrdarya Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Training on "Techniques of planting mother tree plantations", held on April 11-13, 2019 for the representatives of Syrdarya Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Practical seminar training on "The role of Management Plan in Forestry Activities", held on April 22-27, 2019 Workshop on "Pasture Management" under Project "Sustainable management of forests in Mountain	•	SFM practices for valley forests and shelterbelts coving 2995ha is not done. 25% 25%

					and Valley areas in Uzbekistan" (FSP), held on April 25, 2019 in Tashkent. Workshop on validation of visit suggestions with project team, co-financing partners, and forestry organizations organized in Tashkent, 17 June 2019. Consultants have travelled extensively to identify and build relations with local communities and forestry organizations responsible for field implementation and monitoring. Mother plantations and plantations have been established, and innovative other concepts have been identified and validated. The project selected 100 hectares on the territory of 4 farms for the implementation of the system of forest strips, conducted training courses and seminars with the participation of more than 40 specialists, households and farmers, of which 12 are women. On September 15, 2020, water was supplied to the problem areas of the Dekhkanabad and Pap FO through 5 km long polyethylene pipes, which made it possible to install 40-ton reservoirs for storing water on the mountains slopes. It created opportunities to grow there plants,		

					shrubs and trees adapted to local climatic conditions. In the end of November 2019 Gender Expert conducted a needs assessment in Syrdarya region FO to explore a potential for diversifying income generation opportunities for local rural women through developing traditional crafts based on available non-timber resources. There were barriers and bottlenecks to start the initiative identified during group discussions with rural women and community advisors from Gulistan and Boyovut districts: the distance to the potential workshop site (FO old premises) is quite far for the majority of women's residential areas. Syrdarya FO management is keenly interested to develop production of wool blankets initiative from locally available lamb wool and manage the value chain. The rural women from low-income and other socially vulnerable layers from neighboring communities will be provided with jobs. Upon COVID_19 lockdown more exploration in the FO neighborhood to identify more women in need for capacity development on local crafts.		

Output 2.4.:	SFM practices for forest covering X ha of land leading to improvement of livelihoods of at least X households.	The technical knowledge and participatory planning processes are no longer available in the forest enterprises to establish more shelterbelt plantations together with private land owners and farmers.	SFM practices for forest covering 29 010 ha of land	SFM practices for forest covering 29 010 ha of land leading to sequestration of 862 680 tCO2eq and improved livelihoods of at least 100 local households of which at least 30% are female headed	2-day informational workshop on sharing information about project purposes among local stakeholders, identification of demonstration sites, reviewing management planning at Pap Forestry organization and preparation of detailed Work plan for 2019, Pap district, 8-9 November 2018. Seminar on "Scientific basis for afforestation / reforestation, technology for creating pistachio plantations from planting material with a closed root system, pasture management", (December 20-21, 2018) day training on "Seed production, soil preparation, management of watersheds and pastures, as well as non-wood products" in 2019, Pap district, 20-21 February 2019 for the representatives of Pap Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Training on "Techniques of planting mother tree plantations", held on April 9-10, 2019 for the representatives of Pap Forestry Organization, farmers and contractors Practical seminar training on "The role of Management Plan in Forestry Activities", held on April 22-27, 2019		Only preparatory work done but SFM practices in 29010ha is not done. 25%

					Workshop on "Pasture Management" held on April 25, 2019 in Tashkent. Workshop on validation of visit suggestions with project team, co-financing partners, and forestry organizations organized in Tashkent, 17 June 2019. Consultants have travelled extensively to identify and build relations with local communities and forestry organizations responsible for field implementation and monitoring. Mother tree plantations and plantations have been established, and innovative other concepts have been identified and validated. A three day workshop conducted to capacitate 23 Pap FO rural women in washing, disinfecting, scratching the raw sheep wool available locally. The women learned to make cotton cases, quilt them and produce quilted wool blankets and belts. The ready produce is environmentally friendly, very light, warm, has a whole number of healing qualities. The unique feature of the proposed methodology for wool washing is that it does not engage toxic, heavy and expensive chemicals and detergents; the process does not require considerable amounts		

					of water which is crucial for water deficient areas. Potential marketing and sales strategies were discussed. GEWE awareness raising, introduction to entrepreneurship and business plan development sessions were also included to the agenda Pap FO management will support the new income generation strategy through hiring several trained women as seasonal workers while the entire value chain is developed and becomes earning profit for both the women and the FO.		
Output 3.1:	Training of X SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	SCF personnel, notably in the Cadastral Unit, often lack the necessary technical skills as well as equipment to effectively manage and interpret forestry information	Training of 25 SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	Training of 50 SCF staff at central and provincial level; provision of equipment related to GIS and to preparation of maps	Practical seminar training on "The role of Management Plan in Forestry Activities" held on April 22-27, 2019 Prepared 46 SCF staff at central and provincial levels Online training on base map conducted in June 2020. GIS-related equipment procurement completed. Most of the items have been delivered		Done
Output 3.2:	Training and awareness raising of X forestry officials in the application of the Voluntary Guidance on	Currently, non-State forest users are limited to a ten-year lease of FF land. This acts	Training and awareness raising of 100 officials in the	Training and awareness raising of 200 officials in the application of	For the reporting period of 2018-2019, project events shown in more than 60 programs on TV, published on the Internet and print media. The audience of 100 forestry enterprises of SFC,		Training of 100 officials to use VGGT is not done. 25% achieved.

	Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	as a barrier to non-state investors investing in any forest activity that requires more than ten years to be profitable. It notably makes any private investment in carbon sequestration on forest land very unprofitable.	application of the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	the Voluntary Guidance on Governance and Tenure (VGGT) and need for revision of the grazing ticketing system on FF land	ministries and departments, NGOs and international organizations (ICARDA, UNDP, TIKA, and USAID USA) is reached. Communications Specialist started in June 2019		
Output 3.3:	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	A draft NAMA for the pistachio was prepared in 2012 and is under review No MRV in place	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	NAMA for the forestry sector including MRV in place	Nothing done	•	0% done
Output 3.4:	Amendment to forest legislation legalizing long- term leases of forest fund land	There is no state policy in place for sustainable development of forestry. Insufficient funding to the sector makes forestry seek additional funds from e.g. leasing	Proposals for revision of policy legislation	2 revisions to the forestry legislation	Number of proposals have been made to the draft Presidential Decree on Amendments to the Legislation which legalizes the long-term lease of forest land. Project specialists contributed to the development of Presidential Decree on the "Convention to Combat Desertification". Amendment has been made to the forest legislation permitting the transfer of forest fund lands to long-term leases	• How many proposals for revision?	done

		of pastures, which leads to overgrazing			for up to 49 years. The project supported the amendment through its approval. It is worth to note that all related activities as envisioned in the Prodoc (i.e. a workshop and preparation of standards and guidelines) were not yet carried out. Since the legislation has been amended even without these project activities, they seem to be now obsolete and respective changes in the LFM should be proposed Project team facilitated the adoption of a Presidential Decree in which the lease term of FF land extended up to 49 years The Law "On Pastures" has been adopted, according to which associations of pasture users will be created, which will regulate the issuance of tickets for grazing of the State Forest Fund		
Output 3.5:	The National Forest Program is approved	The draft National Forest Program was initially prepared in 2008. It has since been subject to review and revision.	The National Forest Program is approved	The National Forest Program is approved	During the meeting held on 11-12 November 2019, National Forest Program and the Concept for the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 have been reviewed and revised. Currently, National Forest Program has been reflected in the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2030 and agreed with relevant ministries and agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the final version submitted to the		Not approved yet. National Forestry Program is not developed but is reflected in the Development of the Forestry sector until 2030.

					Cabinet Minister for review and approval.		
Output 3.6:	Number of lessons and best practices from Component 2 institutionalized in policy and/or programs Gender Action Plan (GAP)	0 0	5 lessons and BPs identified from Component 2 1 GAP developed	10 lessons and BPs, including on FSC certification, integrated into policies and or programs GAP implemented	Gender Action Plan (GAP) for 2021-2022 developed by GE, discussed with State Forestry Committee management, and with FOs during the workshop on June 21, 2019. Final version of GAP endorsed by SFM management FOs appointed field Gender Coordinators (FGC) based on the detailed endorsed ToR: FGCs capacitated on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) during 4 workshops. Network of FGCs established through online group in Telegram App. and regular communication maintained. The FGCs' status institutionalized by the special decree of the State Committee on Forestry with 30% salary increase provided by the FOs. Sex-disaggregated database of FOs' staff, seasonal workers, grazing tickets owners and farmers developed; FGCs trained on collection and maintenance of the database. The baseline information collected as of June 2019 status of FOs' HR and related community small holders to monitor GE	•	Activities done and target of MT point is not matching. 20%

Output 4.1:	Number of manuals and guidelines on SFM in different forest types	No manuals or guidelines exist	2 manuals and 2 guidelines developed and published	Manuals and guidelines applied at project demonstration sites and beyond	• Project monitoring and evaluation system prepared.	•	Not manual and guidelines developed and published.
Output 4.2:	M&E system in place	0	M&E system in place and providing inputs to PIRs, PPRs and mid-term evaluation	M&E system in place and providing inputs to final evaluation	• The monitoring system by FAO is established and monitoring by Program associate from FAO Country Office is being conducted on a regular basis. • PIR 2020 submitted to GEF Coordination Unit Six-months reports are submitted regularly to GEF CU. In order to disseminate the best practices reflected in the approved Forest restoration concept, Nursery concept, Pasture Management Strategy, 4 brochures summarising key ideas of the documents have been published by "Print Media" and disseminated amongst National partners and pilot FOs • On September 3-5, 2020, within the project, special workshops were held for women from the regions of Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan, where they learnt to produce non-wood crafts. The details of the trainings were covered by many Uzbekistan media outlets. Below are the links to the coverage:	•	Done. Functioning of M&E is affected by COVID.

					https://www.uzdaily.uz/uz/post/6582 https://uzreport.news/society/predstavitelstvo-fao-provelo-seminar-trening-po-povisheniyu-dohodov-selskih-jenshin ttps://uzreport.news/society/ormon-hududlarida-yashovchi-qishloq-ayollari-daromadlarini-oshirish-boyicha-o-quv-seminari		
Output 4.3:	Mid-term and final evaluation reports	0	Mid-term project review recommendations implemented	Final evaluation	• It is planned for August 2020. However, due to COVID-19 restriction and other constrains, it is requested to postpone it for 6 months		MTR being done
Output 4.4:	Communication and dissemination plan Project website and social media pages X number of project newsletters	Low awareness of SFM	Communication and dissemination plan in place Project website and social media pages established Outreach event organized in connection	6 project newsletters 4 outreach events	• A communication plan has been developed. • In June 2019, Sanobar Khudaybergenova, communication consultant was recruited to develop and lead communication activities. Communication strategy was developed for June 2019-December 2020 period. In accordance with FAO guidelines, it was decided to locate the project webpage inside corporate FAO.ORG website. However, due to the prolonged migration of corporate site from one platform to another (Drupal), the process has been delayed.	•	Communication expert is hired but communication and dissemination plan is not developed yet.

	X number of awareness/ outreach events organized		with project launch		Leaflets on project information has been published and disseminated during every training and field trainings to the local community and representatives of various ministries and agencies. • As for the social media accounts, FAO projects are not allowed to open separate social media accounts because of one corporate social media account policy, the project activities were decided to be highlighted through UN in Uzbekistan's social media. Communication priorities and channels were identified to disseminate the information to various stakeholders including national partners, policy makers, and rural population near project demonstration sites as well as general public. • The contact list of mass media representatives was formed for increased outreach. On 18 June 2020, the project team was interviewed on the discussion of strategy for the development of agriculture until 2030 in Uzbekistan. The interview was aired by Uzbekistan 24 national news channel during the prime time:		

					https://youtu.be/WT9Y6uV50kA • Upon adoption of presidential decree on additional measures to increase the efficiency of forest use in Uzbekistan, the project coordinator provided comments on increasing the efficiency of forest use in Uzbekistan. The interview was aired at Uzbekistan 24 TV channel 9:00 PM news program on 23 August, 2019: https://youtu.be/u-5cUUBvDJ4 • Seminar on "Development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities for rural women living in forest areas", was conducted in Dekhkanabad Forest organization on September 2-5, 2019. Press release was drafted and disseminated among local media. News article was published on the fourth page of "Dekhqonobod Ovozi", weekly print newspaper and the coverage from the event was aired by Kashkadarya regional TV. Along with it, radio interview with participants was aired by Uzbekistan 24 national radio channel:		

					https://soundcloud.com/user-929662669/carpet-weaving • Following the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and Freiburg University, the team has visited Uzbekistan recently. The coverage of the visit was aired at Agro-tourism program at Dunyo Bo'ylab national TV channel on 12 October 2019: https://youtu.be/46t_ssKzK5Y • Considering the importance of concept proposal for restoration of degraded forests, it was decided to highlight the topic in the media for enhanced attention. The training was covered by "Efirda biz" news program of Dunyo bo'ylab national TV channel, 18 October, 2019 @7 pm issue: https://youtu.be/LpaReStVdMM "Raising awareness of the researchers, professors and postgraduate students of the Tashkent state Agrarian University about international and local experience in forestry" held on September 30, 2019" was widely covered by the national media: Dunyo boýlab TV channel: https://youtu.be/JhTJEmGZi6Q		

					• Uzbekistan 24 national TV: https://youtu.be/JuJ8uUfdn84 • The coverage of SFM Steering Committee Meeting in Uzbek and Russia languages at UzReport TV was aired on 19 February 2020: https://youtu.be/92cOJsmbQaM • To raise awareness about the importance of forests for biodiversity, the project organized tree-planting event among the local population including women and children at the demonstration sites. The events were devoted to the International Day of Forests 2020. • The news circulated in the air for 24 hours in Uzbek and Russian languages. • Additionally, photo archive of the project was established. All seminars, trainings, meetings and tours conducted within the frame of the project were photo-documented. • During the reporting period, the project also greatly contributed to quarterly FAO Uzbekistan newsletter with several articles in its each issue		

Annex VII. Co-financing table

Source of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement/approval (USD)		Actual amount materialised as of MTR (USD)		Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
			Cash	**Kind**	**Cash**	**Kind**	
GEF	GEF		3,187,023	-	1,855,580	-	
FAO	FAO		953,000	100,000		608,000	
Gov. Uzbekistan	GoU		-	17,370,620	-	12,736,310	
Donor	GIZ		227,531	-	200 000*	-	
Research Institute	ICRAF		-	15,000	-	-	

*Contribution recorded in Euros

Annex VIII. GEF evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments
Strategic Relevance		
1. Overall strategic relevance	S	Relevant to the country's need.
1.1 Alignment with GEF & FAO strategic priorities	S	It is aligned with GEF and FAO strategic priorities.
1.2 Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	Relevant to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs.
1.3 Complementarity with existing interventions	S	Contributes to government of Uzbekistan's effort to address forestry sector problems.
Effectiveness		

1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Slightly below the target of MT level.
1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	Few MT level targets not achieved. Only about 40% of Mid-term level targets achieve.
1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	Some progress made
Outcome 1	MS	Some progress made
Outcome 2	MS	Some progress made
Outcome 3	MS	Some progress made
Outcome 4	S	Progress made with minor shortcomings.
Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Some progress made (40% activities accomplished) but need to work for more as this is less than target of mid-term level.
Efficiency		
Efficiency	MS	Efficient but some improvement needed
Sustainability of project outcomes		
i. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Relevant staff trained, farmers trained and commitment made by relevant agency verbally.
ii. Financial risks	ML	Financial issues not seen.
iii. Sociopolitical risks	UA	
iv. Institutional governance risks	ML	Relevant local government institute in involved in implementation and they committed to continue results
v. Environmental risks	ML	With the arrangements it is unlikely but if any climate issues appear then could not say
vi. Catalysis and replication	ML	Policies influenced and there is replication plans in place.

Factors affecting performance		
Project design and readiness	MS	Appropriate but still some room for improvement
Quality of project implementation	MS	Considering issues that is beyond the control of the PMO it is satisfactory
Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF etc.)	S	Mission from regional office was limited due to Covid19. Synergy building is limited.
Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	Could accelerate with leadership programs.
Quality of project execution	MS	Delay in recruitment of consultants and procurement of equipment delayed project activities.
Project execution and management (PMO and executing partner performance, administration, staffing etc.)	MS	Delay in recruitment of consultants, procurement of equipment and delay in contracting service provider affected implementation.
Financial management and co-financing	S	There were financial issues in the beginning but latter it was resolved.
Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MS	Would have been better if more research institutes were included.
Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	Stillrooms for improvement by establishing link with other SFM projects.
Overall quality of M&E	MS	Still rooms for improvement
M&E design	S	Design is fine
M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	Still room for improvement
Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	Still room for improvement
Cross-cutting concerns		

i. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	Could have leadership building programs. Also need to include more women in programs.
ii. Human rights issues	MS	No direct human right programs but indirectly supports human right
iii. Environmental and social safeguards	S	Supports local environment improvement and also social aspects were taken into consideration
Overall project rating	**MS**	To meet the final targets, speed of implementation needs to be improved.

B. Assessing rating

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

C. Criteria for rating factor affecting performance

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)	here 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.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation design or implementation rating

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 and implementation meet expectations
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of M&E design and implementation meet expectations
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design and implementation somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of M&E design and implementation substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of 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 implementation.

E. 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 asses (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude to risks to sustainability

Annex IX: Links of the project news coverage in print and electronic media and airing in Television.

- https://youtu.be/WT9Y6uV50kA

- An interview in relation to the Presidential decree on additional measures to increase the efficiency of forest use was aired at Uzbekistan 24 TV channel 9:00 PM news program on 23 August, 2019: https://youtu.be/u-5cUUBvDJ4
- Seminar on "Development of traditional crafts and income generating opportunities for rural women living in forest areas", September 2-5, 2019 was aired by Uzbekistan 24 national radio channel: https://soundcloud.com/user-929662669/carpet-weaving
- The coverage on the visit of the Freburg University team was aired at Agrotourism program at Dunyo Bo'ylab national TV channel on 12 October 2019: https://youtu.be/46t_ssKzK5Y
- Awareness program coverage September 30, 2019" was widely covered by the national media: Dunyo boýlab TV channel: https://youtu.be/JhTJEmGZi6Q
- Uzbekistan 24 national TV: https://youtu.be/JuJ8uUfdn84
- The coverage of SFM Steering Committee Meeting in Uzbek and Russia languages at UzReport TV was aired on 19 February 2020: https://youtu.be/92cOJsmbQaM
- On September 3-5, 2020, special workshops held for women from the regions of Kashkadarya, Syrdarya and Namangan, were covered by many Uzbekistan media outlets.

https://www.uzdaily.uz/uz/post/6582
https://uzreport.news/society/predstavitelstvo-fao-provelo-seminar-trening-po-povisheniyu-dohodov-selskih-jenshin

https://uzreport.news/society/ormon-hududlarida-yashovchi-qishloq-ayollari-daromadlarini-oshirish-boyicha-o-quv-seminari