

ADB GEF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (PIR)

(This report covers implementation period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021
including recently closed projects covering the reporting period)

ADB Official Project Title: Greater Mekong Subregion Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Project (Additional Financing)

ADB Project Number: G0433-VIE

I. GEF PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Ratings: (Please see Annex C for Definition of Ratings.)

Development Objective Rating (DO):

1. Satisfactory. The objective to increase the protected area management by 25% by the project completion compared to 2013 baseline is expected to be achieved. As of December 2020, the increase of 33.81% was reported. This increase contributes to sustainable management of the established biodiversity corridor in the Central Annamite and thus to the global environmental objectives.

Implementation Progress Rating (IP):

2. Moderately Satisfactory (MS). Implementation of output 1 and 2 activities was delayed due to long government procedures and COVID-19 social distancing and lockdown. Handover of grant administration from ADB Manila to Viet Nam Resident Mission and the transition time also contributed to the delay. The delay resulted in the extension of the grant closing date for 15 months (from September 2019 to December 2020), and output 2 scope reduction (development of the safeguard monitoring reporting and verification-MRV system was cancelled).

Risk Rating:

3. Low risk (L). The risk includes understaffing and lack of qualified staff in the Executing Agency and Implementing Agencies in addition to too many implementing agencies. All this caused prolonged review and approval resulting in underachievement of two output indicators. Gaps between sector development plans: inconsistencies between national and provincial strategies/roadmaps, and forestation/forest protection regulations between ministries (MONRE and MARD, for example) caused confusion during grant implementation and delayed the implementation process. The project impacts, however, will need further assessed, in the context that other projects/program may also contribute to the same impacts that are expected under this project.

Information on Progress, challenges and outcomes on project implementation activities

4. As of 30 June 2021, the grant elapsed time is 100%. The total cumulative contract awards and disbursements (including advance accounts) were \$2.482 million and \$3.172 million, respectively, which are equivalent to 78% and 86% of the net grant amount of \$3.795 million. For 2021, the achieved CAD is \$0 million compared to the projections of \$1.316 million and \$0.632 million for contract awards and disbursements, respectively. The project is rated 'on track'.

5. The project experienced a one-year start up delay due to prolonged consolidation of the CPMU and PIUs. The mid-term review was conducted in November 2017. Major contracts were

awarded during 2018-2019. Project progress was very delayed due mainly to government prolonged review and approval processes, including untimely approval of annual work plan and financial plan. In 2020, COVID-19 social distancing and lockdown during February-May 2020 prevented from implementing many activities in communes and villages under both components and resulted in delay in achieving component 1 and 2 outputs by the grant closing date. ADB extended the grant closing date to 31 December 2020 to facilitate project implementation.

Information on progress, challenges and outcomes on Environment and Social Safeguards

6. The grant activities entailed no construction activities, land acquisition and resettlement and thus exerted no negative social and environment impacts. Its positive impacts on the environment and indigenous people are natural through improved forest protection and management, including improved knowledge and strengthened practice for the indigenous people in forest protection and co-management.

Information on progress, challenges and outcomes on stakeholder engagement

7. Grant activities raised awareness of local residents and civil organizations through involving them intensively in the conservation related activities from consultation to implementation of the protected area management plan. More specifically, local residents, commune women's unions, commune forest management boards, farmers' groups, have been consulted on village conservation plan development, participated in the VCP development workshop, and implement the developed VCP with supervision and monitoring by the commune forest management board and district forestry units.

8. In addition, officials from various government agencies (for example Protected Area Management Boards-PAMB, Forest Protection Units, District People's Committees, Commune People's Committees, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minorities Agencies) participated in process for development and implementation of the operation and management plan (OMP) for the protected areas.

Information on Progress on gender-responsive measures

9. GAP implementation was on track with all targets were substantially met. The grant project GAP consists of 10 activities and 8 targets, one activity was not implemented (A6) because there was no intervention to set up enterprises to be financed by the project. 100% of ten activities were successfully completed. Five among eight targets were achieved, two targets were substantially achieved (T4, T6) resulted from lower-than-expected participation rate of the ethnic women due to the reason that the conservation works are more suitable for men than women. Under T7, the sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of PFES was not available in December 2020, due to the communities started to pilot that PFES payment mechanism in 25 villages since late 2020. GAP monitoring table is in Attachment 2.

Knowledge activities/ Products

- Protected area operation management plan
- Village conservation manual
- Species conservation plan
- PFES supervision and payment mechanism

FOR SCCF/LDCF INDICATORS: (Provide information if applicable)

Total Number of Beneficiaries	A total 1,146 households (Quang Nam: 452; Quang Tri: 477; Thua Thien Hue: 237) received project support for improving agricultures capacity and income, including support for home gardening, livestock raising.
Ha of land better managed to withstand the effects of climate change	7 PAs, covering 226,039.63 ha, are supported by the Grant
No. of risk and vulnerability assessments, and other relevant scientific and technical assessments carried out and updated	Climate risk assessment was conducted in project provinces as a sample scenario in terms of potential impacts to biodiversity in the Trung Truong Son.
No. of people trained to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and/or evaluate adaptation strategies and measures	Under BCC loan project: 12,821 people including project officers and community members benefited from project related activities, with 38.16% were women (4,892 women) of which 85% were from ethnic minorities. Under GEF BCC-Grant: 2,117 people benefited, 805 (38%) of these were women.
No. of regional, national and sub-national institutions with strengthened capacities to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and/or evaluate adaptation strategies and measures	Seven projected area management boards, three departments of natural resources and environment, and biodiversity conservation agency in MONRE.
Contribute towards public awareness of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaption (Tick if relevant)	Yes
Expand access to improved climate information services (Tick if relevant)	Yes
Expand access to improved climate related early-warning information (Tick if relevant)	Yes
No. of regional, national and sector-wide policies, plans and processes developed or strengthened to identify, prioritize and integrate adaptation strategies and measures	Yes. Policy recommendations on biodiversity conservation were proposed based on project experience.
No. of sub-national plans and processes developed or strengthened to identify, prioritize and integrate adaptation strategies and measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PFES mapping and payment mechanism was proposed. - Sustainable forest management mechanism was proposed. - Conservation measures for selected animals were proposed.

II. PROJECT PROFILE

1. General Information	1	GEF ID	GEFID5005
	2	Focal Area(s)	Multi Focal Areas
	3	Region	Central region
	4	Country	Viet Nam
	5	GEF Project Title	GMS Biodiversity Conservation Corridor (Additional Financing)
	6	Project Size (FSP; MSP)	FSP
	7	Trust Fund (GEFTF; SCCF; LDCF)	GEFTF
2. Milestone Dates	8	GEF CEO Endorsement Date (mm/dd/yy)	23 October 2014
	9	ADB Approval Date if the GEF Fund (mm/dd/yy)	24 June 2015
	10	GEF Grant Signing of the GEF Fund (mm/dd/yy)	4 September 2015
	11	Implementation Start Date of the Project and of the GEF Component (mm/dd/yy)	29 February 2016 (grant effectiveness)
	12	Date of 1st GEF Grant Disbursement (mm/dd/yy)	8 August 2016 (Initial cash advance)
	13	Final date of GEF Grant Disbursement (mm/dd/yy)	31 December 2021
	14	Proposed/Revised Implementation End (mm/dd/yy)	
	15	Actual Implementation End (mm/dd/yy)	31 December 2020
	16	Expected Financial Closure Date (mm/dd/yy)	31 December 2021
3. Funding	17	Actual Financial Closure Date (mm/dd/yy)	Not yet available
	18	PPG/PDF Funding (USD)	N/A
	19	GEF Grant (USD)	\$3,795 equivalent
	20	Total GEF Fund Disbursement as of 30 June 2021(USD)	\$3,172
	21	Confirmed Co-Finance at CEO Endorsement (USD)	N/A
	21	Materialized Co-Finance at project mid-term (USD)	N/A
4. Evaluations	22	Materialized Co-Finance at project completion (USD)	N/A
	23	Proposed Mid-term date (mm/dd/yy)	Midterm was conducted
	24	Actual Mid-Term date - if applicable (mm/dd/yy)	14-22 July 2017
	25	Proposed Terminal Evaluation date (mm/dd/yy)	December 2022
	26	Actual Terminal Evaluation Date (mm/dd/yy)	Not yet available.
	27	Tracking Tools Required (Yes/No/ Focal Area TT)	Yes, management effectiveness tracking tools for national protection areas in Quang Nam, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Tri provinces.

28	Tracking Tools Date - if applicable (mm/dd/yy) Midterm Tracking Tool Terminal Evaluation Tracking Tool	2013 as the baseline Same tracking tool is used for midterm and terminal evaluation. Outcome was too early to be updated during midterm due to limited project progress.
----	---	---

III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Project Description:

10. The overall expected impact of the BCC and its additional financing by the Global Environment Funds (GEF) is *'Climate resilient sustainable forest ecosystems in the Central Annamites (Trung Truong Son) landscape benefiting local livelihoods and downstream users (National Strategy on Biodiversity to 2020 and Vision to 2030)'*. Achievement of GEF's expected impact of *'Strengthened management and ecological integrity of the protected area (PA) network in the Central Sub-region of the Greater Annamite (Trung Truong Son) region of Viet Nam'* will contribute to the overall project impact as stated above. The Project expected combined outcome is sustainably managed biodiversity conservation landscapes in Quang Nam, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue provinces.

11. The expected grant outputs have been integrated into the BCC loan project and are (i) Institutions and communities strengthened in conservation of the Central Annamite landscape; (ii) Biodiversity conservation landscape managed with ecosystem services protected and maintained; (iii) Livelihood improved, small-scale infrastructure support provided and financial sustainability obtained in target villages with reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and (iv) Project management and support services provided. The grant has two components: (i) Strengthened planning and management of the biodiversity and forests in the Protected Areas and their surroundings in the Trung Truong Son landscape; and (ii) Landscapes conservation measures at the community level in PAs and their surroundings to facilitate financial sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Updated DMF status is in [Attachment 1](#).

12. The BCC covers 35 communes (13 in Quang Nam, 12 in Quang Tri and 10 in Thua Thien-Hue) located in 6 districts (Tay Giang and Nam Giang in Quang Nam province; Huong Hoa and Dakrong in Quang Tri province; and A Luoi and Nam Dong in Thua Thien-Hue province) in three provinces. The selected communes have met the criteria including (i) being within the BC designed area, (ii) having contribution to ecosystem connectivity, (iii) poor communes, and (iv) holding good forest coverage to facilitate the connection of forest ecosystems. The pilot provincial BC policies including management plans, once developed, are expected to cover about 530,000ha and benefit around 15,500 households.

13. The GEF scopes of support covers 8 protected areas (Table 1) and 40 villages within the protected areas and their buffer zones and to improve management of approximate 231,000 hectares of the protected areas. About 6,000 people in the three participating provinces would benefit from the project through enhanced ecosystem services, improved carbon stocks, enhanced climate resilience, sustainable forest benefit sharing and improved conservation-based livelihoods. The Quang Tri Provincial People's Committee (PPC) in its official letter no. 514/UBND-MT dated 7 Feb 2018 advised not to establish the new HCM PA because the site did not meet the criteria on the size and biodiversity features for a protected area. The current grant scope, therefore, supports 7 protected areas, the number of 40 villages remain.

B. Implementation Progress (IP) Rating:

14. This assessment is made based on the latest project progress report. The grant outcome consists of one indicator of management effectiveness of the protected areas increase by 25%. This is fully achieved given the number of protected areas reducing from eight to seven because one protected area in Quang Tri province, the Ho Chi Minh legendary trail protected area, was not established due to its ineligible size and its fauna and flora nature.

15. Four outputs consist of 17 indicators, among those 12 were fully achieved, 2 were partly achieved (1h and 1e) because seven protected area established instead of eight as envisaged, and 3 were not achieved (3h, 3i, due to output 2 scope reduction and 4b due to government policy constraint). The partial achievement of the outputs does not negatively impact the achievement of outcome and thus is assessed not negatively impact the expected global environment benefits. Details are in Attachment 1.

a. GEF Grant Disbursement

16. Initial advance was made in August 2016, six months after grant effectiveness. This was due to late mobilization of the key staff of the grant project management unit (PMU) including grant coordinator and accountant. Disbursement was delayed during the grant implementation also was because of multiple implementing agencies in the provinces (seven management boards of the protected areas and the three departments of natural resources and environment) when central PMU was not a permanent professional PMU. Grant disbursement followed loan disbursement procedures consisting of more steps than ones applied for technical assistance projects.

b. Stakeholders Engagement

17. **Key stakeholder groups.** Stakeholders to participate in the preparation and implementation of OMPs and VCPs included government officials, members of representative bodies, mainstream beneficiaries, potentially disadvantaged groups and CSOs. The stakeholders' participation in training, participatory decision making, and where applicable, provision of labor to implement the implementation of the OMPs and VCPs.

18. Stakeholders' participation contributed to achieving project targets on biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement.

- PMUs and DARDs were representatives of implementing agencies responsive for project implementation. They participated in monitoring and supervision of preparation and implementation of OMPs and VCPs, approval of VCPs and monitoring of impact of VCPs on conservation;
- PAMBs were representatives of implementing agencies responsive for project implementation. They participated in the preparation of OMPs and selection of executive committees of village conservation committees, endorsement of village conservation plans and overseeing the use of village block grants;
- Executive committees of village conservation committees were representatives of beneficiaries. They participated in preparation of village conservation plans based on project criteria and implemented the village conservation plans;
- Village participatory planning team provided technical assistance in preparation of village conservation plans and implemented the village conservation plans;
- Beneficiaries and ultimately owners of the village conservation plans participated in the consultations on the preparation of OMPs and preparation of village conservation plans based on project criteria and implemented the village conservation plans;
- The civil society organizations, they participated in preparation of village conservation plans. CPMU and PPMUs noted the importance of the CSOs' contribution, especially Women's Unions, Fatherland Fronts, and Youths Unions and made effort to maximize their involvement in key project implementation stages including (i) advocating about project objectives and activities, technical requirements, community roles, responsibilities and benefits when participating in the project; (ii) consulting on key project activities such as operations and management plans (OMP) for protected areas, and village conservation

- plans (VCP) before they are approved by the local government authorities; and (iii) implementing those plans.
- Regarding commune development fund (CDF), CDF Management Boards were set up at commune level with staff selected from the CPCs and Commune WUs¹. In villages/hamlets, credit and savings groups were formed with group leaders/representatives (reputable and capable) chosen by the communities themselves. CDF, although mainly was an activity under BCC loan, was also applied in GCF communes, where appropriate.

c. Gender Action Plan Implementation Status

19. The main results of GAP implementation are: (i) 100% of 11 female technical staff in PAMBs have trained on environmental communication, monitoring of forest flora and wildlife (the target of 100%); (ii) 3,768 participants including 1,349 women from PAMBs, representative of provincial, district, commune and community levels including the poor, the marginalized men and women participated in the consultation meetings and training on OMPs and VCPs preparation in 3 provinces (35.8%, higher than the target of 30%); (iii) 1,249 women among 3,279 participants representing community stakeholders at the various multi-stakeholder consultations, workshops and training to prepare the OMPs and VCPs in 3 provinces (38.1%, higher than the target of 30%); (iv) 40 VCCs were established with 7,778 members including 3,848 women (50%, achieved the target of 50%); (v) 44 women among 111 community facilitators participated in village participatory planning teams (VPPT) (40%, achieved the target of 40%); (vi) 782 women among 1,594 participants from PAMBs staff and local people trained on PFES (49%, higher than the target of 30%); (vii) The Social Safeguard Specialist is assigned to guide and report the GAP implementation at each PPMU level; (viii) Sex-disaggregated beneficiaries data provided.

20. The project supported to develop FPES guidelines for improving FPES implementation and management in the buffer zone and the communities started to pilot that PFES payment mechanism in 25 villages since late 2020. Therefore, the sex-disaggregated data on FPES beneficiaries (T7) was not available as of grant completion in December 2020. This data will be updated in the PCR mission. Updated GAP implementation status is in Attachment 2.

d. Social and Environmental Safeguard Plan Implementation Status

21. **Involuntary Resettlement.** Initial review conducted during the fact finding mission confirmed that the Additional Financing is category B for involuntary resettlement (IR) and indigenous people (IP) in accordance with ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS 2009).² Since villages in protected areas and their buffer zones were yet to be determined at the project processing stage and technical inputs for land use planning was expected to be provided for executing and implementing agencies, local government units, Provincial/District/Commune Peoples Committees, relevant Ethnic Minorities Offices, and the Viet Nam Women's Union during project implementation, no project resettlement plan (RP) was prepared before the additional financing appraisal. The GEF project involved no civil works, no resettlement and no land acquisition which was further confirmed during implementation. Therefore, RP was not needed and was not prepared for GEF.

¹ After the PPC issued the Decision to establish the CDF and its operation regulation, the CPC held a meeting to select the members of the CDF Management Board. Director of the CDF Management Board was assigned to the Head of the Commune Project Implementation Unit (CPIU); The Deputy Director of the CDF Management Board was the representative of the Commune Women's Union; The accountant was held by the CPC's accountant.

² ADB Safeguard Policy Statement June 2009, Manila.

22. **Ethnic Minority Development Framework (EMDF) and Ethnic Minority Development Plan (EMDP).** GEF provides incentives, funding, and technical assistance enabling local people to sustainably utilize forest and other natural resources, improve livelihood alternative opportunities, grow trees of their choice in their homestead plantations and community forests for subsistence needs as well as for fuelwood consumption and construction and use. The establishment of forest conservation regimes under VCPs in the 40 villages in and around the protected areas creates income generating opportunities for local people through joint forest management activities. Thus, livelihood of ethnic communities is not negatively impacted by GEF activities.

23. The Ethnic Minority Development Framework (EMDF) was updated based on the 2014 EMDF for BCC project with expansion to cover GEF protected areas and buffer zones. The uEMDF was posted to ADB website in June 2015 and since then the uEMDF is used for both BCC and GEF. The EA extended contract of the social safeguards specialist under the BCC for the same service under GEF.

24. The only potential negative impacts that were forecasted during project design was the displacement of the ethnic minorities living inside the protected area and restriction of access of those people to natural resources. For example, establishment of new protected area (Ngoc Linh) was triggering restriction of land use or restriction of access to natural resources. However this had been mitigated as livelihoods of ethnic minority people/population in the area are no longer subject to the natural resources on account of the National Program of *settled cultivation and resettlement for ethnic minority people*. Moreover, no negative changes took place in the ethnic minorities' farming and livelihood system or their cultural practice and ancestral domains.

25. In and around the other 6 protected areas, the restriction of land use and access to natural resources have already been regulated in the government policy for natural forests and protected areas³. During implementation, it was confirmed that there have been no resettlement and land acquisition and both BCC and GEF activities did not cause any economic displacement. In March 2019, the EA and IAs further clarified that there has been no further restriction to Ethnic Minorities' access to forest products as a result of the GEF project. Therefore, there is not a need to prepare a separate REMDP for GEF.

26. **Environmental Safeguards.** GEF concentrates on strengthening institutions and communities in conservation of natural reserves and forests inside and around the protected areas. The ongoing BCC project and the GEF are collectively classified as a Category B for environment in accordance with the ADB SPS 2009. Activities that would cause significant environmental impacts and clarified as category A for environment according to ADB SPS 2009 were not eligible for BCC and GEF financing.

27. Much like the BCC project, GEF also generates overwhelmingly positive environmental impacts. Biodiversity conservation in the protected areas and their buffer zones is of global significance and will support for conservation of several critically endangered species through the restoration and protection of habitats essential to their survival. GEF takes a sector-like approach whereby exact locations and type of activity in the 40 villages in and around protected areas were determined during implementation by the local implementation partners within the geographical boundaries and according to the additional financing objectives.

³ Article 35 of 1991 Law on Forest Protection and Development prohibits all illegal forest exploitation and deforestation.

28. The environmental assessment and review framework (EARF) of BCC was updated to include the scope of the GEF. The CPMU/PPMUs conducted environmental assessment for GEF activities based on the updated EARF. During GEF implementation, the characteristics of the project activities are amended to minimize negative environmental impact. For example, there are no civil works accepted under the grant scope, except a resting shelter for the forest patrollers for Sao La in Quang Nam province, where the project supported to purchase the shelter's frames and measures to prevent forests would be implemented, where/when necessary, during assembling of the shelters. There is neither waste-generated activities under GEF. Therefore, an environmental monitoring system was not required. The EA expanded the function of the environmental safeguard specialist under the BCC project to support also environmental safeguards management under GEF.

C. Global Environmental Benefits (GEB) Objective/ Development Objective (DO) Rating:

29. Ecosystem conservation was initiated by the Program “200 Typical Global Ecosystems”⁴, where based on biodiversity attributes of 238 large areas selected for prioritization of biodiversity conservation measures on earth. The Greater Mekong Ecosystem complex of downstream forest areas comprises four ecosystem areas, three of which are listed in under the “200 Typical Global Ecosystems”. The 1999 Ecoregion Action Program (EAP)⁵ was operational in forest areas of the Greater Mekong downstream to preserve unique biodiversity values in danger; the Truong Son Range is the most diversified ecosystem in the Greater Mekong Ecosystem downstream complex.

30. The prioritized Central Truong Son, part of the Greater Truong Son Range's ecosystem—one of 200 global typical ecosystems, comprises forest habitats with many unique and threatened species; the landscape embraces the conjunction of tropical and temperate climate zones. The Central Truong Son ecosystem lies in the mountainous terrain of the Truong Son Range in four provinces in the south of Lao PDR and seven provinces in the central region of Vietnam (ie. Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, Da Nang, Binh Dinh, Gia Lai, and Kon Tum) with a total area of 3.7 million ha, in which about two million ha are forests. The biodiversity rich forest areas of the Central Truong Son Range/Annamites in the western part of Quang Nam, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Tri provinces provide critical ecosystem services to the lowland and coastal areas of the central region of Vietnam.

31. The project contributed to sustainable management of the biodiversity in the three provinces of the Central Truong Son region of Viet Nam, and therefore contributed to the global environment protection.

⁴ The Global 200 is the list of ecoregions identified by WWF, the global conservation organization, as priorities for conservation. The Global 200 list actually contains 238 ecoregions, made up of 142 terrestrial, 53 freshwater, and 43 marine ecoregions.

⁵ Defined in 1999 by WWF, the Ecoregion Action Program (EAP) in the Forests of the Lower Mekong currently works to conserve the rich and endangered biodiversity of two of these ecoregions - the Greater Truong Son and the Central Indochina Dry Forests.

Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Status
OUTCOME Sustainably managed biodiversity conservation landscapes in Quang Nam, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue provinces	e. By 2019, management effectiveness of eight existing and proposed protected areas covering 231,000 ha increased by 25% over 2013 baseline	e. Achieved By December 2020: The increase of 33.81% was reported compared to the 2013 baseline (EMO's report dated April 2021). - Eight protected areas (231,276.63 ha) were to be supported by the grant. However, Ho Chi Minh Legendary Trail PA in Quang Tri (5,237 ha) was not established per Quang Tri PPC's decision number 514/UBND-MT dated 07/02/2018 due to its ineligible size and fauna and flora variety. As a result, only 7 PAs, covering 226,039.63 ha, are supported by the Grant. The management effectiveness was, therefore, measured based on the data collected for seven PAs. The removal of the Ho Chi Minh Legendary Trail protected area from the grant scope does not affect the grant outcome achievement.

D. Risk Rating:

32. There was an unforeseen factor that negative impacted on timely achieving the project outcome, and thus diminished the full achievement of the expected GEBs was the impact of the COVID-19 that resulted in constraints to implementing field works and partially cancellation of output 2 scope. There would also be risks to sustain the grant outcome through sustainable implementation of the village/commune conservation plan and operations and management plan of the protected areas due to lack of financial and personnel resources at the communes and districts.

E. Overall Rating of the Project: Satisfactory

33. The project addressed fragmentation in terms of biodiversity conservation in the established biodiversity conservation corridor in the Central Annamite through improving conservation capacity of the seven protected areas in the project provinces that were not included in the original scope of the loan project. In addition, the project is expected to successfully demonstrate sustainable forest management to reduce emission from deforestation and forest degradation (see more details in output 2 in section B).

F. Additional Comments – Good Practices and Lessons Learned:

34. Good practices include (i) Forest conservation plan implementation involving villages and communes; (ii) establishment and implementation of forest ecological service payment mechanism; and (iii) agriculture-based livelihood for the local residents to reduce forest exploitation. Those good practices can also be replicated to sustain forest management and protection.

35. Lessons learned:

- MONRE should not be the only Executing Agency (EA) for the project. EA should be selected based on agency's mandates. For examples: Provincial government should be EAs for activities in provinces; MARD should be EA for forestation and conservation activities; MONRE should be EA for conservation policy. At the same time, MONRE can be coordinator for project activities.

- Grant implementation period is too short while most of the activities take place at the communes/villages. Grant implementation should be at the same time with the loan implementation to synergize the entire project impacts.


G. Knowledge activities / products:

- Protected area operation management plan;
- Village conservation manual;
- Species conservation plan; and
- PFES mapping in the project area and proposed payment mechanism.

H. Location Data:

Thua Thien Hue (A Luoi and Nam Dong districts); Quang Tri (Huong Hoa and Dakrong districts) and Quang Nam (Tay Giang and Nam Giang districts).

Signature:

Name of Project Officer: Khuc Thi Lan Huong (Ms.) 
Position: Senior Project Officer (Agriculture and Natural Resources), VRM
Date: 26 August 2021

for Endorsed by:



Andrew Jeffries
Country Director, VRM

For Projects that have conducted Midterm Review Mission (from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021)

IV. Midterm Review: Grant MTR was combined with the BCC loan project review mission. AM and BTOR are in Attachment 3. Tracking tools used for as a 2013 baseline were used with no change.

Midterm Project Ratings: (Please see Annex 1 for Definition of Ratings.)

Development Objective Rating at MTR (IP):

Complicated nature of the project within short implementation time and by a non-permanent PMU may lead to delays and underachievement of outputs and outcome.

Implementation Progress Rating at MTR (DO):

As of 15 June 2017, overall project implementation progress was 10% against the elapsed grant period of 35%. The project faced a start-up delay of one year due to government long approval process. It started to catch up since Q2 2017 but implementation of activities is still delayed due to the same reason and government complicated procedures.

Risk Rating at MTR:

Complicated nature of the project within short implementation time may lead to delays and underachievement of outputs and outcome.

Information on Progress, challenges and outcomes on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan included at CEO Endorsement/Approval)

It was early to assess.

Information on Progress on gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent

It was early to assess.


Knowledge activities / products (based on the Knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval) and lessons learned (if available)

It was early to assess.

Main Findings of the MTR: By the MTR of 14-22 July 2017, the grant is in its early implementation stage due to the start-up delay mentioned above. Although it is too early to assess the achievement of the overall objectives, the project may face difficulties in delivery all activities due to short implementation time, complicated nature of a number of activities, and government cumbersome procedures while the PMU is not a permanent PMU with part-time PMU management staff.

Core Indicators: most were not yet due.

Signature:

Name of Project Officer: Khuc Thi Lan Huong (Ms.) 
Position: Senior Project Officer (Natural Resources and Agriculture), VRM
Date: 26 August 2021

for Endorsed by:



Andrew Jeffries
Country Director, VRM

ANNEX C: DEFINITION OF RATINGS

Implementation Progress Ratings

Highly Satisfactory (HS): Implementation of **all** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be presented as “good practice”.

Satisfactory (S): Implementation of **most** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that is subject to remedial action.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Implementation of **some** components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with **some** components requiring remedial action.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Implementation of **some** components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with **most** components requiring remedial action.

Unsatisfactory (U): Implementation of **most** components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): Implementation of **none** of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Global Environment Objective/Development Objective Ratings

Highly Satisfactory (HS): Project is expected to achieve or exceed **all** its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.

Satisfactory (S): Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only **some** of its major global environmental objectives.

Unsatisfactory (U): Project is expected **not** to achieve **most** of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, **any** of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Risk Rating

Risk ratings will assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risks of projects should be rated on the following scale:

High Risk (H): There is a probability of greater than 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.

Substantial Risk (S): There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold and/or the project may face substantial risks.

Modest Risk (M): There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/ or the project may face only modest risks.

Low Risk (L): There is a probability of up to 25% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/ or the project may face only modest risks.