

Decentralized Project/Programme Evaluation Series

Terminal evaluation of Project “Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods”

**GCP/MOZ/117/GFF
5516**

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Abstract

The project "Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods", with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), sought to promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems. To do so, it sought to strengthen the existing revenue sharing mechanism (RSM) that supports sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local peoples' livelihoods in the Zambezia Province, Mozambique.

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach, applied mixed-methods and included a field mission to Mozambique. The project contributed to the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework the integration of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the new Forestry Law. However, results in terms of human capacity strengthening were modest. Natural resource management practices were introduced in local communities allowing beneficiaries to access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption. Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES, important for when it becomes operational, and therefore impact prospects at community level are promising.

Overall, the results achieved can lead to broad changes in the enabling environment, changing the legal and regulatory frameworks, having communities adopt more sustainable practices, and contributing to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation. Key recommendations included the flagging of the most promising communities national authorities as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programs, the preparation of an "exit plan" for the four Districts benefiting from the project in order to ensure minimum technical follow-up to communities supported, as well as the systematization of the approach, experience and good results achieved with the "Beekeeping" and "Savings and Credit Groups" practices to reinforce the learning dimension of the project.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CPF	Country Programming Framework (FAO)
DINAB	National Directorate of Environment
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
DINAF	National Directorate of Forest (under MITADER)
DINAS	National Directorate of Agriculture and Silviculture
DNEA	National Directorate for Agricultural Extension
DPAP	Provincial Directorate for Agriculture and Fisheries
DPDTA	Provincial Directorate of Territorial Development and Environment
DPTADER	Provincial Directorate of Land, Environment and Rural Development
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FLO	Financial Lead Officer
FNDS	National Fund for Sustainable Development
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MASA	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)
MITADER	Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
MTA	Ministry of Land and Environment
NRMC	Natural Resource Management Communities
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RSM	Revenue Sharing Mechanism
SDAE	District Service for Economic Activities
SDPI	District Service for Planning and Infrastructure
SPA	Provincial Services of Environment
SPFFB	Provincial Forests and Wildlife Service
UN	United Nations
ZILMP	Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Program

Map of Mozambique



Source: Left side map (UN Geospatial. 2021. Map of Mozambique [online], <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/mozambique-1>); Right side map (adapted by the evaluation team based on image available at <https://www.zambezia.gov.mz/por/A-Provincia/Perfis-Distritais>)

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The Terminal Evaluation of the “Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods” project funded by the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations for Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) covered almost the entire original implementation period, from August 2017 to August 2022, with a dual purpose of accountability and learning, having therefore been summative. The evaluation was carried out by a team of two independent consultants and covered the four districts of Zambézia Province where project activities were implemented – i.e. Alto Molócue, Mulevala, Maganja da Costa and Gilé.
2. The objective was to provide an independent assessment of whether or not the planned inputs have led and/or contributed to the achievement of the planned results (outputs, outcomes, and impact). It also sought to examine and detail project achievements, identify barriers and challenges to implementation and determinants for success or failure (reasons for why project results have been delivered, or why they have not), and identify any broader results and impacts, positive or negative, intended or unintended, which have occurred in view of informing and improving similar future FAO/GEF projects.
3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach and applied mixed-methods to gather data from different sources and informants in order to assess the different evaluation criteria according to the GEF/FAO guidelines, namely the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability, as well as the factors that have influenced performance and cross-cutting issues. The evaluation adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process, involving the project team, central and provincial government's departments, the FAO Country Office, direct beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders.
4. A detailed evaluation matrix was prepared which included the lines of inquiry and indicators under each evaluation question, as well as the methods and sources that guided the collection of information and evidence. Information was triangulated in order to validate evidence and support the analysis that fed into conclusions, recommendations and a set of lessons learnt to inform future similar projects, whether implemented by FAO/GEF or by other development actors. The evaluation faced some constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of coherence of quantitative data available and the limited duration of the field mission which were, however, overcome by the flexibility of the evaluation team.

Main findings

5. **Relevance:** The strategic relevance is assessed as highly satisfactory. The project is aligned with the Agenda 2030 (SDG), the FAO's regional priorities and its country programming framework in Mozambique, as well as with the GEF-5 focal areas priorities; the project also responds to government's priorities. The project responds to the needs of local communities because it creates opportunities to generate income while maintaining the sustainability of forest resources. The internal design of the project was coherent, but a conditional approach to delivering the expected outcomes limited its strategic relevance; this was corrected at midterm, which urged addressing the needs of local communities alongside improvement of the legal framework. The political, climate and sanitary events that occurred throughout implementation did not change the relevance of the project as the overall country context remained favourable for forest conservation and promotion of ecosystem services.

6. **Effectiveness:** Overall assessment of project results is moderately satisfactory. Targets for outputs under Component 1 were fully achieved; however, DINAF's involvement in the delivery of technical assistance and legal draft proposals could have been stronger. Targets for outputs under Component 2 were only partially achieved (output 2.3) and the actual number of people trained is very limited. Targets for outputs under Component 3 were almost fully achieved; the option of working with communities through a "package" of ecosystem services and the choice of Service Providers were appropriate. Progress has been made in the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and inclusion of the PES concept since now these discussions include eight different ministries. Many initial policy dialogue achievements are as attributable to another project, FAO UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ, as they are to this one. The approval of the Forest Law and its regulation has not been completed and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular, which may compromise project impact. There is progress towards better understanding the PES concept, but modest results in terms of human capacity strengthening. The project's institutional strengthening dimension presents few results and lacks a tangible strategy which can also hinder project impact. The project managed to introduce several sustainable natural resource management practices in the target communities that contributed to increase the capacities of the communities. Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES, when it becomes operational and therefore impact prospects at community level are promising. Opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited.
7. **Efficiency:** Overall assessment of project efficiency is moderately satisfactory. The cost-effectiveness of Components 2 and 3 was very low (**Finding 16**). The project was affected by a number of external factors (Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, COVID-19 pandemic, etc.) that strongly impacted the project, compromising its initial planning and leading to successive adjustments (**Finding 17**). The project built on synergies and complementarities with other projects. However, the late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the consolidation of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities.
8. **Sustainability:** Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability are moderately likely. The project strategy and the results achieved have ensured environmental sustainability; beekeeping and agro-forestry systems show good prospects for continuing after project completion, but the fish farming model tested is not sustainable for communities. Prospects for financial sustainability through the 20% RSM are low, but opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in the Zambézia Province are more promising. Although prospects for social sustainability are bolstered by opportunities created for improving project beneficiaries' livelihoods, institutional sustainability (central and decentralised level) has not been sufficiently ensured and the project does not have a defined exit strategy.
9. **Factors affecting performance:** Overall assessment of factors affecting performance is satisfactory. The project's strategy is adequate to respond to the challenges that the country faces towards promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems. The initial project coverage was not realistic and the project assumed the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised; this assumption proved deleterious to project results. The weaknesses detected at midterm were overcome by revising the logframe's indicators and theory of change. The monitoring & evaluation system and procedures are adequate, allowing for a correct follow-up of activities, data collection and information on progress, reporting and analysis to support corrective measures. The operational arrangement of the project was adequate to facilitate the decision-making process, but housing the PMU at FAO instead of at DINAF limited project performance; oversight from FAO was adequate and project staff interacted frequently with the Lead Technical Officer,

but interaction with the GEF focal point in Mozambique and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent. Financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures. The co-financing reported throughout the implementation was clearly overestimated, but the project has reviewed the procedure and has been reporting more realistic and reasonable figures.

10. **Stakeholder's engagement:** Overall, stakeholder's engagement is assessed as highly satisfactory. The project concept and design were subject to extensive consultations and discussions with relevant government partners and national stakeholders. Partnerships were established with a wide range of stakeholders, including high engagement of local authorities and fruitful collaboration with the private sector in the case of beekeeping. Partnerships with services providers proved to be adequate as they have shown strong technical expertise and good capacity for community mobilization. The strategy of signing Letters of Agreement with the district governments increased ownership and contributed to them taking on more responsibility in following-up the work at the community level. A specific partnership with the private sector through AGRIMEL proved particularly successful as this company ensured the purchase of honey from the communities, thus contributing to support the entire honey value chain.
11. **Knowledge management:** Knowledge management is assessed as highly satisfactory. The flaws detected in terms of communication and knowledge management at midterm were overcome and an appropriate communication and visibility strategy towards internal and external stakeholders put in place; a strategy for collecting and disseminating lessons learned was implemented (**Finding 31**). The project adequately systematized and documented its results, lessons learned and success stories and managed to produce and deliver several knowledge materials including manuals, technical reports, infographics, and videos, newsletters, which were useful to disseminate lessons learned and which can also be useful to support the scaling up of project results.
12. **Gender:** The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation (**Finding 32**). A sound gender analysis was included to project design identifying the main barriers and problems affecting women; it also highlighted that women are vital stakeholders in managing and using forest resources, through their subsistence and economic activities. A gender assessment was conducted right at the start of the project identifying the challenges, risks, and opportunities, and providing recommendations towards gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment throughout implementation. A specific gender strategy was developed defining concrete actions and steps to incorporate gender dimensions in all project components; this was put in practice throughout implementation.

Conclusions

13. **Conclusion 1:** The project was relevant in responding to the country's needs by contributing to promote an enabling environment for sustainable forest management and enhancing communities' capacities to implement best practices on sustainable management of natural resources. The project was congruent with GEF 5 focal areas priorities and FAO's country programming contributing to the 2030 Agenda, particularly to SDG 15 (Life on Land).
14. **Conclusion 2:** The project managed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law. The Inter-ministerial Working Group was successfully created with eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions and a draft document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF. Nevertheless, the new forest law that envisages the inclusion of PES has not been approved and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular.

15. **Conclusion 3:** Some progress was achieved towards better understanding the PES concept by decision-makers from different government sectors, but overall project achievements in terms of human capacity strengthening were modest.
16. **Conclusion 4:** The project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices allowing beneficiaries to access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption.
17. **Conclusion 5:** A number of external factors such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, COVID-19 pandemic affected the project compromising its efficiency. The project planned to support seven districts, but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints. The late start in Component 3 hindered project's efficiency, since its activities would have benefited from starting at the very beginning of the project so that more time would be available to implement and consolidate community work. The overall project's cost-effectiveness is low.
18. **Conclusion 6:** The main risks for environmental sustainability derive from deforestation, soil erosion, and uncontrolled wildfires that continue affecting the landscape of Zambézia. However, beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation, fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities, and some agroforestry practices are being applied at community level. The main risk for financial sustainability derives from the fact the 20% revenue to the communities remains incipient,
19. **Conclusion 7:** The design and readiness problems were due to the internal conditional logic that prevented the simultaneous start of the various components. Project's operational arrangements were adequate, but the fact that the project management unit did not returned to DINAF from 2020 onwards hindered project execution in that it reduced project's capacity to provide a more continuous support to activities related to institutional capacity strengthening. Funds availability has not affected project performance, disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time. Co-financing reported throughout implementation was overestimated, but the project has reviewed the procedure and ended up reporting more realistic figures.
20. **Conclusion 8:** The results achieved can lead to broad changes in the enabling environment towards changing the legal and regulatory frameworks; the practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation.
21. **Conclusion 9:** The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation. A specific focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included, but beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project's strategy adequately focused on social and environmental aspects.

Recommendations

As this evaluation took place very close to the expected end of the project, it was not possible to make constructive recommendations that could be implemented in a timely manner. Therefore, some recommendations were converted into lessons learned, as summarized below.

22. **Recommendation 1** (FAO, DINAF and FNDS): Identify/map the most outstanding communities/NRMC in terms of results achieved and flag them to FNDS as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programmes
23. **Recommendation 2** (FAO and Local Authorities): Together with the District Authorities, prepare an "exit plan" for the four Districts benefiting from the project in order to ensure that communities

supported by the project continue to benefit from a minimum technical follow-up, thus ensuring the investment and effort applied is not lost.

24. **Recommendation 3** (FAO): Systematize the approach, experience and good results achieved with the "Beekeeping" and "Savings and Credit Groups" practices to reinforce the learning dimension of the project.
25. **Lesson learnt 1** - Working with communities requires a constant presence on the ground.
26. **Lesson learnt 2** - Partnerships with the private sector contribute to greater effectiveness and increase prospects for sustainability in working with local communities.
27. **Lesson learnt 3** - Signing Letters of Agreement with the Government, including the allocation of a small package of financial resources, significantly contributes to greater engagement, commitment and ownership by the public institutions.
28. **Lesson learnt 4** - The absence of the institutional/organizational strengthening dimension hinders the effectiveness of capacity building strategies towards Government's institutions.
29. **Lesson learnt 5** - The start of community interventions components cannot depend on the results of project components focused on improving legal frameworks.

GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ¹	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	Section 3.1
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 1
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	Section 3.1 / Findings 2, 3
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 4 Section 3.3 / Finding 18
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Section 3.2
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 6, 7, 8
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives		
- Outcome 1	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 8, 9, 10
- Outcome 2	MU	Section 3.2 / Findings 11, 12
- Outcome 3	S	Section 3.2 / Findings 13, 14, 15
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Section 3.2
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	S	Section 3.6 / Finding 32
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	Section 3.3 / Findings 17, 18
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Section 3.4

¹ See rating scheme in Appendix 5.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating¹	Summary comments
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 20
D1.2. Socio-political risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 21
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Section 3.4/ Finding 21
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Section 3.4 / Finding 19
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	Section 3.5.1 / Finding 23
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	Section 3.5.3
E3. Quality of project execution For decentralized projects: Project Management Unit/BH	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	Section 3.5.4 / Findings 27, 28
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	HS	Section 3.5.5 / Findings 29, 30
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	HS	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E7. Overall quality of M&E	HS	Section 3.5.2
E7.1 M&E design	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 24
E7.2 M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 25
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	Section 3.5
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	HS	Section 3.7.1 / Finding 32
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous peoples	HS	Section 3.7.2 / Finding 33
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	HS	Section 3.7.1 / Finding 34
Overall project rating	S	

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

30. The evaluation has a dual purpose of accountability and learning. On the one hand, it aims at obtaining an independent assessment of whether or not the planned inputs have led and/or contributed to the achievement of the planned results (outputs, outcomes, and impact). On the other hand, it also seeks to examine and detail project achievements, identify barriers and challenges to implementation and determinants for success or failure (reasons for why project results have been delivered, or why they have not), and identify any broader results and impacts, positive or negative, intended or unintended, which have occurred in view of informing and improving similar future FAO/GEF projects.

1.2 Intender users

31. The primary intended users of the evaluation include the Budget Holder, Project Task Force, Technical Advisor, FAO technical, programme and operation staff, the donor, and other external stakeholders, including government institutions related to the project who can use the findings of the evaluation to affect change. A detailed stakeholder analysis was carried out by the evaluation team in collaboration with the project team during the inception phase identifying the external stakeholders related to the project and how they can use the evaluation, namely:

- **Government institutions**, such as National Directorate of Forest (DINAF), National Fund for Sustainable Development (FNDS), National Directorate of Environment (DINAB), Provincial Directorates of Territorial Development and Environment (DPDTA) and Provincial Services of Environment (SA), District Administrations, District Services for Economic Activities (SDAE)
- **Civil society**, such as the Zambezia Network for Environment and Sustainable Community Development (RADEZA), and other NGOs like UATAF, ICEI, ITC-F.
- The **private sector**, such as the service provider ARIMEL and **academia**, such as the University of Zambezia (UNIZAMBEZE).

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

32. The evaluand is Project GCP/MOZ/117/GFF and the evaluation covers almost its entire original implementation period, from August 2017 to August 2022². The evaluation focus is on the implementation which took place after the Mid-term Review (i.e. from June 2021 onwards), as this midterm covered the first half of implementation in depth. The evaluation is nevertheless summative. Geographically, the evaluation covered the capital, Maputo, and the four districts of Zambézia Province where project activities were implemented – i.e. Alto Molócue, Mulevala, Maganja da Costa and Gilé. When assessing the extent to which the project achieved its intended results, the evaluation sought to determine whether the project's model and its specificities tied to Mozambican context, law and regulatory framework warrant scaling up.

² The evaluation began before the project's NTE was subsequently extended to December 2022; see section 2 for further details

33. In addition, and following interviews held during the inception phase, the evaluation team considered it appropriate that the scope included a more specific focus on two key-aspects: i) determining sustainability of project results through the continued or new support of national authorities and other actors; ii) generating insights and lessons learnt to inform future similar projects, whether implemented by FAO/GEF or by other development actors. Finally, the evaluation also seeks to provide recommendations to enhance the project's exit strategy in order to improve its effectiveness in the remaining implementation period and its possible impact thereafter. The reason why such aspects were included are supported by the fact that the project largely embodied a pilot-model of payment for ecosystem services, and that the evaluation took place very close to the end of the project, which was expected to end in August 2022 but in July 2022 was extended to December 2022.
34. This final evaluation sought to assess the extent to which the project achieved its intended results. More specifically, it sought to determine whether the project's model and its specificities tied to Mozambique and Mozambican law warrant scaling up.
35. The following table presents the list of evaluation questions, based on the ones included in the evaluation's terms of Reference, which this exercise intended to answer. A detailed Evaluation Matrix was prepared which includes the lines of inquiry and indicators under each evaluation question, as well as the methods and sources that guided the collection of information and evidence (see Appendix 2).

Table 1. Evaluation questions by GEF criteria

<p>Relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework? ▪ Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes; were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all involved stakeholders involved? ▪ Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project objectives and goals?
<p>Effectiveness - achievement of project results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have project objectives been achieved, and were there any unintended results; what results, intended and unintended, did the project achieve so far across its components? <p><u>Effectiveness by outcome:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the National Revenue Sharing Mechanisms (RSM) improved? To what extent has the national mechanism for sharing the revenues generated by the exploitation of forest and wildlife resources become more transparent and equitable and has the integrated Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) improved? ▪ To what extent has the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM been enhanced? Has the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land, and Environment (MTA), which is responsible for the management of natural forests, as well as decentralized government agencies, NGOs and local communities to manage the improved revenue sharing mechanism, including the PES element improved, and how? ▪ To what extent has the Pilot testing of improved RSM in Zambézia Province been successful? To what extent are the beneficiary communities better

	<p>prepared for the PES (through livelihoods and SLM practices, CBNRM and governance improvements) in the 4 districts in Zambézia?</p> <p><u>Effectiveness in terms of intended impact:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks? ▪ To what extent can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project? ▪ What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits (in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability)?
Factors affecting performance:	
M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (M&E design) Was the M&E plan practical and sufficient? ▪ (M&E implementation) Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies? ▪ Was the information from the M&E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?
Quality of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent did FAO deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision? How well were risks identified and managed?
Quality of execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent did the execution project partners and did FAO effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project?
Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and how did shortfall in co-financing affect project results?
Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were other actors, such as civil society, indigenous population or private sector involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results?
Knowledge management, communication and knowledge products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences? To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling-up of project results?

Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?
ESS risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?
Progress to Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent may the progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the project? ▪ Was there any evidence of environmental stress reduction and environmental status change, or any change in policy/legal/regulatory framework? ▪ Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term impact?
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What knowledge has been generated from project results and experiences, which have a wider value and potential for broader application, replication and use?

Source: Terms of Reference

1.4 Methodology

36. The methodology developed for this evaluation adopted a theory-based approach which relied on specific tools that allowed the evaluation team to understand the project design and its performance, the direction that the project has taken throughout its implementation, as well as its future prospects, particularly in view of ensuring sustainability of results and generating lessons learned.
37. This evaluation adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process, involving the project team, central and provincial government's departments, the FAO Country Office, direct beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders. Information was triangulated in order to validate evidence and support the analysis that fed into conclusions and recommendations.
38. A **mixed-methods approach** was applied to gather data from different sources and informants as presented in the evaluation matrix and summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Evaluation methods and tools used in the evaluation

Desk-review	Collection and analysis of existing project documents, outputs and monitoring reports (e.g. ProDoc; project inception report; annual work plans; data from the project monitoring and financial systems; steering committee minutes; all the six months progress reports produced; backstopping missions reports; MTR report; any other internal documents including consultants' and financial reports). This allowed for better understanding of the context and structure of the project and for identification of its achievements. A documentation repository was created using a shared drive to facilitate consultation and document sharing within the evaluation team.
Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews with key informants were conducted to collect information/evidence from the most relevant stakeholders (e.g. all project staff and key-partner institutions involved in project implementation; relevant government stakeholders at central and provincial level and a sample of local authorities; services providers such as NGOs and the private sector –see appendix

	1). Most interviews were conducted face-to-face with the exception of those where interviewees were outside Mozambique (e.g. FAO/GEF staff in Rome).
Field visit – Province of Zambézia	A 10-days visit to the Province of Zambézia was carried out for the field data collection phase, with both team members travelling. Face to face interviews were carried out as well as on-site verification of project's achievements and assessment of the interest and capacities of beneficiaries and local stakeholders. Focus groups discussions were held with the main beneficiaries, notably women and men participating in Natural Resources Management Committees (NRMCM).
Thematic sessions with project staff	Bilateral discussion sessions were organised with the project staff, either face-to-face (during the field visit to Mozambique), or remote through Skype or Zoom (after the field visit). For the sake of efficiency and in order to not overload the project staff, the sessions were short (60 min maximum), and were organized around specific aspects (e.g. execution & management, budget and financial execution, results-based monitoring, communication & visibility).
E-survey	In addition to the interviews and focus-groups, an e-survey was applied to the following types of stakeholders (1 – Government departments at central, provincial and district level; 2 - NGOs/Civil Society Platforms; 3 – Private Sector) in order to collect opinions and perceptions on the project's progress and results, but also to shed light on their satisfaction regarding key-activities developed and results achieved (e.g. improvements on the RSM; changes in human and institutional capacities towards implement the RSM and PES mechanisms; advances in the natural resources management, etc.). The e-survey was anonymous and received a total of 44 valid responses (of 110).
Briefings/Debriefings	At the start and end of the field mission, sessions were carried out with the evaluation manager, Project staff, Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, and Funding Liaison Officer to present preliminary findings and discuss preliminary recommendations. The evaluation team also participated in a workshop with external stakeholders.

39. **Site mapping and sampling³:** Whilst some of the project's actions are national in scope – notably Component 1 – the field activities *stricto sensu* are centred in the Province of Zambézia, more specifically in the four Districts of Gilé, Maganja da Costa, Mulevala and Alto Molocué. According to the document review and additional information from the inception interviewees, the project activities are concentrated in 10 Localities of these four Districts⁴, directly covering 30 communities and targeting 12 NRMCM. The MTR – which was conducted in 2020 and which therefore contended with high travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic – carried out field visits to two districts (Alto Molocué and Maganja da Costa). This made it possible to hold meetings and Focus Groups Discussions with four NRMCM. Taking into account the duration and feasibility of the field trips, the evaluation team proposed to conduct field visits to eight Localities (80% coverage) and to conduct Focus Groups Discussions with eight NRMCM (66% coverage). Overall, the sample is therefore representative; furthermore, in each of the provinces, the evaluation team covered 2 or 3 NRMCM, to mitigate any geographic bias. The selection of these communities deliberately targeted those sites visited during the MTR in order to corroborate and report on

³ Targeted sampling

⁴ In administrative and territorial terms, Mozambique is divided into 10 Provinces and these into 154 Districts, which in turn are divided into 419 Administrative Posts and these into Localities, the latter being thus the lowest level of representation of the Central State.

progress of identified results; the selection also covered sites not visited by the MTR in order to increase geographic coverage and representativeness.

40. **Data collection:** Primary data collection was done through interviews (both remote and face-to-face), focus groups discussions, on-site observation and the e-survey. Following the preliminary review of key documentation during the inception phase, a systematic documentary review continued throughout the exercise. This allowed ongoing analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative information and accelerated triangulation of information. The e-survey was conducted as part of the data collection and was tailored to obtain the views/perspectives from main stakeholder groups.
41. **Data analysis and triangulation:** The methodology for this evaluation mixed quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques from primary and secondary sources. The evaluation team ensured triangulation by cross-checking and confirming findings and conclusions through the various sources. A series of remote team "discussion sessions" were held to analyse data, facilitate the triangulation of sources and discuss findings as part of the analytical process benefiting from the different expertise brought by each team member. The evaluation team worked closely with the evaluation manager to get continuous feedback and guidance on methodological procedures to ensure that the iterative draft versions met the expected quality and compliance level of FAO/GEF for conducting terminal evaluations. Notwithstanding the quality assurance process and guidance provided, the evaluation manager did not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team, but ensured the report provides the necessary evidence in a clear and convincing way, drawing its conclusions and recommendations from that basis.
42. **Gender and minority groups:** the "UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation" was used to shape and conduct the evaluation and the team used it as a basis for ensuring that the gender and human rights aspects of the programme are integrated in the evaluation. In terms of gender analysis, the evaluation team assessed the project's contribution to the objectives presented in the "FAO Policy on Gender Equality", as well as in the "GEF Policy on Gender Equality". During data collection, the team ensured that all stakeholders were asked about gender issues related to the different activities in order to ensure an adequate gender focus in the report. The team conducted gender-disaggregated data analysis where available, and assessed the extent to which the different needs, priorities, voices and vulnerabilities of women and men, boys and girls were considered in the project's design, implementation (including targeting and coverage), and monitoring. During the data collection process, the evaluation team put special emphasis on gathering women's views.
43. **Ethical considerations:** The evaluation was conducted in coherence with the "2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct and Guidance on Human Rights" and "Gender Equality in Evaluation". The evaluation team was responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation. The protocol included ensuring that respondent participation, particularly in Focus Groups Discussions, was voluntary. It was made clear to respondents that no personally identifiable information would be collected by the evaluation team, and that all responses would be anonymous so that findings could not be attributed to specific respondents. Informants were invited to speak in the language they felt more comfortable with (including national languages, by relying on other local participants to the Focus Groups Discussions for translation).

1.5 Limitations

44. The lack of or the little coherence of quantitative data available was a limitation. The evaluation team applied various data collection methods (quantitative and qualitative) and worked closely with project staff to ensure access to reliable data. In addition, the methodology ensured an adequate triangulation of data and information. On the other hand, the planned endline study, which the evaluation expected to provide quantitative data, was not completed by the end of this evaluation, which entailed an important limitation since its results were therefore not available for use.
45. The limited duration of the field mission was also a constraint to collect data from primary sources, namely from local authorities and communities (beneficiaries). In order to mitigate this constraint, the evaluation team proposed splitting the team in two in order to make a more efficient use of the time available and thus cover more project sites and communities. Additional virtual interviews were carried out after the field mission to reach stakeholders that had not been available during the in-country field mission.
46. The E-survey got 44 responses (of 110) which means a response rate of 40%, and considered good. However, a limitation stems from the fact that 42% of respondents (18 of 44 respondents) only had connection or participation with the project in its final implementation phase, which may limit the reliability of the answers obtained as respondents did not have a complete picture of the project and its history.
47. The Covid-19 pandemic in Mozambique affected availability of some interviewees. Therefore, the evaluation team remained flexible to adjust to the availability of interviewees. Continued communication with FAO country Office and evaluation manager was maintained to allow for such.
48. Following this introduction, section 2 presents the background and context of the project. Section 3 presents the main findings for each evaluation question. Conclusions and recommendations are in section 4, followed by lessons learned in section 5. The report is accompanied by the following annexes:

Annex 1. Terms of reference for the evaluation

Annex 2. E-survey

2. Background and context of the project

Box 1. Basic project information

- Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project ID number: 5516
- Recipient country: Mozambique
- Executing Partners: **Ministry of Land and Environment** (former Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development - **MITADER**) through: National Directorate of Forest (**DINAF**); National Directorate of Environment (**DINAB**); **Decentralized government services** at provincial level (Provincial Services of Economics Activities, former Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Food Security - **DPASA**) and the Provincial Directorate for Territorial and Environment Development (**DPTA**), The **District Government** of the four Districts through the District Services for Economic Activities (**SDAE**) and the National Fund for Sustainable Development (**FNDS**)
- Date of project start and expected end: 25 August 2017 and 24 December 2022
- Date of mid-term review: published in June 2021, carried out in September 2020

49. The project "*Payment for ecosystem services to support forest conservation and sustainable livelihoods*" is a five-year project signed between the Government of Mozambique through the former Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development (MITADER), now called Ministry of land and Environment (MTA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in October 2017⁵.
50. **Problems and challenges:** It is estimated that Mozambique has 34 million hectares of natural forest, covering 43% of its territory. The most important of these ecosystems is the Miombo, covering about two-thirds of the total forest area⁶. Deforestation and forest degradation caused by shifting cultivation and unsustainable timber and charcoal exploitation as well as uncontrolled forest fires, reduce the availability of forest ecosystem goods and services to rural communities, threatening globally important biodiversity and increasing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Zambézia is one of the provinces with the highest forest cover, (15% of the national forest cover) but also the second highest deforestation rate (0.9% per year, behind Nampula)⁷, threatening the livelihoods of local communities and the country's economy. Illegal logging and charcoal exploitation are rife in many parts of the country, causing environmental degradation as well as robbing local communities of the benefits they would have received from legal forest harvesting activities⁸.

⁵ General information about the project can be found at <https://www.fao.org/gef/projects/detail/en/c/1056955/>

⁶ Banco Mundial, 2018. Notas sobre a Floresta em Moçambique". Available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/494001544069659149/pdf/131837-Portuguese-Country-Forest-Note-Final-PORT.pdf>

⁷ FNDS. 2018. *Desmatamento em Moçambique (2003-2016). Relatório Final*. Maputo, Mozambique. 23 p.

⁸ The general context presented in PRODOC is also supported by available national studies, such as: i) "*Identificação e análise dos agentes e causas directas e indirectas de desmatamento e degradação florestal em Moçambique*", disponível em <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/component/edocman/identificacao-e-analise-dos-agentes-e-causas-directas-e-indirectas-de-desmatamento-e-degradacao-florestal-em-mocambique/download> and ii) *Definição de Florestas, Desmatamento e Degradação Florestal no âmbito do REDD+ em Moçambique*", available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/component/edocman/definicao-de-florestas-desmatamento-e-degradacao-florestal-no-ambito-do-redd/download>

51. Miombo is the forest ecosystem that is characteristic of the Zambezia province. Thanks to the presence of Miombo, the province is rich in wildlife species and the people in the project area are highly dependent on Miombo forests for their livelihoods. Although quantitative data on benefits local communities derive from Miombo are rare, available studies show forests and other natural areas accounting for 28% of household income. Household studies show that Miombo woodland resources are a critical element of the rural household economy and contribute significantly to mitigating the impacts of poverty. Miombo woodlands are also a critical part of many farming systems in the area. In the traditional rotational systems of crop production, Miombo forests are selectively cut, leaving useful trees standing⁹. The vegetation is subsequently burnt, sterilizing the soil and releasing nutrients for farming. In the absence of modern inputs, and with low population densities, this can be a sustainable system but if cultivation and fires are too frequent, Miombo regeneration is impaired. During wetter times of the year, open grassy patches within the Miombo forrest are sometimes heavily used for grazing, but Miombo itself becomes quite important as these grass patches are burnt over or are fully grazed late in the season. Miombo is seasonal and loses much of its leaf cover during the winter, dry season. In the early spring, the so-called late dry season flush sees the Miombo coming back to life, with vast swathes of the woodland covered in bright red, orange, and yellow foliage. Environmental services from Miombo woodlands are thus essential for carbon sequestration, for biodiversity conservation, for tourism, and for watershed management and could become major income-generating opportunities for local communities.

52. Over the past two decades, Mozambique has developed a number of laws, policies, strategies, programmes and action plans addressing conservation and sustainable management of the country's natural forests, as well as mechanisms for sharing revenues of commercial forestry and wildlife conservation activities with local communities. Implementation of this legal and regulatory framework, however, has remained a challenge. The Ministerial Diploma n° 93/2005 of May 4th (commonly referred to as "20% Decree") establishes a benefit-sharing arrangement with local communities whose customary lands are under commercial exploitation of forest and wildlife concessions. The existing government revenue sharing mechanism allocates 20% of taxes paid by forestry operators to local communities. This Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) was thus an important step towards promoting forest governance and creating opportunities for communities by channelling financial resources that could be applied to forest management and conservation, while contributing to improve livelihoods of local communities. However, the effective implementation of this mechanism has not been achieved by the government, which is due to two main problems. The first concerns to the lack of an adequate enabling policy and regulatory environment. Currently there are gaps in the policy and regulatory framework leading to poor law enforcement and partial implementation of regulations, reinforced by a lack of awareness of decision makers on the potential for RSM to contribute to ecosystem conservation and restoration as well as rural people's livelihoods. As such, the RSM related regulations are interpreted in very different ways by different stakeholders at different levels. The regulatory framework is inadequately enforced and there is a lack of coordination between different stakeholders. Furthermore, no environmental performance criteria are applied, so communities that burn the forest and facilitate illegal logging are receiving the same amount as communities that control fire. The second problem concerns insufficient human and institutional capacity to implement the RSM. The institutional capacity of government institutions in charge of forests for implementation of the decree is limited due to a combination of factors, including the limited allocation of human resources in all Provincial Forest and Wildlife Services, and the absence of more detailed guiding

⁹ Dewees, P., B. Campbell, Y. Katerere, A. Siteo, A.B. Cunningham, A. Angelsen and S. Wunder. 2011. Managing the Miombo Woodlands of Southern Africa: Policies, incentives, and options for the rural poor. Washington DC: Program on Forests (PROFOR). http://www.profor.info/sites/profor.info/files/docs/Miombo_web.pdf

principles for the implementation of the 20% Decree. This hinders its correct application on the ground and leads to conflicts as the basis for revenue sharing is not transparent for the beneficiaries.

53. **Objective:** In response to the above problems and challenges, the objective of the proposed project is to: “promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems through improvement of the existing revenue sharing mechanism that supports sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local peoples’ livelihoods.”
54. **Components:** The project seeks to support government-financed Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) through four components¹⁰ in order to: i) provide it with a legal basis (Component 1); ii) improve the local capacity to measure and verify the conservation impacts (Component 2); iii) assist the local communities to develop capacities and engage in income generation activities that are in line with ecosystem conservation principles (Component 3); and iv) follow a solid Monitoring & Evaluation framework (Component 4). The project strategy within each component is summarized below:

Table 3. Summary of project’s strategy by component

Components	Strategy
COMPONENT 1 National forest and wildlife Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM)	Seeks the improvement of an existing national forest and wildlife RSM by making it more transparent and equitable and by integrating a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). Under this component, the project is developing i) a common set of rules for investing in, provision of, and compensation for ecosystem services, and ii) promoting their adoption by existing government sector funds and revenue sharing mechanisms, including forestry, mining, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, energy, environment and infrastructure. In this way, the project contributes to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the country’s development policy framework.
COMPONENT 2 Human and Institutional Capacity Development	Seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of the MTA. This ministry is in charge of natural forest management, and decentralized government bodies, NGOs and local communities; the ministry is expected to manage the improved revenue sharing mechanism, including the PES element. This involves developing institutional capacities and operating procedures, as well as training individuals.
COMPONENT 3 Testing of the improved government forest and wildlife RSM in the Zambézia Province	Builds upon the PES rules developed under the first component and concerns the detailed design and practical testing of the improved government forest and wildlife RSM in Zambézia Province. Under the improved RSM, payments will become conditional on environmental performance of communities. The improved mechanism will be operationalized in four Districts. On-the-job training for district and provincial government officials involved in implementing this component will further enhance the institutional capacity developed under the second component.
COMPONENT 4 Monitoring & Evaluation framework	Seeks to implement a sound monitoring and evaluation framework – to track project progress and measure impacts on the health of ecosystems and on people’s wellbeing. Special attention will be given to women’s roles, constraints and opportunities in decision-making and benefit sharing in all components through the development and implementation of a gender strategy.

¹⁰ PRODOC Revised version 19th October 2016

Source: Evaluation team based on ProDOC

55. The project was endorsed by the CEO and Chairperson of the GEF in October 2016 with a total budget of USD 3,637,748.00¹¹. However, its implementation only started in December 2018¹², when the Funding Agreement was operationalized. The project is implemented by FAO in partnership with the Government through the National Directorate of Forests (DINAF) at national level, and through both the Provincial Forests services under the MTA and the District Economic Activities Service (SDAE) at district level. Letters of Agreements (LoA) were signed with service providers in the private and public sector and with civil society organizations to support the implementation of activities on the ground.
56. The project is closely aligned with a government flagship initiative that is currently being implemented in the same target Province of Zambézia, the *Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Program (ZILMP)*, which aims at Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in the same Districts as the FAO/GEF project. The ZILMP is funded by the Government through a grant received from the Forest Investment Programme (FIP)¹³ financed by the World Bank.

2.1 Theory of change

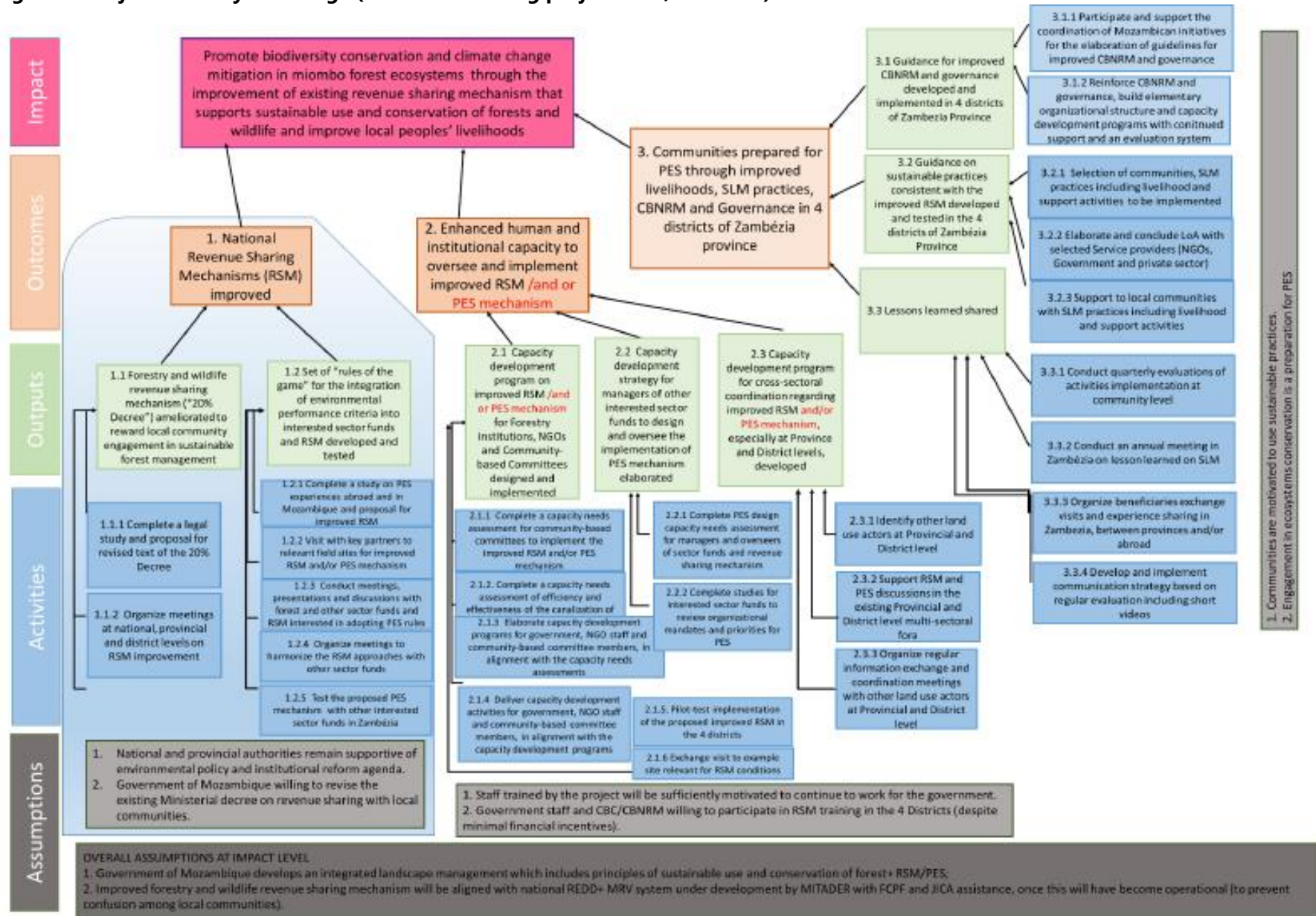
57. The evaluation team considers that the Theory of Change (ToC) proposed by the MTR remains valid and accurately depicts the changes that the project intends to achieve and the respective logical strategy (*IF-THEN sequence*) for doing so (see Figure 1 below). Furthermore, the document review and the interviews carried out by the evaluation team during the inception phase confirmed that the assumptions in the MTR remain valid and relevant, particularly those regarding the willingness of the Government of Mozambique to revise the existing Ministerial decree on revenue sharing with local communities; the motivation of communities and staff trained to engage in ecosystem conservation in preparation for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), and the alignment of the government's Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) with the REDD+ system and related initiatives under development and/or being implemented by the MTA. For this reason, the evaluation team does not consider it opportune to redesign the Theory of Change as the current one remained a valid support for this evaluation and was therefore used to guide the interrogation of the retrospective elements of the project, namely the assumptions underlying the cause-effect relationships.

¹¹ Further details and related contractual documents can be consulted at <https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/5516>

¹² According to MTR Report

¹³ Further information about MozFIP available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/nossos-projetos/listagem-de-projetos/mozfip>

Figure 1. Project's Theory of Change (elaborated during project MTE; still valid)



3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

EQ1.1: Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women)?

Finding 1 - The project is aligned with the Agenda 2030 (SDG), the FAO's regional priorities and its country programming framework in Mozambique, as well as with the GEF-5 focal areas priorities. The project also responds to government's priorities.

58. This project is aligned with the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), contributing directly to SDG 15 (Life on Land), particularly by promoting the adoption of sustainable forest management practices by local communities (SDG Target 15.2). Through the improvement of the existing Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) and the inclusion of the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) concept, it also contributes to promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest resources and appropriate access to such resources (SDG Target 15.6).
59. The project contributes to FAO Regional Priority 4 (Climate action and sustainable natural resource management)¹⁴ since its strategy focus on promoting the adoption of practices and technologies for sustainable, adapted, and resilient production systems, as well as on reversing deforestation and enhancing ecosystem services across the Zambezia landscape. In regard to FAO's strategy in Mozambique (CPF 2016-2020)¹⁵ – which has been extended to 2022 – the project contributes to Priority Area B (Ensure transparent and sustainable management of natural resources and environment), and more specifically to Output 2.2 (Government institutions and rural communities with enhanced capacity to implement best practices on sustainable management of natural resources and the environment). Within the scope of UNDAF (2017-2020)¹⁶ this project contributes to Outcome 9 (Most vulnerable people in Mozambique benefit from inclusive, equitable and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment), as to the delivering as one approach.
60. The project contributes to the following GEF 5 focal areas strategies: i) Biodiversity strategy, by focusing on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services ; ii) Climate Change Mitigation strategy, by focusing on reducing deforestation and forest degradation and promoting sustainable forest management ; and iii) Sustainable Forest Management/REED+ strategy, by reducing pressures on forest resources and generating sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.
61. Project's outcomes are congruent with the Government's Five Year Plan (PQG 2020-2024) – which includes the sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and reduce deforestation as national priorities. They are also aligned with the National Development Strategy (END 2015-2035), where sustainable management of natural resources is also identified as a critical factor for country's development. In addition, the project is also consistent with the various sectoral instruments (policies, programs, strategies) that place sustainable forest management as a priority

¹⁴ Priorities for FAO in the African Region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, available at <https://www.fao.org/3/ni577en/ni577en.pdf>

¹⁵ FAO. 2016. *Country Programming Framework (CPF 2016-2020)*. Maputo.

¹⁶ UNDAF (2017-2020), available at <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/mozambique>

for government action, namely the National Environment Policy, Conservation Policy, Territorial Planning Policy, National Land Policy, Strategic Plan for Agrarian Sector Development Strategy, National Reforestation Strategy, National Action Program for Adaptation to Climate Change, among others.

Finding 2 - The project responds to the needs of local communities because it creates opportunities to generate income while maintaining the sustainability of forest resources.

62. Forest resources are important assets for Mozambique and fundamental sources of income and livelihoods for many rural communities. These resources constitute an important path for economic development through the various value chains and other forest-related activities within the Zambezia landscape. The project's strategy responds to country's needs by strengthening the political and institutional framework, and human capacities of public administration, thus contributing to promote an enabling environment for sustainable forest management. The project responds to the needs of local communities by creating development opportunities based on productive practices that simultaneously promote the sustainability of forest resources and generate income. This is relevant in a context that has experienced accelerated deforestation and where climate change makes it critical to increase the capacity of households to adopt coping strategies to better respond to related risks and shocks. In the focus groups carried out with the communities it was noticeable that families are aware of the need to preserve ecosystems and natural resources through more sustainable practices, as they rely on them to make a living. 77% of the E-survey respondents considered the project very relevant, having given a rating of 9 or 10 points (scale 1 to 10).

EQ1.2: Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes and were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all involved stakeholders involved?

Finding 3 - The internal design of the project was coherent, but a conditional approach to delivering the expected outcomes limited its strategic relevance; this was corrected at midterm, which urged addressing the needs of local communities alongside improvement of the legal framework.

63. Mozambique has made a strong commitment to reduce emissions and important steps were then taken with the approval of the "National Strategy for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Conservation of Forests and increase of Carbon reserves through forests (REDD+ 2016-2030)". The project design is aligned with this priority and responds to the needs of the different stakeholders. The existing RSM, framed by the "20% Decree"¹⁷, is weak and, in practice, has not been applied. Thus, under Component 1, the project seeks to improve the national forest and wildlife RSM by making it more transparent and equitable and by integrating a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanism. This strategy is relevant and aligned with the priorities of the country, responding to the needs of promoting an enabling environment towards mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the country's development policy framework. In order for this to be put in place it is necessary to strengthen stakeholders' capacities at central and decentralized levels, which is foreseen under Component 2, by developing institutional capacities and operating procedures, as well as training individuals to oversee and implement the improved RSM and PES mechanisms. At grassroots level, the project seeks to prepare local communities for PES by strengthening Community Based Natural

¹⁷ Diploma Ministerial n°93/2002 de 4 de Maio, available at <https://www.biofund.org.mz/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/1547646546-DIP.MIN.93-2005%20%20sobre%20os%20os%20porcent%20.pdf>

Resources Management (CBNRM) and testing sustainable agriculture and forestry practices as it is expected that payments will become conditional on environmental performance of communities. Nevertheless, although the project design is coherent and responds to the needs of the various stakeholders, a conditional approach during implementation posed challenges, as it assumed that the work with local communities could only start after the legal framework was approved. This issue was flagged at midterm and the strategy was revised, thus allowing Component 3 to move forward and making project's strategy and its planned actions more integrated, rather than sequential.

EQ1.3: Were there any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affected the relevance of the project objectives and goals?

Finding 4 - The political, climate and sanitary events that occurred throughout implementation did not change the relevance of the project as the overall country context remained favourable for forest conservation and promotion of ecosystem services.

64. Since project approval in 2016 and throughout implementation Mozambique was affected by political and institutional changes (Elections and turnover of government officials in 2019), climate crisis (droughts, cyclones Kenneth and Idai, particularly in 2019 and 2020), and sanitary crisis (COVID-19 pandemic since 2020). Nevertheless, the strategic relevance of the project was not affected as the overall country context remained favourable. The country's commitments to REDD+ strategies have been consolidated since 2016, leading to significant mobilization of resources to strengthen policies and practices for the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in the Zambézia Province (e.g. over USD 500 million were mobilized through the Mozambique Forest Investment Programme¹⁸, Sustenta Programme¹⁹, and the Zambezia Integrated Landscapes Management Program²⁰, funded by the World Bank). In 2021 Mozambique has become the first country to receive payments from a World Bank trust fund (over USD 6.4 million) for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation²¹. This has created a favourable political and institutional context for the project's objectives and goals by raising the interest of the different stakeholders in the project's strategy and creating an enabling environment for its implementation; 72% of the E-survey respondents considered that the project was able to successfully adapt to external factors.
65. Overall, the strategic relevance of the project is assessed as **highly satisfactory** since it is consistent with relevant national policies, legislation and strategic priorities, as well as aligned

¹⁸ The MozFIP project aims at improving the practices and enabling environment for forest and land management in targeted landscapes. Further information at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/374901487522968695/pdf/Mozambique-Forest-Investment-Project-PAD-02152017.pdf>

¹⁹ The Sustenta programme aims at integrating family farming into productive value chains towards improving livelihoods of rural households through the promotion of sustainable agriculture. Further information available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/nossos-projetos/listagem-de-projetos/21-desenvolvimento-sustentavel/129-programa-sustenta>

²⁰ This program will pilot innovative and decentralized governance arrangements at the National, Provincial and District levels, which integrate government, private sector and civil society stakeholders, with the goal of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, while promoting rural development. Further information at https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/system/files/documents/Mozambique_ZILMP_Executive%20Summary.pdf

²¹ "Mozambique Becomes First Country to Receive Emission Reductions Payments From Forest Carbon Partnership Facility", World Bank Press Release of October 2021 available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/10/15/mozambique-becomes-first-country-to-receive-emission-reductions-payments-from-forest-carbon-partnership-facility>

with FAO's country programming and GEF 5 funding cycle priorities. The needs of local communities were well addressed since the project created income generation opportunities based on sustainable productive practices that also promote the sustainability of forest resources.

3.2 Effectiveness

EQ2.1 - How effectively has the project delivered on its expected outputs, in terms of their quality, quantity and timeliness (against milestones)?

Finding 5 - Targets for outputs under Component 1 were fully achieved. However, DINAF's involvement in the delivery of technical assistance and legal draft proposals could have been stronger.

66. In regard to **Output 1.1** (*Forestry and wildlife RSM - "20% Decree"- ameliorated to reward local community engagement in sustainable forest management*), the project delivered technical assistance to DINAF, organized technical meetings and produced various studies and legal assessments. A legal study and iterative proposals to revise the "20% Decree" were completed and submitted to DINAF, as well as a technical proposal for the inclusion of PES in the new Forestry Law. However, the evaluation found that involvement of DINAF in initial assessments and legal studies was weak. In practice, and according to the interviews carried out, DINAF felt that its technicians were not sufficiently engaged in the studies, for example by integrating the teams of consultants. However, it was also found that that the Government had the opportunity to request the inclusion of other provinces in the study. For example, the assessment was initially carried out in the Province of Zambézia only. After a government request, the assessment was then expanded to include six other provinces, but even so, DINAF did not consider it sufficiently representative of the whole country.
67. In regard to **Output 1.2** (*Common set of "rules of the game" developed for the integration of environmental performance criteria into existing sector funds and revenue sharing mechanisms, both for forestry and for other sectors*), the project conducted a study on PES experiences abroad and in Mozambique to substantiate the technical and political discussion. An article entitled "Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: learning experiences from the forestry sector"²² was also produced. It documents relevant PES experiences from Mozambique and other countries, gives orientations for countries embarking on PES scheme, and serves to disseminate PES in various fora targeting audiences relating to forests and climate, such as the REDD+ and the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) working groups.
68. A Concept Note to set up the Inter-ministerial Working Group was prepared to discuss the road map to improve the RSM and include the PES concept. In total, eight different sectors have been engaged in the Inter-ministerial Working Group (Land and Environment; Agriculture and Rural Development; Interior Waters and Fisheries; Energy; Mining; Economy and Finance; Gender and Social Affairs; and Public Administration). While the group was successfully created, the group only met once. On a more positive note, a draft document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF and was foreseen to be discussed and concluded in the next inter-ministerial working group, planned for the second semester of 2022. Nevertheless, gender rules have not yet been delivered as planned, although the project expect to conclude

²² FAO, 2020. "Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: Learning experiences from the forestry sector". Paper prepared by Noémie Huybrechts (FAO Consultant) and Carla Cuambe (FAO Program Officer), based on the report on PES prepared by Porras and Nhantumbo (2019) and the legal analysis from Chicue (2019).

this in the second semester of 2022, together with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES.

Finding 6 - Targets for outputs under Component 2 were only partially achieved (output 2.3) and the actual number of people trained is very limited

69. In regard to **Output 2.1** (*Capacity development program on improved RSM and/or PES mechanism for Forestry institutions and NGOs designed and implemented*), the project delivered and assessment of government's capacity and processes related to needs and gaps for the implementation of the "20% Decree" which was validated by DINAF. The exercise served as a basis to develop Terms of Reference for capacity development of government and NGOs' staff. As part of the project's capacity strengthening strategy for RSM and PES, a training of trainer's session on community governance for natural resource management was carried out in October 2021 targeting a total of 21 individuals (6 from government institutions and 15 from civil society organizations), out of the 30 planned for this output. The training was delivered by the Mozambique Community-based Natural Resource management Network²³. Overall, during the interviews carried out by the evaluation, all interviewees who participated in trainings expressed satisfaction with the quality of trainings received.
70. In regard to **Output 2.2** (*Capacity development strategy for managers of other interested sector funds to design and oversee the implementation of PES mechanism elaborated*), the project delivered five workshops and awareness raising sessions, particularly targeting the inter-ministerial working group where community governance for natural resources management, various aspects of RSM and PES were discussed. A specific discussion session on PES was also delivered in 2021 targeting a total of 12 government staff from different institutions (Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Directorate for Environment, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Sea, Inland waters and Fisheries). The discussion was led by DINAF, with technical assistance from FAO in the framework of the Interministerial coordination working group on PES. An agreement was signed with DINAF to implement an action plan to improve the existing RSM, but document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" was not yet approved.
71. In regard to **Output 2.3** (*Cross-sectoral coordination regarding improved RSM and/or PES mechanism, especially at Province and District levels, developed*), the project did not managed to engage sectors and improve cross-sectoral coordination at provincial and district levels. An agreement was reached with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambézia for holding biannual meetings, including PES discussion. This partnership worked well until the Covid-19 outbreak, but unfortunately after that it was difficult to convene meetings due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, thus hindered the project to adequately engage the local stakeholders in the provincial discussion. For example, the two plenary meetings planned with the Platform to discuss RSM and PES were not held. Nevertheless, the project has engaged with stakeholders in various situations and seminars organized in the province (for example project inception, identification and discussing of project activities; experience sharing).

Finding 7 - Targets for outputs under Component 3 were almost fully achieved. The option of working with communities through a "package" of ecosystem services and the choice of Service Providers were appropriate

²³ The "Mozambique Community Based Natural Resources Management Network" was established in 2018 and function as an institutional platform that aims to improve livelihoods of rural communities, sustainable natural resources management, and the conservation of wildlife and its habitat through the effective participation and empowerment of rural communities.

72. In regard to **Output 3.1** (*Sustainable livelihood models including, SLM practices, CBNRM and Governance developed and tested*), the project signed LoAs with four service providers to test and introduce innovative approaches towards improving livelihoods and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices in local communities: i) AGRIMEL, which was responsible for the beekeeping activities; ii) ICEI, which was responsible for aquaculture, agro-forestry, anti-fire brigades, and nutrition activities; iii) UATAF, which was responsible for the saving and credits groups; and iv) ITCF, which was responsible for the Natural Resources Management Committees (NRMC) governance. The project sought to introduce and test the same package of services in all beneficiary communities. This option was appropriate in that it increased the communities' access to different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods (e.g. income generation, access to credit, food consumption). Overall, the evaluation found that the service providers presented good technical capacity and knowledge of the territory, which facilitated their work in supporting the communities. However, several factors limited their work, in particular the great distances between Districts, and lengthy FAO internal processes. The project reached 2,376 (of which 48% were women) direct beneficiaries in 12 communities of the four target districts, meaning 91 percent of the expected target²⁴. A total of eight new CBNRM committees were also created, and ten others revitalized in the four target districts, but it is worth mentioning that when the evaluation team collected data, the creation/revitalization of more CBNRM was still ongoing.
73. In regard to **Output 3.2** (*Lessons learned shared*), the project managed to deliver a range of communication and reporting materials, as well as to systematize and disseminate testimonies from the field and lessons learned. For example, the study "Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in Mozambique"²⁵ provides an assessment of the PES schemes in Mozambique, highlights the potential forms to distribute this compensation at the local level, and identifies potential opportunities and constraints based on selected experiences. The article "Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: learning experiences from the forestry sector"²⁶ reveals the benefits that a PES mechanism would represent for integrated development of Mozambique based on lessons from Brazil and African countries. Testimonies from the field and success stories were systematised and disseminated in progress reports and also on the Internet²⁷. A "Gender assessment"²⁸ was conducted, which synthesized project lessons and testimonies specifically pertaining to women. Following, a "Gender strategy"²⁹ was developed which provides shared knowledge on gender issues and opportunities to strengthen women's preparedness, leadership and gender-adapted alternative sustainable activities based on project lessons. In addition, three videos and at least two newsletters documenting project results and lessons

²⁴ Actual figures based on the monitoring matrix provided by the project team (August 2022). According to the project team the target will be reached by the end of the project once the ongoing NRMC strengthening activities are completed.

²⁵ FAO and IIED. 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: PES in Mozambique, supporting the 20% Decree revision*, Maputo 2019.

²⁶ FAO, 2020. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: Learning experiences from the forestry sector*. Paper prepared by Noémie Huybrechts (FAO Consultant) and Carla Cuambe (FAO Program Officer), based on the report on PES prepared by Porras and Nhantumbo (2019) and the legal analysis from Chicue (2019).

²⁷ See for example, "MULEVALA: Grupo de poupança contribui para a melhoria das condições de vida", available at <https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1473009/>

²⁸ FAO. 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Assessment*. Maputo, May 2019

²⁹ FAO. 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Strategy*. Maputo, October 2019

learned were produced, but it is worth mentioning that when the evaluation team collected data, production of additional communication materials (videos and newsletters) was still ongoing.

3.2.2 EQ2.2 - How effective was the project in achieving its intended outcomes? / EQ2.3: What results (intended and unintended) did the project achieve across its components? Can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?

Outcome 1. National Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) improved

Finding 8 - Progress has been made in the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and inclusion of the PES concept since now these discussions include eight different ministries.

74. The project contributed to strengthening cross-sectoral policy dialogue by engaging different government sectors in policy discussions regarding the revision and harmonization of the existing RSM. Technical and policy discussions about the PES concept and its practical inclusion and applicability in national legislative and regulatory framework have also progressed. While traditionally these discussions were restricted to the forestry and environmental sectors, the diversity of sectors involved has now increased to eight different ministries. This creates new opportunities to strengthen the RSM for communities; the RSM can now include revenue derived from sectors others than forestry and the environment, such as from fees, licenses or concessions in the mining, energy or fishing sectors. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the direct involvement of the territorial, agriculture, gender and social affairs sectors as their awareness and responsibility towards local communities benefits the practical application of RSM and PES mechanisms, particularly in regard to the mobilization and engagement of local communities which is under their responsibility.

Finding 9 - However, it is worth noting that many initial policy dialogue achievements are as attributable to another project, FAO UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ, as they are to this one.

75. Several meetings and working groups for the revision of the forestry law were financed, initiated, and developed under FAO's project UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ³⁰. The attribution of policy dialogue achievements to this project is thus shared. For example, the inclusion of the PES concept in the Forest Policy³¹ and in the Forest Agenda 2019-2035³², both approved in 2019, opened an important window to strengthen and ensure the protection, conservation, creation, enhancement and sustainable use of forest resources. To a great extent this resulted from the efforts of the previous FAO project, but also from the discussions in the initial phase of the present project, in particular during 2018 and 2019. Nevertheless, although synergies and complementarities between projects are positive, as they also increase efficiency in the use of resources, attribution cannot be strictly determined.

Finding 10 - The approval of the Forest Law and its regulation has not been completed and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular, which may compromise project impact.

76. The forest policy states that it is critical to recognize the role of communities in conserving biodiversity, water, soils, and the carbon cycle, and therefore, that they should be paid for these

³⁰ UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ - FAO's Technical and Strategic Support to the Implementation of MozFIP

³¹ Governo de Moçambique. 2019. *Política Florestal e Estratégia de Implementação*. Available at www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/documentos/legislacao/politica-florestal-e-estrategia-de-implementacao

³² Governo de Moçambique. 2019. *Programa Nacional de Florestas e Agenda Florestal 2019-2035*. Available at www.profor.info/sites/profor.info/files/PROGRAMA%20NACIONAL%20DE%20FLORESTAS_%20final%20compressed.pdf

environmental services. However, such policy is a mere strategic guidance instrument, implying the necessity to also improve the forest law and its regulatory mechanisms for their effective implementation. Such improvement was expected through this outcome, but it did not occur, despite the technical assistance provided to DINAF. The various studies and the technical and legal support put in place by the project contributed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law. A proposal for the inclusion of PES in the new Forestry Law has been submitted to DINAF and 63% of the E-survey respondents rated the project's contribution to the review of legislation and regulation as "good". Nevertheless, the law has not yet been approved (as of October 2022), although according to DINAF there are good prospects for approval in the short-term. As a consequence, there are still no concrete results in regard to the improvement of the RSM derived from the policy dialogue and the legal technical support provided by the project vis-à-vis the initial scenario since the payments to communities remain incipient and irregular, as confirmed by the evaluation through field visits and interviews with DINAF. For example, out of the eight NRMCs visited in the summer of 2022, five had not received payments for more than four years and only three had received payments in 2021.

77. Overall, outcome 1 effectiveness is assessed as **moderately satisfactory** because although the project contributed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law, the latter has not yet been approved and the payments to communities remain incipient and irregular. Concrete steps were taken to provide technical assistance to DINAF and to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination to ameliorate the existing RSM and PES with a total of eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions. However, while the Inter-ministerial Working Group was successfully created, it remains an ad hoc structure and to date only one inter-ministerial meeting was carried out. The draft document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF, but it has not yet been officially approved.

Outcome 2. Enhanced human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM and/or PES

Finding 11 – There is progress towards better understanding the PES concept, but modest results in terms of human capacity strengthening

78. The evaluation found progress towards better understanding the PES concept, especially at central level and 56% of the E-survey respondents rated the project's contribution to strengthening human and institutional capacities as "good". This was also visible in the interviews with key informants, who were able to explain what the concept consists of and how important it is to recognize (and reward) the role of communities in the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. The trainings and workshops were instrumental in clarifying the PES concept among technical staff and policy-makers. However, trainings were very limited in terms of the number of people reached, with only 21 people reached (6 from Government and 15 from civil society), against a target of 30 people. Considering that the strategy of the project was to involve different sectors of government as well as other stakeholders – including provincial and municipal government, as well as civil society representatives – in the discussion about RSM and PES, limiting the training to a few national government and civil society representatives only, unnecessarily restricted the capacity building strengthening undertaken by the project.

Finding 12 – The project's institutional strengthening dimension presents few results and lacks a tangible strategy which can also hinder project impact

79. No sound progress was detected in regard to the project's institutional strengthening dimension. This would have been particularly important at the DINAF level, as it is the institutional locus for coordinating the "rules of the game", in addition to assuming the technical and political tutelage of the legal and regulatory instruments for operationalizing the RSM and incorporating the PES. The interviews conducted at central level revealed that no significant progress could be attributed to this project in terms of organizational domain improvement such as through improved tools and systems for analysis/diagnosis, planning, budgeting, resource mobilisation, communication, monitoring, evaluation, equipment. Another example where the project fell short of implementing a tangible strategy or leaving a defining mark is linked to the recurring lack of internet access – which was repeatedly noted as a recurrent problem by ministry officials interviewed –, which the project, with its USD 3.6 million in budget could have sought to address however partially³³. Furthermore, based on statements by Government staff, the option of placing the project staff directly in DINAF could have contributed to this dimension through an on-the-job training approach. This was done in previous projects; it was in fact considered common practice by FAO in Mozambique and, according to DINAF, this significantly contributed to shared experiences, improve day-to-day work routines, and increased knowledge.
80. Overall, outcome 2 effectiveness is assessed as **moderately unsatisfactory** because although there is progress towards better understanding the PES concept, the results in terms of human capacity strengthening are very modest. Trainings were very limited in terms of the number of people reached and targeted only a few national government and civil society representatives, which unnecessarily limited the capacity building strengthening foreseen by the project. Furthermore, no sound progress was detected in regard to project's institutional strengthening dimension, which could prove critical to improve DINAF's capacity to move forward and coordinate the "rules of the game" to operationalize the RSM and integrate PES, once the forest law is approved.

Outcome 3 - Communities prepared for PES through sustainable livelihood models including, SLM practices, CBNRM and Governance in 4 districts of Zambézia Province

Finding 13 - The project managed to introduce several sustainable natural resource management practices in the target communities that contributed to increase the capacities of the communities

81. Component 3 represents a central pillar of the project's strategy towards preparing communities to receive payments for ecosystem services. Opportunities for income generation in these communities are scarce due to the low level of organization and difficulties in accessing inputs, credit, technical assistance, markets, among others. Quite often communities use unsustainable and environmentally damaging practices such as uncontrolled fire, deforestation, misuse of agro-chemicals, intensive charcoal production, among others. The evaluation team observed important changes in the beneficiary communities as a result of this project in the 4 target districts. The visits conducted revealed that the practices introduced contributed to increase the capacities of the communities in three senses: i) they have an environmental function because they contribute to the preservation of natural resources (land, water, forests, biodiversity) as a counterbalance to intensive agriculture and forest exploitation; ii) they are based on simple practices, low

³³ The internet access issue requires paying for a modem and for the subscription to the internet service (around 200 USD/month for the entire building and complete staff, not just staff directly connected to the project; ie USD 12,000 over the 5 years of the project's implementation). Providing this service to DINAF through project implementation would have made a tangible though limited contribution to the institutional strengthening of DINAF.

technological level and therefore adapted to the capacities, knowledge and development level of the communities; and ii) they contribute to improve their livelihoods, both through increasing and diversifying food consumption (improved nutrition) as well as through income generation (sales).

Finding 14 - Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES, when it becomes operational and therefore impact prospects at community level are promising

82. E-survey respondents rated the project's contribution towards preparing communities for PES as "excellent" (40%) or "good" (32%). The **agro-forestry practices** introduced have the potential to reduce carbon emissions (particularly by reducing deforestation). With support from the project a total of 300 beneficiaries were trained on agro-forestry practices (162 women) through the service provider ICEI. A total of 48 individual farmers in the districts of Gilé, Muleva, Alto Molócue and Maganja da Costa introduced pineapple in their agroforestry systems³⁴. The evaluation observed that the two communities visited in Alto Molocué district have agro-forestry plots installed. Although still incipient, it was observable that these plots have a greater capacity to retain moisture in the soil. However, these activities only started in 2021. Starting these activities earlier, would have allowed consolidated results and would have highlighted their real benefits for the communities and ecosystem. For rural communities to adopt such practices, it is crucial to see tangible results. All the more so as agro-forestry practices require years before their real benefits in the ecosystem and production systems can be observed. Such benefits include increasing soil fertility and crop stability. As it stands, agro-forestry practices are underway and show promise, provided they continue.
83. In the case of **beekeeping**, changes in livelihoods are more visible. This is an activity whose tangible results can be achieved relatively quickly (one year), and therefore it was possible to observe that most communities are already producing honey and enjoying the increased income generated. In five of the eight NRMC visited the beneficiaries were developing beekeeping (Districts of Maganja da Costa, Alto Molocué and Gilé)³⁵. All of them expressed satisfaction with this activity and were unanimous in considering it profitable. With support from the project, the beneficiaries received hives, bee catching boxes, protective suits, masks and fumigation tools. A total of 120 beneficiaries were trained on beekeeping (61 women). Through the service provider AGRIMEL, they received training on improved beekeeping techniques, including apiary management, identification of major pests and diseases, honey extraction process, preservation and packaging. They were also trained on the importance of beekeeping for forest preservation, as bees are essential for pollination and the production of quality honey depends on the native flora. This represents a significant step forward from traditional beekeeping practices that relied on the use of tree bark to build the artisanal hives. Honey production by the traditional method was very low (maximum of 6 to 8 kg/hive), compared to the new improved beekeeping technique (about 20 kg/hive). The sale of honey has been backed through the service provider AGRIMEL, who ensures the entire commercialization process and who has ensured the honey produced and the income generate from its sale reaches the producer, thus improving their livelihood. Each hive can produce twice a year. AGRIMEL buys the honey from the producers at 100 MZN/Kg (approximately USD 1.60/Kg), which means an annual average income of USD 64/hive. The project has distributed over 200 hives for demonstration purposes. Interested beneficiaries can extend the number of hives by purchasing them to AGRIMEL for 5000 MZN/hive (approximately USD 78). This means that the return on investment of each additional hive can be achieved in just over one year. A beneficiary can easily manage five hives individually, by applying the management

³⁴ Data from project's internal monitoring system.

³⁵ In the Mulevala District, the project did not develop beekeeping activities.

practices introduced by the project. This means an average annual income of around USD 320/year from this activity: this is very close to the average annual income in the country³⁶.

84. In the case of the **anti-fire brigades** the project supported the creation of 12 brigades in the four target districts and trained 180 beneficiaries (29 women) on fire management practices, through the service provider ICEI. In all eight NRMC visited the brigades were formed and active. In addition to the training, the beneficiaries received personal protective equipment. Each kit was composed of overalls, protective helmets, gloves, nasal masks, fire boots, bicycles, firefighting sprayers, machetes and rakes. The evaluation also observed that these groups have been responsible for prevention and raising awareness among other community members. With support from the project, the areas most prone to fires were also mapped for greater preventive attention, an activity carried out with the participation of technicians from the provincial government. Radio messages were also produced and broadcasted in the four target districts. The presentations reached 54 transmissions, performed 3 times a day, using one of the three different languages (Portuguese, Elomwe and Nharinga) to increase territorial coverage. In the focus groups conducted with the beneficiaries, it was noticeable that the communities are more aware of the importance of preventing uncontrolled fires. For example, in Mulevala District, the community of Nadala reported being mobilized by the anti-fire brigade to combat an uncontrolled fire. However, the other communities visited (i.e., brigades of seven out of eight NRMC), reported that they have been mainly focused on raising people's awareness about prevention, but have not yet started to put the learned techniques into practice. Thus, whilst the theory appears strong, in practice, the effects of anti-fire brigades will only be observable in a few years' time, after several agricultural seasons have passed. Only then will it be clear whether communities have in fact consolidated the anti-fire brigades and whether these have effectively adopted controlled fire practices.
85. The **saving and credit groups** are still being consolidated, but in the eight NRMC visited it was possible to observe that communities already show a good level of organisation of these groups. The project supported the creation of 48 groups in the four target districts and trained 1,156 beneficiaries (548 women) on savings practices and credit granting mechanisms, through the service provider UATAF. In Alto Molocué and Maganja da Costa districts, community savings started in July 2020, while in Gilé and Mulevala districts started in January 2021. Data from the internal monitoring system provided by UATAF indicate a total of 1,114,751 MZN of savings (approximately USD 17,500). The Savings and Credit groups have also granted small credits to their members for productive investments with a total of 846,550 MZN granted (approximately USD 13,250). The most recent data available report a total of 135 beneficiaries who applied for credit for small investments, which means an average of 6,270 MZN/investment (approximately USD 98). Furthermore, the evaluation also found that these groups play an important social role. For example, if a family needs support because someone needs to go to a local health centre, but has no money (for example for transport), the group supports that family. In practice, these groups also function as community safety nets.

³⁶ The most recent data from Mozambique's National Statistics Institute (INE), included in the 2019/2020 Household Budget Survey, shows that each Mozambican earns an average of USD 365/year and is mainly self-employed in agriculture. Full report available at https://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/files/IOF%202019_20%20Final%2022_09_2021.pdf

86. In the case of **pisciculture**, and despite some positive progresses reported by the service provider ICEI³⁷, the visits carried out by the evaluation did not find evidence of great success in this activity. The introduction of pisciculture in the communities was based on a technical model promoted by the provincial government. The evaluation found that the dimensions of the fish ponds were not for small-scale pisciculture and required significant investment in food, as well as a heavy recurring investment to purchase the alevins required to repopulate the fish ponds. The tanks were first populated with 2,000-2,500 alevins, and once the fish have grown, are sold or - as in the case of the fish ponds in the Community of Ganga, Muzu, District of Maganja da Costa where the tanks dried out due to the lack of rains and all the alevins were taken out - they need to be repopulated by the community. The evaluation also detected a risk of competition between food for human consumption and animal feed, as several of the raw materials used to prepare the feed at community level are part of families' diets (e.g. dried fish, dried shrimps, beans, peanuts, cassava, etc.). Furthermore, communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the required amount of feed for the fish ponds as recommended by the project. The project recommends feeding the fish ponds with a portion the size of a PET bottle (approximately 500 milligrams) once a day. However, in all communities visited, beneficiaries were only feeding the fish ponds with two or three handfuls of "farelo" (the husks, straw and dust or corn bran only), and it was not clear if this amount was given daily. Fish seen in the tanks were of small size. ICEI reported that the main difficulties/challenges with the pisciculture activity were: i) a partial success in the identification made by the technicians specialized in aquaculture of the provincial government for the installation of the fish ponds, since in some cases the locations suffer from a scarcity of water in the dry season which limits the production to one cycle per year only instead of the projected two; ii) difficulties for the commercial alevins supplier to meet the project's schedule and supply the alevins on time (procurement process managed by FAO)³⁸. These constraints are structural and derive from the model adopted and only the second can, at this stage, hope to be addressed though government cooperation and provided that a clear exit strategy is jointly defined.
87. In regard to **nutrition**, the project supported the creation of 12 groups in the four districts targeting 120 women. Through the service provider ICEI women participated in awareness raising sessions on balanced and healthy diets. In addition, each group benefited from demo kits for cooking and received training on food processing and conservation. It is also worth mentioning that four technicians (one in each district) from the district Services for Economic Activity Development (SDAE) were also trained on nutrition issues.
88. The project also contributed to strengthen the **community governance's systems for natural resources management**. In total, the project managed to create eight new NRMC and revitalize ten existing NRMC in the four target districts³⁹. Through the service provider ITC-F the project trained 393 beneficiaries (157 women) on community governance of natural resources and on organizational strengthening of committees. This capacity development process also sought to increase communities' capacities to access funds from the existing REDD+ mechanisms, as described in the letters of agreement signed with the service providers.

³⁷ ICEI. 2022. *Relatório Final: Fortalecimento de Sistemas de Governança Comunitária para Gestão dos Recursos Naturais em Comunidades seleccionadas nos Distritos de Alto-Molócuè, Maganja da Costa e Gilé, Província de Zambézia*. Moçambique, Agosto 2022

³⁸ Information provided by ICE after the field mission and sent to the evaluation team by the project staff.

³⁹ As previously mentioned, when the evaluation team collected data, the creation/revitalization of more CBNRM was still ongoing.

Finding 15 - Opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited

89. In the Zambézia landscape there are various REDD+ initiatives underway, mostly implemented by FNDS and financed by the World Bank, which actually already include payment for ecosystem services mechanisms to communities. The most relevant are the Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP)⁴⁰ and the Dedicated Mechanism to Communities Programme (MozDGM)⁴¹. These programmes include provisions for communities to apply for small grants in order to implement sustainable natural resource management activities. Furthermore, in the case of this project, it is worth mentioning that the LoAs signed with the service providers included the support to beneficiary communities in the preparation of small project proposals to these programmes⁴². However, only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation: i) a community exploring a forest concession benefited from MozDGM grant to rehabilitate sawmill equipment to ensure timber processing for value chain development; ii) one community (Teniua, in Gilé), implementing beekeeping under this project, has been selected to benefit from the BSP programme and the project has been supporting its legalization and the opening of the bank account, mandatory to be eligible for BSP funds; iii) although not through a grant, it is worth noting that a group of anti-fire brigades established by this project was recently integrated into forest plantation company (PORTUCEL) comprising a team of wildfire fighters, paid by this private company.
90. Overall, outcome 3 effectiveness is assessed as **satisfactory** because the project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices by providing the same package of services in all beneficiary communities, which was appropriate since it increased the communities' access to different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption. Nevertheless, opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited as only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation.

3.3 Efficiency

EQ3.1: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?

Finding 16 - The cost-effectiveness of Components 2 and 3 was very low

91. Appendix 3 show project's financial data, including breakdown of project costs by project component and budget line. Overall, about USD 1.8 million was spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a 3.6 million budget. This means that 50% of the total budget was spent on human resources, including staff and consultants. Based on the results obtained, there was no

⁴⁰ The Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP) aims at defining the share of the monetary benefits generated by the reduction of emissions, in particular derived from the reduction of deforestation in the Province of Zambézia. These monetary benefits will be shared between different beneficiaries based on the annual performance of the landscape, i.e. payments will be made after verification of the reduction of the area of deforestation. Further information available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/documentos/publicacoes/plano-de-partilha-de-beneficios>

⁴¹ The MozDGM programme aims at supporting initiatives that facilitate the socio-economic development of local communities aimed at adapting to and mitigating climate change in the Zambezia Province. Further information available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/nossos-projetos/listagem-de-projetos/mozdgm>

⁴² Example of current call for proposals for small community projects available at <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/recursos/destaques/184-oportunidade-de-financiamento-para-organizacoes-comunitarias-de-base-na-zambezia>

efficient use of human resources. While it is understandable that the project strategy included the production and delivery of several studies and diagnostics, in particular related to the analysis of the RSM and within the scope of technical assistance for the inclusion of PES, these costs seem exaggerated considering the modest progress in the outcomes and outputs of Components 1 and 2 (see section 3.2). Component 2 accounted for almost 30% of the total project costs. This means that almost 1 million USD has been spent, despite the limited progress on human and institutional capacity strengthening.

92. Component 3 accounted for 40% of the total project costs. The costs assigned under the budget line for contracts (USD 870,000) seems more reasonable, taking into account that the project strategy for Component 3 was to sign LoAs with service providers, rather than through external consultants. However, to date over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support a total of 2,376 people directly reached through sustainable natural resource management practices (i.e. almost USD 500/beneficiary).

EQ3.2: To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?

Finding 17 - The project was affected by a number of external factors (Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, COVID-19 pandemic, etc.) that strongly impacted the project, compromising its initial planning and leading to successive adjustments

93. The project was affected by a set of external factors, some of which occurred simultaneously, hampering the execution of the initial plan. The 2019 General Elections resulted in subsequent institutional changes, including merger of Ministries, nomination of new ministers and changes in the administrative structure of provincial administrations. Even in early 2020 DINAF was not sure under whose ministerial umbrella it fell and FNDS moved from one ministry to the other. Dialogue and technical discussions were difficult during that transition period. To aggravate the situation, the country was affected by Cyclones Idai and Kennedy, which devastated several regions of the country and refocused all – including FAO's – attention and efforts towards emergency actions and relief. In February 2020 the world experienced the global COVID-19 pandemic, which led to lockdowns, declarations of state of emergency, travel restrictions. Changes in FAO Representation led to an internal restructuring of the country office, still on-going at the time of the field mission (Summer 2022), which has led to several changes in HR management and rendered the hiring of staff and non-staff members lengthy and administratively burdensome.
94. As a result, various project's activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. For example, under Component 2, the capacity needs assessment on sustainable land management practices and on the RSM was planned for year 2 but was postponed to year 3; the trainings on PES for government staff and NGO were planned to start in year 1 and 2, but only took place in year 4; the exchange visit on PES to an example country relevant for Mozambican was cancelled; the two plenary meetings planned with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambézia to discuss RSM and PES were cancelled due to the project's failure to adequately engage the local stakeholders in the provincial discussion. Under Component 3, the development and implementation of communication strategy was planned to year 2, but only started in year 3; the strengthening of NRMC at community level was planned to year 2, but only started in year 3; the LoA with SDAE departments were planned for year 2, but were only signed in year 3.

Finding 18 – The project built on synergies and complementarities with other projects. However, the late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the consolidation of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities

95. 44% of the E-survey respondents considered that the project was able to generate good synergies and complementarities with other ongoing actions in Zambézia Province. The strong synergies with different stakeholders, in particular the quality of partnerships with service providers (see Finding 7) contributed to project efficiency by allowing a smooth implementation of the activities and complementarities with the different REDD+ programmes underway in Zambezia (see Finding 4). However, the project planned to support seven districts, but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints identified at midterm. Furthermore, activities under Component 3 related to sustainable alternative livelihoods models (i.e. agro-forestry, aquaculture, beekeeping, anti-fire brigades, nutrition, saving and credits) initiated in year three, but only in two districts (Maganja da Costa and Alto Molocué). At mid-term the project team and the MTR realised that work with communities should be speeded up immediately, rather than waiting for the foreseen legislative changes. The project then decided to expand community work under this component to two more districts (Gilé and Mulevala). Although by design Component 3 activities were actually planned to start from year three onwards, when advances in the legal and regulatory framework of the RSM and PES were expected to be consolidated, in practice this has resulted in low efficiency in this component. Community work demands time in order for the results be tangible, visible and consolidated. Some expected results may be visible more quickly (e.g. beekeeping), but in the other cases they continue demanding significant time to prepare the communities and to achieve the expected results, particularly on fish farming, reduction in uncontrolled burning, soil recovery and increased production based on agro-forestry systems, and consolidation of community dynamics of savings and credit. Project efficiency in this component would have increased if activities with communities had started at the very beginning of the project, rather than waiting for progress in the revision of the legal framework, as envisaged in the design, as the latter depends on Government's political will.
96. Overall, project efficiency is assessed as **moderately satisfactory** because a number of external factors such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, COVID-19 pandemic affected the project. Such factors compromised project's initial planning and led to successive adjustments, as various activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. Furthermore, the project planned to support seven districts, but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints identified at midterm. Also at midterm the project team and the MTR realised that work with communities should be fast-tracked, rather than stalled awaiting the foreseen legislative changes, as initially planned in the project design. However, the late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the efficiency of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities. The overall project's cost-effectiveness is very low considering the amount (USD 1.8 million) spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a 3.6 million budget, particularly under Component 2 with little to show as result. The same applies to Component 3 since over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support little more than two thousand people through sustainable natural resource management practices.

3.4 Sustainability

EQ4.1a: What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project? EQ4.1b: What are the key risks which may affect

the sustainability of the project benefits (in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability)?

Finding 19 - The project strategy and the results achieved have ensured environmental sustainability; beekeeping and agro-forestry systems show good prospects for continuing after project completion, but the fish farming model tested is not sustainable for communities.

97. 84% of the E-survey respondents considered that some benefits of the project can continue in the long term, while only 9% considered that the project results are not sustainable. The main existing risks for environmental sustainability derive from the problems affecting the landscape of Zambézia, in particular deforestation, soil erosion, and uncontrolled wildfires. The sustainable natural resource management practices tested and introduced by the project contribute to minimize these risks. The practice of beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation. Integrated fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities, including by the anti-fire brigades trained, which indicates good prospects for reducing uncontrolled wildfires. Conservation agriculture through agroforestry systems will still take some time to consolidate, but it is visible that communities have already understood and are applying techniques of direct seeding or planting, permanent soil cover, crop rotations or intercropping food and forest crops. These techniques are also important to increase the resilience of communities to the impact of climate change, which continues to be a risk of environmental crises and shocks in Mozambique. There is evidence that project beneficiaries will continue the beekeeping activity as it is being well appropriated and is already generating income. However, the aquaculture model tested is not sustainable for the project beneficiaries because they will not be able to restock the fish ponds with alevins, nor will they be able to secure sufficient feed with locally available raw materials. The option of buying industrial feed or even more alevins to repopulate the ponds is neither expected nor feasible due to their high price in local markets.

Finding 20 - Prospects for financial sustainability through the 20% RSM are low, but opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in the Zambézia Province are more promising.

98. The project strategy for financial sustainability was based on the assumption that the RSM would be improved, thus leading to more regular channelling of financial resources to communities. However, despite some advances in political and technical discussions, payments of the 20% to communities remain incipient. Out of the eight NRMCS visited, five had not received payments for more than four years and only three had received payments. For example, the community of Nadala (Mulevala District), received MZN 54,000 (approximately USD 850) in 2021, but referring to the year 2019, the funds were used to buy basic materials and rebuild the school. The community of Ganga (Maganja da Costa District), received MZN 100,000 (approximately USD 1,500) in 2016 which was used to buy a grinding mill; in 2021 the community received USD 900 which it used to rehabilitate the road; since then, they have never received any more resources because the local forestry operator stopped paying the licenses. The NRMCS in the community of Mussaia (also in Maganja da Costa District) was revitalized in 2016, but so far has not received any amount from the 20% RSM.
99. Furthermore, apart from the forestry sector, there are still no visible advances in other sectors (mining, tourism, energy) indicating increased revenues from fees or licences channelled to communities. However, as mentioned, important REDD+ programmes are underway in Zambézia Province which contemplate PES mechanisms. These are the cases, for example, of the Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP) or MozDGM. These programmes will continue beyond the end of the present project. The beneficiary communities of the four target districts are more prepared to receive PES,

as they are applying sustainable practices, which also contribute to the reduction of emissions, namely through the reduction of deforestation and uncontrolled wildfires.

Finding 21 - Although prospects for social sustainability are more promising due to opportunities created for improving project beneficiaries' livelihoods, institutional sustainability (central and decentralised level). However, institutional sustainability have not been sufficiently ensured and the project does not have an exit strategy defined

100. An inter-ministerial group was established with support from the project including representation from eight sectors of government, but the ad hoc nature of this group indicates that it is unlikely to maintain a regular meeting dynamic without external financial support. At central level, particularly in DINAF, there are still many organisational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication which need to be further strengthened. In addition, the high turnover of Government staff and the low level of public budget allocation to the forest sector pose risks to institutional sustainability. At the level of the project beneficiaries, it was possible to observe that livelihoods have improved. Activities such as beekeeping are already generating income, which is guaranteed by the purchase of honey by AGRIMEL. The same was observed regarding the savings and credit groups, which are operating with increasing volume of savings in almost all communities, as well as granting small credits (interest rate 10%) to community members. However, this is an ad hoc, piece meal approach: the project does not have an exit strategy, which would be important to consolidate results, but also to leave a road map for the public institutions and other stakeholders involved in view of defining the necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of the project after it ends.
101. Overall, project's sustainability is assessed as **moderately likely** in that moderate risks were found. The main risks for environmental sustainability derive from deforestation, soil erosion, and uncontrolled wildfires that continue to affect the landscape of Zambézia. However, beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation, fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities, and some agroforestry practices are being applied at community level. The main risk for financial sustainability derive from the fact the 20% revenue to the communities remain incipient. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in the Zambézia Province to render financial sustainability prospects more promising. At community level opportunities were created for improving beneficiaries' livelihoods, which reduce risks for social sustainability. However, there are still many organisational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication which need to be further strengthened at DINAF's level, and the absence of a concrete exit strategy increases risks for institutional sustainability.

3.5 Factors affecting performance

3.5.1 Project design and readiness

EQ5.1a: How clear and coherent was the project design (including its causal logic / theory of change) to address the needs of target groups and beneficiaries?

Finding 22 - The project's strategy is adequate to respond to the challenges that the country faces towards promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems

102. The project's strategy is adequate to respond to the challenges that the country faces towards promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems through improvement of the existing RSM and introduce PES that supports sustainable use and conservation of forests and improves local peoples' livelihoods. The project design is logical in the sense that it intends to improve the policy framework by defining a common set of rules for investing in and establishing provision of compensation for ecosystem services by involving different government sectors (Component 1); it seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of stakeholders in charge of natural forest management, including government (DINAF/MTA) and decentralized government bodies, NGOs and local communities towards improving the RSM and introducing a PES element (Component 2); it seeks to assist the local communities to develop capacities and engage in income generation activities that are in line with ecosystem conservation principles in order to allow them to receive payments based on environmental performance (RSM) and on the ecosystems services they bring (PES) (Component 3). The project's results chain provides a logical and coherent sequence of inputs - outputs - outcomes - impact in order to produce changes in institutions, local communities and in the Zambezia landscape. However, while the project strategy is logical and coherent, project's results hinge on approval of laws and regulations under Component 1, in particular towards the improvement of the current RSM and inclusion of PES, which ultimately determines the project's impact and its sustainability prospects.

EQ5.1b: To what extent were the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed and context (political, institutional, social, etc.)?

Finding 23 – The initial project coverage was not realistic and the project assumed the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised; this assumption proved deleterious to project results.

103. The project was initially designed to be implemented in seven districts of Zambézia Province. These were selected on the basis of the following technical criteria: i) existence of forest cover and biodiversity of global significance; ii) 20% RSM operational; iii) NRMC in place and operational; iv) existing NRMC willing to participate in forest conservation and related natural resources management activities; v) potential for synergies with other actor's initiatives, particularly the government's Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Program. However, the number of districts was clearly overestimated, as the project quickly realized financial resources would not be sufficient to cover them all. It is important to note that Zambézia Province is very large (more than 103 000 square kilometres), which means that the distances between districts, and within them, between communities, are very long. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that the condition of the roads, particularly secondary and tertiary roads, is poor, requiring several hours to reach communities. In addition to the technical criteria, such practical factors should have been considered but were omitted in determining the project coverage. As a result, at midterm, it was concluded that covering seven districts was unrealistic and that the project should focus on only four.

104. In addition, the project had a central design flaw, in that it assumed the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised; in other words, component 3 would begin only after the RSM improved and included the PES element. In practice this led to significant delays in starting Component 3 activities, including the mobilisation and the testing of innovative sustainable forestry practices in the communities. This design and readiness problem was detected by the mid-term review and led to a review of the project strategy (including adjustments in its theory of change). The recommendation was promptly accepted by the project (2020) and contributed to speeding up Component 3 activities on the ground.
105. Overall, project's design and readiness is assessed as **moderately satisfactory** in that by design it was assumed that the strategy and related activities under Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised. This hindered the project's readiness leading to a review of the project strategy at midterm which contributed to speed up Component 3 activities on the ground.

3.5.2 Monitoring and evaluation system

EQ5.7a: Was the M&E plan practical and sufficient and did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies?

Finding 24 – The weaknesses detected at midterm were overcome by revising the logframe's indicators and theory of change

106. The original logframe template did not include indicators for outputs, only for the project objective and outcomes, and at midterm it was found that there was not enough information to measure qualitative indicators due to the absence of custom criteria for their assessment. Following the recommendations of the MTR the project revised the Theory of Change (as reproduced in section 2.1 of this report) and the results framework, which were cleared by the Lead Technical Officer and became effective from February 2021 onwards.
107. The revised logframe, annual work plans and budgets have been used by the project team for monitoring purposes. A monitoring & evaluation plan was prepared by the M&E officer in which basic procedures and routines for collecting data, processing, analysing and storing information in a systematic way were defined. A Rural Rapid Assessment was carried out in 2018⁴³ by the project team to understand the pre-project situation of the identified CBNRM committees and the concerned communities and a Baseline study was carried out in 2019⁴⁴. The Inception Report was prepared following the inception workshop organized by FAO together with the National Directorate of Forest (DINAF) in March 2019⁴⁵.

EQ5.7b: Was the information from the M&E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?

Finding 25 – The monitoring & evaluation system and procedures are adequate, allowing for a correct follow-up of activities, data collection and information on progress, reporting and analysis to support corrective measures.

⁴³ Baseline survey - Field work 18.11/01.12.2018 by Ângela Narandas – Isabel Cachomba – Leonardo Buchili - Noémie Huybrechts presented on 05.12.2018.

⁴⁴ UniZambeze. 2019. *Estudo de base do projecto Pagamento por Serviços Ambientais para apoiar a Conservação das Florestas e Modos de Vida Sustentáveis (GCP/MOZ/117/GFF)*, Maputo, 2019

⁴⁵ FAO. 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods (GCP/MOZ/117/GFF): Inception Workshop Report*. Quelimane, 4th March 2019

108. 72% of the E-survey respondents considered the project's M&E of good quality. The evaluation also found that the M&S system captures information that allows to: i) track project activities (e.g. training sessions, number of participants, meetings held, documentation produced such as reports, assessments, lists of beneficiaries in the different components of the project, among others); ii) track achievement of results by reporting against outputs and outcome indicators. The M&E system is centrally managed from the FAO country office. The monitoring officer is experienced and dedicated; she has the primary responsibility for these tasks, despite continued support as of project start, from the project facilitator, based in Zambezia. From the second half of 2021 onwards, the technical officer recruited to support Component 3 also participated in the monitoring visits. This improved the efficiency of the M&E System, as visits to municipalities and communities, often very distant from each other, could be split among three individuals instead of being carried out by one. These monitoring visits by the project team to Zambézia were conducted on a quarterly basis, with the exception of 2020, when they were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
109. In terms of reporting, the main tools are the Project Progress Reports (PPR), prepared every six months and the annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR), covering the years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The latter are also prepared with the involvement of the Lead Technical Officer, the Budget Holder and the GEF-Funding Liaison Officer, who give clearance to the report. The reports have been submitted on time and provide adequate information to track project's progress towards achieving intended results and status on the implementation of activities. A results matrix is included in each report, in which the progress (percentage) of each indicator is identified, accompanied by a narrative description/justification. Overall, it was found that the information provided allows to obtain a general picture of progress on the ground. When necessary, corrective measures are also proposed in the PPR and PIR. It was found that the annual work plans have been systematically adjusted to respond to changes in context in order to adjust the project's strategy accordingly, as occurred with the re-scheduling of some activities to face restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. All reports were sent to the Steering Committee for accountability purposes and subsequent feedback and follow-up to inform implementation. The Lead Technical Officer also conducted technical/monitoring missions to Mozambique, including visits to project sites in Zambezia. Back to Office Reports were prepared by the consultants and project staff for every mission, often including recommendations for adjusting the intervention strategy and the content of some activities. A mid-term review was conducted in 2020⁴⁶ and the status of implementation of the recommendations has been monitored by the project.
110. Overall, project's M&E is assessed as **highly satisfactory** in that a M&E plan was prepared and included basic procedures and routines for collecting data, processing, analysing and storing information in a systematic way as well as an adequate tracking of project's activities and results. The overall quality of reporting is good, quarterly monitoring visits have been conducted, as well as monitoring missions by the Lead Technical Officer.

3.5.3 Quality of implementation and execution

Finding 26 - The operational arrangement of the project was adequate to facilitate the decision-making process, but housing the PMU at FAO instead of at DINAF limited project performance. Oversight from FAO was adequate and project staff interacted frequently with the Lead Technical

⁴⁶ Mid-term review of GCP/MOZ/117/GFF – Payment for Ecosystem Services, September 2020

Officer, but interaction with the GEF focal point in Mozambique and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent

111. In regard to execution, The project's operational arrangement was adequate to support decision making and facilitate the implementation of activities. At national level, DINAF was the government's counterpart for this project, being responsible for ensuring coordination with other relevant initiatives government sectors, both in Zambézia Province and at national level. A project task force was set up comprising the Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer, the GEF Funding Liaison Officer and other relevant technical staff, being responsible for the coordination and daily management of activities. In terms of decision-making, a project steering committee was set up, which includes representatives from various Government bodies (MTA/DINAF, Gender and Youth ministry or Ministério do Género, Criança e Acção Social, Agriculture and Rural Development ministry or Ministério da Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural, Mineral Resources and Energy ministry , Ocean rivers and fisheries ministry or Ministério do Mar, Águas Interiores e Pescas, FNDS) and FAO Mozambique. Various bilateral and multilateral donors also take part in the steering committee as observers, such as the World Bank, European Union, JICA and GIZ.
112. The project design envisaged that the Project Management Unit (PMU) would be located at DINAF, as the national counterpart of the project. During the first year, the technical adviser and other project consultants were based directly at DINAF. However, in 2020, the PMU moved to teleworking. The reasons given for this decision were the constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited face-to-face work. However, from the end of 2020 onwards, work routines in the ministries progressively returned to normality, so the PMU could have moved back again to DINAF. This could have contributed to a better performance of the project as it would have allowed for a more continuous discussion on progresses and technical advances, but also increased the efficiency of the activities related to institutional capacity strengthening foreseen in component 2.
113. In regard to implementation, FAO provided adequate oversight and supervision of the work plans and agreements established, technical and methodological guidance to project's interventions, support in the preparation and review of progress reports and adequate support to administration of financial resources. This is visible from the analysis of the various progress reports (PPR and PIR), as well as from the back to office reports of national and international consultants. The regular monitoring visits from the M&E team were also important to support implementation, whose reports also gave recommendations to the various partners, namely local governments and NGO who signed LoA with FAO. Oversight by FAO-Rome was appreciated by the project team. According to interviews, frequent interactions with the Lead Technical Officer were important to provide overall guidance to project implementation, review of work plans, terms of reference, progress reports and quality of deliverables. However, from the interviews conducted, interaction with the GEF focal point in Mozambique but also with the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent, particularly in the first half of implementation. This was reflected, for example, in inadequate co-financing reporting, which was only corrected in the last year of implementation.
114. Overall, project's implementation and execution are assessed as **moderately satisfactory**. Project's operational arrangements were adequate, particularly as a project task force was set up to ensure overall project's coordination and daily management of activities. The project steering committee, which included representatives from various Government bodies, bilateral and multilateral donors adequately supported decision making. However, the fact that the project management unit did not return to DINAF when work routines in the ministries progressively returned to normality from the end of 2020 onwards hindered project execution in that it reduced

project's capacity to provide a more continuous support to activities related to institutional capacity strengthening.

3.5.4 Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing

EQ5.4a: To what extent were the financial processes adequate (timeliness and adequacy of resources)?

Finding 27 – Financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures. Disbursements of 100% and global financial execution of 93% against 92% of implementation time elapsed.

115. It was possible to observe that overall financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures, namely regarding documentation, eligibility, allocation and justification of expenses. This management is carried out by a financial officer, supervised by the FAO Representative in Mozambique, as Budget Holder. The Field Programme Management Information System (FIPMS) is used to record expenses and for budget control, according to FAO procedures. Financial management through Oracle / FPMIS system allows to control expenses and track the total budget, but does not allow to immediately understand where resources are being channelled vis-à-vis project components, activities, outputs and outcomes. Nevertheless, there is a continuous mapping of the expenses that allows the project team to know the resource allocation according to project components.
116. Funds availability has not affected project performance and 58% of the E-survey respondents considered that financial resources allocated to the project were adequate. The total budget of the project is USD 3 637 748, fully financed by the GEF grant. Disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and have reached to date the full amount of the planned funding. The cumulative disbursements were as follows: USD 825 000 (2019), USD 2 095 000 (2020), USD 2 534 935 (2021) and USD 3 637 749 (2022), corresponding to 100%. These payments allowed for a smooth project implementation in terms of available financial resources.
117. Appendix 3 show project's financial data, including breakdown of project costs by project component and budget line. As of August 2022, the **total financial execution rate is 93%**, which is adequate as the project is nearing completion (92% implementation elapsed time). The training item has a very low execution rate (36%), which was due to the cancellation of capacity building activities within Component 2 due to the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; this limited the overall performance of Component 2. All other items have an adequate execution rate, considering the level of activities and deliverables achieved so far, which are also aligned with the overall financial execution of each project component.
118. The annual financial execution was in line with the activity plan and budget defined each year. The remaining execution time and available financial resources are being used to close some activities (in particular under Component 3) and also to conduct the endline survey taking advantage of the three months extension that has been approved to the project. However, as of September 2022, the LoA required to carry out the exercise had yet to be finalized.

EQ5.4b: To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize?

Finding 28 – The co-financing reported throughout the implementation was clearly overestimated, but the project has reviewed the procedure and has been reporting more realistic and reasonable figures.

119. The total co-financing amount included in the GEF CEO endorsement was USD 37 600 00. However, throughout implementation, the annual PIR reported clearly overestimated figures. For example, the PIR 2019 and 2020 reported an actual co-financing amount materialised of USD 49 200 000, which was already above the estimate at endorsement. But the 2021 PIR (available at the time of the field mission) reported a remarkable actual co-financing amount materialised of USD 139 600 000 and an expected total disbursement by the end of the project of USD 169 700 000. During the interviews with project staff and FLO, the evaluation team discussed and raised this concern. It was mentioned that the current procedure to report the co-financing is based on the information provided by the different partners, including Government, but mainly the World Bank through its ongoing REDD+ programmes in the Zambezia Province, which account for several millions dollars. Overall, it was found that the project's rationale to report the co-financing assumed that the resources from those REDD+ programmes should be considered as co-financing because of their thematic relation and implicit synergies with the objectives of this project. However, and according to GEF guidelines, co-financing means financing that is additional to GEF grant that supports the implementation of the project, and for which supporting evidence should be provided. The project was designed as part of the REDD+ programme, and not only related to it. However, , it is not reasonable to assume that all resources available in the REDD+ programme are in fact being (directly or indirectly) channelled to support its activities, as the co-financed reported suggests. Therefore, the utility of the materialized co-financing is limited because: i), at local level, this project has a direct intervention in only four municipalities of the Zambezia Province, while the REDD+ programmes cover the whole Province; ii) opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited (Finding 15); iii) apart from the forestry sector, there are still no visible advances in other sectors (mining, tourism, energy) indicating increased revenues from fees or licences channelled to communities (Finding 21). Nonetheless, it was clear from the analysis of the latest 2022 PIR (made available in August) that the project has reviewed the procedure, as the current co-financing amount reported is USD 33 100 000, which is considered reasonable and far below the previous USD 139 600 000. The co-financing data provided by the project staff is detailed in Appendix 4 to this report.
120. Overall, project's implementation and execution are assessed as **satisfactory**. Funds availability has not affected project performance, disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and as of August 2022 the total financial execution rate is 93%, which is adequate as the project has reached 92% implementation elapsed time. However, the co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated as in 2021 the project reported a remarkable actual co-financing amount materialised of USD 139 600 000 and an expected total disbursement by the end of the project of USD 169 700 000, against USD 37 600 00 anticipated at endorsement. In 2022 the project has reviewed the procedure and has now been reporting more realistic and reasonable figures.

3.5.5 Project/programme partnerships and stakeholder engagement (including the degree of ownership of project/programme results by stakeholders)

EQ5.5a: To what extent have stakeholders (e.g. government, civil society, rural communities, vulnerable groups, the private sector) been involved in project formulation and

implementation and what has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results?

Finding 29 - The project concept and design were subject to extensive consultations and discussions with relevant government partners and national stakeholders

121. The project concept and design were subject to extensive consultations and discussions with relevant government partners and national stakeholders. A first national workshop was held in 2015 in Maputo, attended by 40 people from government agencies, civil society, bilateral and multilateral donors. FAO carried out three field missions to Zambézia Province in 2015 for project preparation. In the first mission, Pebane, Maganja da Costa, Gilé, Alto Molócue and Ilé Districts were visited to explain the objective of the project and gather stakeholder ideas for project design. The mission met with the provincial governor, district administrators, RADEZA civil society network, the Mozambican timber producers' association as well as members of NRMC. In the second mission the Districts of Maganja da Costa and Mocubela were visited to discuss the functioning of the existing forestry and wildlife revenue sharing mechanism in more detail. The third mission focused on the various sector funds and revenue sharing mechanisms (agriculture, energy, fisheries, mining, tourism), to find out more about what they were doing and to gauge their interest in investing in ecosystem management and restoration and in PES. A final multi-stakeholder consultation workshop was held in Zambézia Province, also in 2015, to share the conclusions of the project preparation phase with about 50 stakeholders. The views and opinions of the different stakeholders were heard and considered in the design of the project, namely: i) invest in creation and/or revitalization of community-level NRMC in the project areas; ii) integrate PES in the government forestry and wildlife revenue sharing mechanism; iii) improve the transparency of how the 20% forest tax revenue share is calculated and disbursed; iv) ensure that the project complements existing initiatives, thereby creating synergies and avoiding duplication.

EQ5.5b: What were the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?

Finding 30 – Partnerships were established with a wide range of stakeholders, including high engagement of local authorities and fruitful collaboration with the private sector (in the case of beekeeping)

122. Partnerships with central government, provincial government and civil society were rated by E-survey respondents as "good", and "excellent" in the case of partnerships with district governments. The project managed to establish partnerships with different government sectors including the Ministry of Land and Environment, Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Directorate for Environment, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Action and FNDS, particularly in regard to the discussions under Component 1. Along with the World Bank, these stakeholders also took part in the project's steering committee, which increased their ownership of the project strategy as they participated in the decision-making process. At decentralized level the project managed to engage with the Provincial Directorate of Land and Environment and the Provincial Service of Environment, which were responsible for providing technical insights and following-up the implementation of field activities in the four target districts. The project established partnerships with services providers (AGRIMEL, UATAF, ICEI, ITC-F) to test and introduce innovative approaches with local communities, all of them with strong technical expertise and good capacity for community mobilization (see further details in section 3.2). In what relates to academia, the project established a partnership with UNIZAMBEZE to conduct research, socioeconomic studies as well as conducting project's baseline and endline (the latter still ongoing). With the Mozambique Community-based Natural Resource management Network a partnership was established to provide a training on natural resource

governance addressed to government staff and NGO. However, the partnership with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambézia was not so successful because the two biannual meetings did not take place as planned due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

123. In general it was found local authorities engaged well within component 3. This was a direct result of the strategy of signing LoAs with the district governments. The signing of direct LoAs with these stakeholders has acted as an incentive for them to take responsibility in following-up the work at community level. This incentive has also provided them with a small working capital (5,000 USD/year) that is being used to purchase basic equipment and consumables (e.g. printers, data-show, toners, fuel for technicians' travel, etc.) that they would otherwise find difficult to acquire. In practice, this option also contributed to strengthening institutional capacities of district governments, although as unforeseen effects, as it was not deliberately implemented under Component 2.
124. In what refers to the private sector it is worth mentioning the excellent partnership with AGRIMEL for beekeeping. This company was found to have a high degree of commitment to the beekeeping promotion strategy, including ensuring the purchase of honey from the communities, as it is aligned with their business model. Two findings prove this success: i) the continued support from this service provider beyond the end of the LoA with FAO; ii) the service provider will open a new "honey house" in Alto Molocué District which will function as a hub so support this value chain in the region.

EQ5.5c: Have all stakeholders been made aware of the ESS plan and the grievance complaint mechanism?

125. The project developed an environmental and social risk mitigation plan. The key risks related to environment derive from climate change impacts on Miombo forest ecosystems. These risks were mitigated by introducing improved sustainable forest practices and by strengthening communities' capacities to cope with climate shocks. The key social risk in this project was "leakage"⁴⁷. The project actively mitigated this risk because it did not aim to displace local communities engaged in destructive forest use, but rather help them to engage in sustainable use of natural resources. However, the evaluation found no evidence about specific awareness by local communities and other stakeholders on the ESS plan. Furthermore, the project did not set up a specific grievance complaint mechanism, although the monitoring visits carried out by the project staff did not report any critical complaint. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that FNDS has in place a specific grievance complaint mechanism that is applied for all REDD+ projects underway in the Zambezia landscape, which could have been used by the project⁴⁸.
126. Overall, project's partnerships and stakeholders' engagement are assessed as **highly satisfactory** in that the project managed to establish partnerships with different government sectors which took part in the steering committee, thus contributing to increase ownership of project's strategy by participating in decision-making processes. Partnerships with services providers prove to be adequate as they have shown strong technical expertise and goof capacity for community mobilization. The strategy of signing LoAs with the district governments increased ownership and contributed for them to take more responsibility in following-up the work at community level. A specific partnership with the private sector through AGRIMEL proved particularly successful as

⁴⁷ As stated in Prodoc, the "leakage" term gained credence in the REDD+ debate and indicates the displacement of destructive forest use activities from the project area to other areas without a net positive environmental benefit at the larger scale – is inherent in any forest conservation intervention implemented at sub-national level.

⁴⁸ Further details available at <https://infordata.co.mz/fnds>

this company ensured even the purchase of honey from the communities (ie it supported the entire honey value chain).

3.5.6 Communication, knowledge management, and knowledge products

EQ5.6a: How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences? / EQ5.6b: To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling-up of project results?

Finding 31 – The flaws detected in terms of communication and knowledge management at midterm have been overcome and an appropriate communication and visibility strategy towards internal and external stakeholders was put in place; a strategy for collecting and disseminating lessons learned has been implemented which can also be useful to support the scaling up of project results

127. At midterm, the project was neither supported by a specific communication and visibility plan to promote its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience, nor by a knowledge management mechanism, aimed at assessing, documenting and sharing its results and lessons learned and experiences. FAO and GEF acknowledge that communication is essential for project effectiveness and sustainability and that communication for development activities should be planned from the beginning to ensure stakeholders' engagement, access to relevant information, and ownership⁴⁹. A comprehensive communication strategy should thus be designed to effectively promote participation, dialogue and improve the visibility of project results. The Project document states that information should be shared on a transparent and continuous basis.
128. The evaluation found that in the second half of implementation, following the midterm review and its recommendations, communication and visibility procedures were adequately applied. A communication and visibility plan focusing on the different project components was developed, which allowed the definition of i) key messages for the project to focus on, ii) the project's communication target audience and iii) the means to get such communications to national, provincial and community level stakeholders. 70% of the E-survey respondents rated the quality of the communication strategy as "good".
129. The communication dimension, both external and internal, is critical in this project since many interventions consist of pilot initiatives through which to test methodologies, new procedures, approaches and best practices, particularly with local communities. In addition, this project also aims to strengthen institutional capacities and promote changes in laws and regulations towards sustainable forest management. The project adequately managed to communicate its objectives, strategy and approach with external stakeholders, both at the national level (including other ministries, cooperation agencies, donors, the private sector, etc.), as well as at the local level, namely with organizations that support communities (e.g. local associations, NGOs, multi-stakeholders platforms, Provincial and District administrations, local public services). The project also managed to share its progresses and results with internal stakeholders, particularly through the project steering committee. Communication with different stakeholders was achieved through the reporting system (i.e. work plans, progress reports, and technical reports).
130. In terms of **knowledge management and visibility**, the evaluation found that project's documentation (e.g. reports, assessments, studies, technical notes, etc.) include FAO's identification and proper reference (including the respective logos) to the GEF as donor. In particular from the second half onwards, the project developed several materials which facilitated the communication and visibility of its actions on the ground and their results. The project has been adequately systematizing and documenting its results, lessons learned and success stories.

⁴⁹ See, for example, www.fao.org/communication-for-development/en/.

Several materials were produced by the project (including manuals, technical reports, infographics, videos, newsletters, stories from the field), which have been useful to disseminate the experience of this project, inside and outside Mozambique (see examples in Appendix 8). Such materials can be useful not only to enhance the visibility of the project, but also to support the scaling up of project results. For example, they can function as reference materials with concrete examples and lessons learned so that future projects implemented by FAO, NGO and the government itself can capitalise on and scale up the results achieved with these practices at community level. 74% of the E-survey respondents rated the quality of the knowledge management strategy as "good".

131. Overall, project communication and knowledge management is assessed as **satisfactory**. The project managed to produce and deliver various communication and visibility materials contributing to disseminate key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and general audience. Several knowledge materials were produced by the project (including manuals, technical reports, infographics, videos, newsletters), which have been useful to disseminate lessons learned and which can also be useful to support the scaling up of project results.

3.6 Progress to impact

EQ8.1: How is the likelihood of impact in terms of substantive contribution to broad changes and what can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impact from the project? / EQ8.2: Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks?

Finding 32 - The project has made contributions that can lead to broad changes in policies, laws, and legislation and has succeeded in promoting sustainable practices at the community level that have the potential to reduce environmental stress

132. Although the Forestry Law has not yet been approved - which will contemplate improved mechanisms for the RSM and PES - the likelihood of long-term impact derived from this project with respect to the enabling environment is promising. The project has contributed to political discussions towards changing the legal and regulatory framework for the RSM and inclusion of PES and concrete proposals (technical and legal) have been delivered to DINAF and are under consideration by the Government (see Finding 5). Evidence in this direction also derives from the fact that several sectors of Government are already involved in this discussion, whereas at the beginning of the project this was a theme mainly linked to the forestry and environmental sector (see Finding 8). The main risks for this substantive contribution in the medium and long term are related to the lack of political will from the government, which is unlikely as the government has been affirming its commitment to REDD+ and has seen the benefit of several initiatives in the country in this area. The likelihood of long-term impact for these broad changes in policy and legislation is promising because of the improved knowledge and understanding on the PES concept generated by the project (see Finding 11). However, weak performance in terms of institutional strengthening may be a risk to ensuring that DINAF has effective capacities to put these mechanisms into practice when approved (See Finding 12).

133. The impact on reducing environmental stress is visible at the community level. The practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation and using integrated (and controlled) fire management. Positive environmental impact is also likely to be seen in the long term by the adoption of beekeeping practices and agro-forestry systems, which contribute to the preservation of forest ecosystems (see Findings 13 and 14).

3.7 Cross-cutting concerns

3.7.1 Gender

EQ7.1a: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? / EQ7.1b: Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures equitable participation and benefits to minority groups, including indigenous people, and persons with disabilities?

Finding 33 - the project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation.

134. The Project Document included a sound gender analysis, identifying the main barriers and problems that affect women and highlighting that women are vital stakeholders in managing and using forest resources, through their subsistence and economic activities, although they are often marginalized in decision-making by the NRMC. A gender assessment was conducted in May 2019⁵⁰ in order to identify the challenges, risks, and opportunities, and provide recommendations towards gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the project. Subsequently, a specific gender strategy was developed in October 2019⁵¹ defining concrete actions and steps to incorporate gender dimensions in all project components. The project also appointed several women to support its activities, both as technical staff (e.g. Zambezia provincial facilitator and M&E Officer), as well as service providers who developed activities in the communities. This was important to facilitate the interaction between women, bringing them together as beneficiaries.
135. Within Component 1 the Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs has been participating in the inter-ministerial working group to discuss the inclusion of PES. Nevertheless, the expected "gender rules" had not yet been defined by the time of this evaluation since they should be discussed together with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES (currently being finalized). Within Component 3, the methodology applied for community governance promotes gender equality. During the visits to communities and focus groups with beneficiaries it was possible to observe that equal access for women to participate in activities has been promoted and their role in the management of NRMC has been encouraged. For example, women participation in the NRMC governing bodies is high, reaching almost half in the majority of them⁵². In some cases, such as the savings and credit groups, women are in fact leading pilot initiatives introduced by the project. During the evaluation's visits it was shown that women had been included in the fire control brigades, even though this, would, traditionally, have been considered a male task. Finally, the

⁵⁰ FAO, 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Assessment*. Maputo, May 2019

⁵¹ FAO, 2019. *Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Strategy*. Maputo, October 2019

⁵² Unfortunately there is no baseline value to compare this figure.

awareness raising activities on nutrition developed by the project had women as a priority target group. Overall, 51 percent of project beneficiaries reached under Component 3 are women. In sum, the project is consistent with the GEF policy on gender mainstreaming and is fully aligned with the FAO gender policy⁵³ since the specific needs and roles of both women and men were addressed. The majority of the E-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to address gender concerns as "excellent" (40%) or "good" (40%).

3.7.2 Minority groups, including indigenous peoples, disadvantaged, vulnerable and people with disabilities, and youth

Finding 34 – A sound participatory approach was applied throughout implementation, including prior consultations with project beneficiaries

136. The term "indigenous people" is not applicable in Mozambique, but the project developed a sound participatory approach, namely by conducting a thorough consultation at the design stage, including visits to target districts and discussions with local authorities regarding beneficiaries' needs. Throughout implementation, NRMC and beneficiary communities were consulted by project staff regarding their needs, priorities and project planned activities were explained to foster motivation and engagement. The majority of the E-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to work with vulnerable and minority groups as "good" (46%) or "excellent" (25%). The evaluation found no evidence of specific focus on some disadvantaged groups such as youth or people with disabilities, which could also have been targeted through the activities at community level, thus increasing the project's contribution to social inclusion.

3.7.3 Environmental and social safeguards

EQ6.1a: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? / EQ6.1b: Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS Mitigation Plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?

Finding 34 - The project's strategy adequately focuses on social and environmental aspects, namely by including communities in sustainable forest management models

137. The environmental and social safeguards (ESS) risk of this project was initially assessed as low, and remained as such throughout implementation. No evident social or environmental threats related to project activities were found by the evaluation. On the contrary, the major threats are precisely those that the project is trying to overcome, such as deforestation and forest degradation caused by shifting cultivation and unsustainable timber and charcoal exploitation as well as uncontrolled forest fires. These threats reduce the availability of forest ecosystem and services to rural communities. The project does not pose risks, which means that the potential social and environmental impacts do not significantly affect populations or ecologically sensitive areas. The majority of the E-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to address environmental concerns as "excellent" (56%) or "good" (35%). However, although the risk matrix identifies risks related to climate change, they only refer to increased fire frequency and less rainfall. Inherent risks related to extreme weather events - in particular cyclones - were not identified. This could have enriched the risk matrix and the EES mitigation plan, considering that Mozambique is one of the countries in the world most prone to such risks, as seen throughout implementation.

⁵³ FAO. 2020. *FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030*. Rome

138. Overall, cross-cutting concerns are assessed as **highly satisfactory**. The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation since a sound gender analysis was included in project's design, a gender assessment was conducted right at the start of the project and a specific gender strategy was developed and put in practice throughout implementation. In what refers to social inclusion and rights of minorities, although a specific focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included, beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project's strategy adequately focuses on social and environmental aspects.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1 (Relevance). The project was relevant as it responded to the national priorities for sustainable forest management and addressed the needs of beneficiary communities. **The project contributes to the 2030 Agenda, particularly to SDG 15 (Life on Land) and is congruent with GEF 5 focal areas priorities and FAO's country programming by enhancing communities' capacities to implement best practices on sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. The project is well aligned with government priorities** stated in the main national policy instruments as national goals, namely the Government's Five-Year Plan (2020-2024) and the National Development Strategy (2015-2035). The project's strategy responded to country's needs by contributing to promote an enabling environment for sustainable forest management. However, a conditional approach to implementation posed challenges because by design the start of Component 3 was dependent on the approval of legislation under Component 1; after the midterm, the project's strategy and its planned activities became more integrated, rather than sequential.

Conclusion 2 (Effectiveness Outcome 1). The project managed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law. The Inter-ministerial Working Group was successfully created with eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions. However, the draft document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF, but is has not yet been officially approved. In the same line, the **new forest law that envisages the inclusion of PES has not yet been approved and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular, as out of the 8 NRMCs visited, 5 had not received payments for more than 4 years and only 3 had received payments in 2021.**

Conclusion 3 (Effectiveness Outcome 2). **Project achievements in terms of human capacity strengthening are very modest. Some progress was achieved towards better understanding the PES concept by decision-makers from different government staff across sectors, other than forest and environment sectors.** However, trainings only reached a few national government and civil society representatives, thus hindering the capacity building strengthening envisaged and undertaken by the project. Regarding the institutional strengthening dimension no sound progress was achieved, such as through improved tools and systems for analysis/diagnosis, planning, budgeting, resource mobilisation, communication, monitoring, evaluation, equipment.

Conclusion 4 (Effectiveness Outcome 3). **The project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices allowing beneficiaries to access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption.** The choice of service providers was appropriate as they revealed the necessary experience and expertise to support the beneficiary communities. In regard to beekeeping, beneficiaries were unanimous in considering it profitable. The anti-fire brigades are active and these groups have been responsible not only for fire prevention but also for raising awareness among other community members about the need of preventing uncontrolled fires. The saving and credit groups have started to show a good level of organisation as the volume of savings and small credits granted have been increasing. However, agro-forestry practices will require years before their real benefits in the ecosystem and production systems can be observed. In the case of pisciculture there is no evidence of great success since communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the required amount of feed for the fish ponds as recommended by the project, and no significant amount of fish was found in the fish ponds visited. The project also contributed to strengthen the community governance's systems for natural resources management, namely by strengthening the NRMC. However, opportunities created for PES under the

REDD+ programmes have been very limited. On a more positive note, the project managed to deliver a range of communication and reporting materials (appendix 8), as well as to systematize and disseminate testimonies from the field and lessons learned.

Conclusion 5 (Efficiency). A number of external factors such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, COVID-19 pandemic affected the project compromising its efficiency. Because of these, various activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. The project planned to support seven districts, but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints identified at midterm, at which time the project team realised that work with communities should be sped up. Nevertheless, **the late start in Component 3 hindered project's efficiency, since its activities would have benefited from starting at the very beginning of the project so that more time would be available to implement and consolidate community work.** The overall project's cost-effectiveness is very low considering that USD 1.8 million was spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a 3.6 million. This is particularly true of Component 2 where only modest results were achieved and of Component 3 since over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support little more than two thousand people through sustainable natural resource management practices.

Conclusion 6 (Sustainability). The main risks for environmental sustainability derive from deforestation, soil erosion, and uncontrolled wildfires that continue affecting the landscape of Zambézia. However, beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation, fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities, and some agroforestry practices are being applied at community level. **The main risk for financial sustainability derives from the fact the 20% revenue to the communities remain incipient, Nevertheless, there are opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in the Zambézia Province making financial sustainability prospects more promising.** At community level opportunities were created for improving beneficiaries' livelihoods, which reduce risks for social sustainability. However, there are still many organisational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication which need to be further strengthened at DINAF's level, and the absence of a concrete exit strategy increases risks for institutional sustainability.

Conclusion 7 (Factors affecting performance): The design and readiness problems due to the internal conditional logic that prevented the simultaneous start of the various components led to a review of the project strategy at midterm which contributed then to speed up Component 3 activities on the ground. The **overall quality of reporting is good**, quarterly monitoring visits project staff and regular missions by the Lead Technical Officer have been conducted as planned. Project's **operational arrangements were adequate**, particularly as a project task force was set up to ensure overall project's coordination and daily management of activities. **However, the fact that the project management unit did not returned to DINAF from 2020 onwards hindered project execution** in that it reduced project's capacity to provide a more continuous support to activities related to institutional capacity strengthening. Funds availability has not affected project performance, disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and as of August 2022 the total financial execution rate is 93%, which is adequate as the project has reached 92% implementation elapsed time. However, the **co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated, but the project has reviewed the procedure** and ended up reporting more realistic figures. **Partnerships with services providers prove to be adequate** and a specific partnership with the private sector through AGRIMEL prove to be a success as this company ensured even the purchase of honey from the communities. The strategy of signing LoAs with the district governments increased ownership. The **project managed to produce and deliver various communication and visibility materials** contributing to disseminate key messages, results and lessons learned to partners, stakeholders and general audience.

Conclusion 8 (Progress to impact). Political discussions and concrete proposals (technical and legal) delivered to DINAF can lead to broad changes in the enabling environment towards changing the legal

and regulatory framework for the RSM and inclusion of PES. The practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation and using integrated (and controlled) fire management, thus contributing to reducing environmental stress.

Conclusion 9 (Cross-cutting concerns). The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation since a sound gender analysis was included in project's design, a gender assessment was conducted right at the start of the project and a specific gender strategy was developed and put in practice throughout implementation. In what refers to social inclusion and rights of minorities, although a specific focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included, beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project's strategy adequately focuses on social and environmental aspects.

4.2 Recommendations

As this evaluation took place very close to the expected end of the project, it was not possible to make constructive recommendations that could be implemented in a timely manner. Therefore, some recommendations were converted into possible lessons learned, which could be useful for future projects (see section 5)

Recommendation 1. To FAO, DINAF and FNDS: Identify/map the most outstanding communities/NRMC in terms of results achieved and flag them to FNDS as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programmes

Currently there are numerous funding opportunities in the Zambézia landscape to support small community projects, which can actually be considered as payments for ecosystem services. In this sense, it would be important to identify and map, by the end of the project, the communities with great potential, and/or whose NRMC are better organized and flag them to the FNDS as potential candidates in the frame of the REDD+ initiatives. This is particularly important because communities have little access to information; this could further support and strengthen the results achieved by the project in certain communities.

Recommendation 2. To FAO and Local Authorities: Together with the District Authorities, prepare an "exit plan" for the four Districts benefiting from the project in order to ensure that communities supported by the project continue to benefit from a minimum technical follow-up, thus ensuring the investment and effort applied is not lost.

The four district governments involved in this project showed a strong degree of commitment and engagement. It is important to prepare an exit plan that identifies key tasks and responsibilities that these institutions could develop, in order to continue supporting beneficiary communities. This should be done together with the district governments, in particular involving the Administrators and technical services (SDAE), so that the exit plans are realistic, adjusted to their real capacities, and to ensure ownership of the plan.

Recommendation 3. To FAO: Systematize the approach, experience and good results achieved with the "Beekeeping" and "Savings and Credit Groups" practices to reinforce the learning dimension of the project.

The project achieved good results in terms of systematization and dissemination of lessons learned. However, considering the good results achieved within the beekeeping and savings and credit groups' activities, more detailed documentation of the practices are required. This could be done using appealing formats and materials, with a didactic purpose, in order to serve as inspiration for future projects, either

implemented by FAO or national NGOs. This would also help to increase the replication potential of the tested models, as well as to give more visibility to results achieved.

5. Lessons learned

Lesson 1 - Working with communities requires a constant presence on the ground: In this project, most of the technical staff was based in the FAO country office, in the capital Maputo. Only one provincial facilitator was permanently based in the Zambézia province, where activities with communities were developed. The project's strategy was also to work with local service providers (mostly NGO), who had themselves local technicians in the field. However, these are contracted by the project, through Letters of Agreement (LoA), so their work must also be closely tracked by the project staff. Technical or administrative problems often arise, that are difficult to be solved remotely, as happened in this project. In this sense, future projects that include direct work with communities must provide adequate resources (human and financial) to deploy staff in the locations where activities will be developed. This would allow for a more responsive technical assistance, follow-up and monitoring, both to the beneficiary communities and to the service providers contracted through projects.

Lesson 2 - Partnerships with the private sector contribute to greater effectiveness and increase prospects for sustainability in working with local communities: The inclusion of direct partnerships with the private sector is not a common practice in most projects, as the preference is usually to work with NGOs. In the case of this project, there was a direct partnership with the private sector, through AGRIMEL, which was contracted as a service provider to support beekeeping activities. The experience of this project showed very positive results with this partnership, as this company guaranteed the purchase of honey from the communities, as well as provided continuous technical assistance, even after the end of its contract. The main goal of the private sector is to generate profit, and these actors will not partner with anyone unless they expect that their action will add value to their business and will deliver and play their expected part to ensure said value is generated. Thus, future projects involving income generating activities with communities should when possible include stronger partnerships with the private sector partly to ensure the success of the activity and partly to provide a built-in exit strategy and sustainability plan for such activities.

Lesson 3 - Signing Letters of Agreement with the Government, including the allocation of a small package of financial resources, significantly contributes to a greater engagement, commitment and ownership by the public institutions: In general, it is not common for projects financed by the GEF to allow the signing of Letters of Agreement (LoA) for the direct transfer of resources to government institutions. However, in the case of this project, this was done with the District Governments in the four target regions of the project. Although the amount of these LoAs was low (about USD 5,000), this contributed to a greater commitment and engagement of local authorities. Based on this experience, it would be desirable for future GEF-funded projects to replicate this example, not only at District level but also at central level, as a way of increasing engagement and ownership by government authorities.

Lesson 4 - The absence of the institutional/organizational strengthening dimension hinders the effectiveness of capacity building strategies towards Government's institutions: Most projects that include an institutional strengthening dimension often limit their activities to provide training to government staff. This strategy contributes to strengthening human capital. However, it is important to bear in mind that public institutions' staff participate in numerous training sessions throughout the year, as all projects include such activities. Furthermore, more than individual training, public institutions need to strengthen their organizational capacities, namely in terms of strategic planning, budgeting, monitoring, communication; they also need to be

adequately equipped to fulfil their mandates, a concept known as organizational readiness. In the case of this project, this institutional/organizational strengthening dimension was weak, thus limiting the effectiveness of the expected results.

Lesson 5 - The start of community interventions components cannot depend on the results of project components focused on improving legal frameworks: The design and initial intervention logic of this project posited that the community work would only start after the revision of the existent legal and regulatory framework took place. However, legal and regulatory changes always depend on external factors, such as the political will and/or political opportunity to approve such revisions. This project had significant delays in the community work component, as it was awaiting the results of the legal and regulatory revision and eventual approval. When the project decided to speed up the community work, even without the new legal framework approval, the time available for implementation was no longer sufficient to consolidate results. Therefore, it is desirable that future projects move forward with activities at the community level, without depending on the approval of laws or regulations as foreseen in other components of the project.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization/Location
Abdul	Renato	Technician	SEDAE - Mulevala
Afonso	Claudio	National Director and GEF Focal Point - Mozambique	DINAF
Alfredo	João	SDAE – Maganja da Costa	SDAE – Maganja da Costa
Bastique	Tomás	REDD+ Coordinator – Zambezia Province	FNDS
Benate	Amílcar	Project Officer	ITC-F
Boscolo	Marco	Lead technical Officer	FAO Rome
Caetano	Domingos	Technician	SEDAE – Gilé
Calisto	Marta	Chief of Locality	Mulevala District Service
Camase	Azarias	Technician	SEDAE – Alto Molocué
Cambembe	Ivone	Director	SEDAE – Gilé
Candua	Arsénio	Director	SEDAE – Alto Molocué
Coelho da Silva	Hernâni	FAO Country Representative	FAO Mozambique
Cônsul	Raquel	Community Management Technician	DINAF
Cruz	Regina	Programme Coordinator	FNDS
Cuambe	Julião	Head of Department	DINAF
Cuambe	Carla	Programme Officer	FAO Mozambique
Cuambe	Oraca	Natural Resources Management Specialist	ANAC
Dinis	Ariane	Financial Officer	FAO Mozambique
Eliseu	Arminda	Head of Aquaculture Department	Provincial Government of Zambézia
Ferro	Giacomo	International Consultant	FAO Mozambique
Fotia	Giovanna	Country Representative	ICEI
Francisco	Minoso	Community Facilitator	SEDAE - Mulevala
Jaime	Amílcar	Technician	SDAE – Maganja da Costa
Joaquim	Isidro	Executive Director	UATAF
Junior	Rogério	Communication Officer	FAO Mozambique
Lidia	Guilhermina	Distrital Administrator	Mulevala District
Locheremue	Venancio	Technical Coordinator	ICEI
Luís	Tongai	Supervisor	ITC-F
Machel	João	Project Coordinator	Provincial Government of Zambézia
Mapanda	Walter	Technical Adviser	FAO Mozambique
Matusse	Félix	Head of Department	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Action

Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization/Location
Mingas	Regina	Local Staff	Ministry of Land and Environment / DINAB
Morebotsane	Kuena	Funding Liaison Officer	FAO GEF Coordination Unit
Muqueio	Gelito	Local Staff	Ministry of Land and Environment / DINAB
Narandas	Ângela	Provincial Facilitator	FAO Mozambique
Nube	Teresa	Natural Resource Management Specialist	CESSC
Pereira	Pedro	Natural Resources Management Specialist	ANAC
Pereira	Claudia	Assistant FAO Country Representative	
Serra	António	Landscape Manager	WWF Mozambique
Siteo	Isabel	Monitoring Officer	FAO Mozambique
Taquidir	Muino	PES National Consultant	FAO Mozambique
Van der Merwe	Heinrich	Director	Agrimel
Zimba	Álvaro	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Action

Focus Group Discussions Held

District	NRMC/Community
Alto Molocué	NRMC/Community Rugula (12 men / 9 women)
Alto Molocué	NRMC/Community Namahala (7 men / 8 women)
Gilé	NRMC/Community Teniua (10 men / 15 women)
Gilé	NRMC/Community Nrule (12 men / 13 women)
Gilé	NRMC/Community Nanepa (23 men / 13 women)
Mulevala	NRMC/Community Jajo (19 men / 11 women)
Mulevala	NRMC/Community Nadala (24 men / 11 women)
Maganja da Costa	NRMC/Community Ganja (11 men / 5 women)
Maganja da Costa	NRMC/Community Mussaia (6 men / 14 women)
Total	124 beneficiaries (80% women)

Appendix 2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
1. Relevance			
<p>EQ1.1: Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree of alignment of project’s strategy and country priorities (i.e. national policies and strategies) ▪ Level of alignment between project’s strategy and FAO / GEF strategic objectives and programming frameworks ▪ Quality of the problem analysis (including gender assessment) and coherence in addressing country priorities and beneficiaries needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ E-survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) ▪ National policies, strategies and programmes ▪ FAO and GEF Policies ▪ Government departments at central and provincial level and other relevant stakeholders, FAO/GEF staff (CO and HQ)
<p>EQ1.2: Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes and were the project’s strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all involved stakeholders involved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of participation and involvement of government stakeholders in the project design ▪ Level of adequacy of project’s strategy and actions to the priorities, needs and capacities of the various stakeholders involved at national, provincial, local and community levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ E-survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Project Inception Report and Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ MTR Report ▪ Baseline study ▪ Government departments at central and provincial level and other stakeholders, FAO/GEF staff (CO and HQ)
<p>EQ1.3: Were there any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affected the relevance of the project objectives and goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which project implementation was based on proper risk assessment and consistent adjustments to adapt to evolving country needs, political and institutional changes (Elections and turnover of government officials), climate crisis (droughts, cyclones Kenneth and Idai), humanitarian crisis (evolving conflict situation in the North), sanitary crisis (COVID-19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ E-survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Inception Report and Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ MTR Report ▪ National policies, strategies and programmes ▪ Government departments at central and provincial level and other stakeholders, FAO/GEF staff (CO and HQ)
2. Effectiveness			

<p>Delivery of outputs</p> <p>EQ2.1: How effectively has the project delivered on its expected outputs, in terms of their quality, quantity and timeliness (against milestones)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of project’s success in delivering the planned outputs against initial planning ▪ Number of training sessions conducted (with details on the subject and the duration), number of participants (disaggregated by gender) and level of satisfaction regarding the training and materials received ▪ Type/number of studies conducted (i.e. assessments, analysis, diagnosis, etc.), their pertinence and quality <i>vis-a-vis</i> the expected outputs and outcomes ▪ Number (and quality) of sectoral and inter-sectoral policies and/or regulatory frameworks revised with the project support ▪ Stakeholder’s perceptions regarding quality of outputs delivering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Data analysis ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports) ▪ Project M&E System and databases ▪ Baseline study ▪ Mission and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries
<p>Effectiveness by outcome</p> <p>EQ2.2: How effective was the project in achieving its intended outcomes?</p>	<p><u>Evidence of project’s contribution to Outcome 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which the national Revenue Sharing Mechanisms (RSM) and the integrated Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) have improved <p><u>Evidence of project’s contribution to Outcome 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement the improved RSM have been enhanced ▪ Assessment of institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land, and Environment (MTA), which is responsible for the management of natural forests, as well as decentralized government agencies, NGOs and local communities to manage the improved revenue sharing mechanism, including the PES <p><u>Evidence of project’s contribution to Outcome 3:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Data analysis ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports) ▪ Project M&E System ▪ GEF Tracking Tool ▪ Mission and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Baseline study

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which the Pilot testing of improved RSM in Zambézia Province has been successful ▪ Extent to which the beneficiary communities are better prepared for the PES (through livelihoods and SLM practices, CBNRM and governance improvements) in the 4 districts in Zambézia 		
<p>Intended and unintended results</p> <p>EQ2.3: What results (intended and unintended) did the project achieve across its components? Can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of intended and unintended results achieved by project component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Data analysis ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus groups discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports) ▪ Project M&E System ▪ GEF Tracking Tool ▪ Mission and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries
<p>3. Efficiency</p>			
<p>EQ3.1: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality and realism of the annual work plans ▪ Extent to which delays occurred, causes and impact on project results ▪ Evidence of budget delivery as planned and the extent to which financial resources have been utilized efficiently ▪ Cost categories analysis and evidence assessment of costs evolution over time, determinant factors affecting costs and possible measures put in place to manage costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Field observation ▪ Quantitative analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Annual Work plans ▪ Budget revisions ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ M&E System and FPMIS ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ PSC's minutes and/or reports

<p>EQ3.2: To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of any adjustments in the timeframe or scope of the project duly justified and reported and in accordance to eventualities or changes in context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Annual Work plans ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ M&E System and FPMIS ▪ Budget revisions ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ PSC's minutes or reports
<p>EQ3.3: 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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of implementation of coordinated actions on the ground with other stakeholders (e.g. CSOs, UN Agencies, the Private Sector, etc.) and the extent to which the project avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives ▪ Degree of synergies and complementarities generated between the project and other REDD+ initiatives (projects/programmes) in place at national level and in the Zambézia Province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Baseline study ▪ Annual Work plans ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Letters of Agreement (LoA) ▪ Minutes of meetings / Aide Memoirs with key-stakeholders ▪ Minutes and reports of key-events (seminars, workshops, field visits, etc.) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ PSC's minutes or reports
<p>4. Sustainability</p>			
<p>EQ4.1a: What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project?</p> <p>EQ4.1b: What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits (in terms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which national and local stakeholders acquired needed knowledge to manage and implement project activities and continuing with project's results - particularly regarding (i) legal and regulatory framework and (ii) human and institutional capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Document review ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Minutes of meetings / Aide Memoirs with key-stakeholders ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR)

<p>of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of factors, risks and key-conditions (financial, institutional, socio-economic, environmental) that may affect sustainability ▪ Evidence/quality of the project sustainability strategy, or exit strategy, if any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report
<p>5. Factors affecting performance</p>			
<p>Project design and readiness</p> <p>EQ5.1a: How clear and coherent was the project design (including its causal logic / theory of change) to address the needs of target groups and beneficiaries?</p> <p>EQ5.1b: To what extent were the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed and context (political, institutional, social, etc.)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strength of the link between project's strategy and expected results towards improving the national mechanism for sharing the revenues and the integrated Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) ▪ Strength of the link between project's strategy and expected results towards increasing the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM ▪ Evidence of community/beneficiaries consultations to define project's strategy ▪ Evidence that targeting, coverage and project activities were justified and realistic based on existing mapping, vulnerability assessments and stakeholders capacities ▪ Perception of stakeholders on the appropriateness of project targeting, coverage and selected activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Annual Work plans ▪ Project Inception Report ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ MTR Report
<p>Project implementation</p> <p>EQ5.2a: To what extent did FAO deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision?</p> <p>EQ5.2b: How well were risks identified and managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extent to which institutional arrangements (including the PSC) contributed to a smooth implementation of project activities and achievement of outputs ▪ Quality of oversight, technical guidance and support provided by the FAO Country Office in a timely and effectively manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC and Annual Work plans ▪ Project Inception Report and Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Minutes of meetings / Aide Memoirs with key-stakeholders

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level and quality of technical and operational support from the LTO, FLO and BH ▪ Completeness of risk identification and mitigation measures during project implementation and quality of risk mitigations strategies developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ PSC's minutes or reports ▪ MTR Report
<p>Project execution and management</p> <p>EQ5.3: To what extent did the execution project partners and did FAO effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequacy of human resources (internal staff and consultants hired) for project execution and management ▪ Relevance, adequacy and performance of service providers involved and their contribution to a smooth project execution ▪ Level of robustness of project management and administrative systems in place to ensure efficient resource use (e.g. procurement, financial management, coordination, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Evidence of adaptive management in regard to in regard to targeting, coverage or project strategy in response to climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC and Annual Work plans ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ Minutes of meetings / Aide Memoirs with key-stakeholders ▪ PSC's minutes or reports ▪ MTR Report
<p>Financial management and co-financing</p> <p>EQ5.4a: To what extent was the financial processes adequate (timeliness and adequacy of resources)?</p> <p>EQ5.4b: To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project expenditure by outcome and expenditures ratios ▪ Level of actual disbursements versus those planned each year ▪ Evidence of adequacy of resources to achieve the project's intended results ▪ Evidence that the planned co-financing was timely provided by national counterparts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Quantitative data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Annual Work plans ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ M&E System and FPMIS ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ PSC's minutes or reports ▪ Letters of Agreement (LoA) and any supporting documents from grants received ▪ MTR Report

<p>Partnerships and stakeholder engagement</p> <p>EQ5.5a: To what extent have stakeholders (e.g. government, civil society, rural communities, vulnerable groups, the private sector) been involved in project formulation and implementation and what has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results?</p> <p>EQ5.5b: What were the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?</p> <p>EQ5.5c: Have all stakeholders been made aware of the ESS plan and the grievance complaint mechanism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project preparation and implementation ▪ Level of involvement and ownership of government officials and other national stakeholders in project design, preparation and implementation ▪ Type/quality of partnership cooperation agreements ▪ Assessment of ESS plan soundness and level of understanding/utilization by the different stakeholders involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC and Annual Work plans ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Minutes of meetings / Aide Memoirs with key-stakeholders ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ PSC's minutes or reports ▪ Letters of Agreement (LoA) ▪ MTR Report
<p>Communication & Knowledge Management</p> <p>EQ5.6a: How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences?</p> <p>EQ5.6b: To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling-up of project results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of project's communication system ▪ Evidence of sound communication strategy/actions undertaken by the project and project's effectiveness in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and general audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ E- Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ Communication and visibility materials produce ▪ Minutes and reports of key-events (seminars, workshops, field visits, etc.) ▪ FAO CO Website ▪ MTR Report
<p>Monitoring & Evaluation</p> <p>EQ5.7a: Was the M&E plan practical and sufficient and did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies?</p> <p>EQ5.7b: Was the information from the M&E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of M&E system with baseline information and allowing for an efficient tracking of project's progress ▪ Quality and timeliness of RBM reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) ▪ Evidence that the M&E info was used to support decision-making, improve implementation and foster learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRODOC ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries ▪ M&E System and FPMIS ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E- Survey 	
6. Environmental and social safeguards			
<p>EQ6.1a: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?</p> <p>EQ6.1b: Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS Mitigation Plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence/quality of environmental and social assessment undertaken during project design and/or at the beginning of project implementation ▪ Quality of ESS Mitigation Plan and extent to which project's results framework is environmental and social responsive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of beneficiaries' (women) views and perception ▪ E-survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Lists of Participants in trainings, visits and other activities ▪ Project M&E System ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries. ▪ Letters of Agreement (LoA)
7. Gender and equity concerns			
<p>EQ7.1a: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?</p> <p>EQ7.1b: Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures equitable participation and benefits to minority groups, including indigenous people, and persons with disabilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence/quality of gender analysis undertaken during project design and/or at the beginning of project implementation ▪ Extent to which project's results framework were gender responsive and addressed beneficiaries from indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities ▪ Extent to which men and women had equal access to capacity building opportunities (e.g. ratio women/men attending training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Qualitative analysis of beneficiaries' (women) views and perception ▪ E-survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Lists of Participants in trainings, visits and other activities ▪ Project M&E System ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries. ▪ Letters of Agreement (LoA)
8. Progress to impact			
<p>EQ8.1: How is the likelihood of impact in terms of substantive contribution to broad changes and what can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impact from the project?</p> <p>EQ8.2: Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress on the environmental indicators stated in the results framework ▪ Assessment of likelihood of impact in terms of any barriers or risks that may prevent progress towards and the achievement of the project's longer-term objectives ▪ The extent to which there is an enabling environment to sustain the national mechanism for sharing the revenues and the integrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports) ▪ Project M&E System ▪ GEF Tracking Tool ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report

or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks?	Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E- Survey ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries
9. Lessons learned			
<p>EQ9: What knowledge has been generated from project results and experiences, which have a wider value and potential for broader application, replication and use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of knowledge generated from project results and experiences ▪ The extent to which results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated (in different geographic areas) or scaled up (in the same geographic area, but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources) in the near future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review ▪ Key-informants interviews ▪ Focus Groups Discussions ▪ Thematic sessions with project staff ▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences ▪ Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Progress Reports (PPR / PIR) ▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports) ▪ Project M&E System ▪ Missions and backstopping reports ▪ MTR Report ▪ Key-stakeholders from FAO, National Counterparts, Beneficiaries

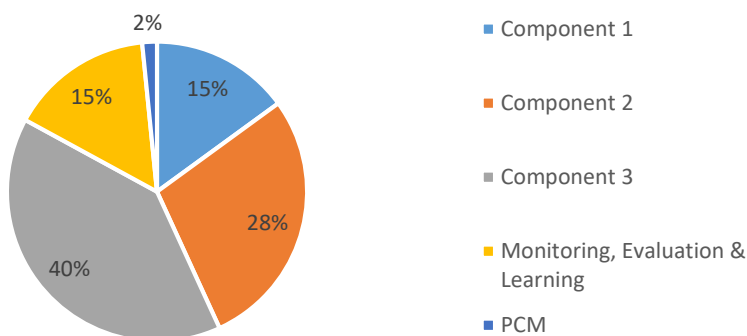
Appendix 3. Financial data (as of August 2022)

Table 4. Budget proportion by project budget line

Item	Budget	Proportion (%)
Salaries Professional	518 269	14%
Consultants	1 307 102	36%
Contracts	870 115	24%
Locally Contracted Labour	28 000	1%
Travel	323 155	9%
Training	72 617	2%
Procurement (exp.)	213 075	6%
Procurement (non-exp.)	90 645	2%
General Operation Expenses	214 770	6%
Total	3 637 748	100%

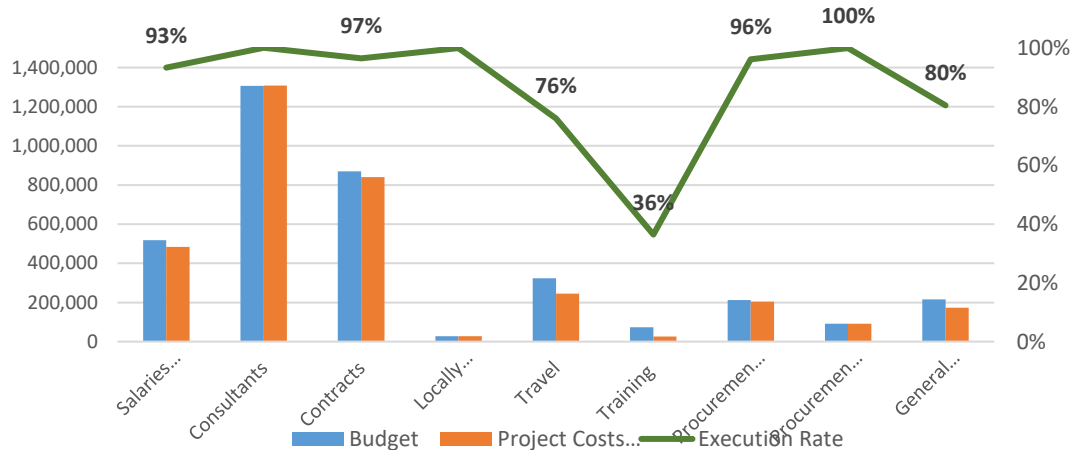
Source: Evaluation team with data provided by project staff

Figure 2. Budget proportion by project component (%)



Source: Evaluation team with data provided by project staff

Figure 3. Financial execution rate by budget line, until August 2022 (%)



Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff

Table 5. Total financial execution by budget line and available budget (USD)

Item	Project Budget	Project Costs	Execution Rate	Available Budget
Salaries Professional	518 269	483 713	93%	34 556
Consultants	1 307 102	1 308 130	100%	-1 029
Contracts	870 115	839 751	97%	30 364
Locally Contracted Labour	28 000	28 000	100%	0
Travel	323 155	245 570	76%	77 584
Training	72 617	26 473	36%	46 144
Procurement (exp.)	213 075	204 909	96%	8 166
Procurement (non-exp.)	90 645	90 642	100%	3
General Operation Expenses	214 770	172 693	80%	42 077
Total	3 637 748	3 399 882	93%	237 866

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff

Table 6. Financial execution and available budget by project component, until August 2022

Components	Budget	Project Costs	%	Available Budget
Component 1	595 968	499 953	84%	96 015
Component 2	1 007 470	940 523	93%	66 947
Component 3	1 394 008	1 327 838	95%	66 170
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning	587 295	516 473	88%	70 822
Project Cycle Management	53 003	53 005	100%	-2
Total	3 637 748	3 399 882	93%	237 866

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff

Table 7. Total financial execution by year (USD)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Available
Budget	81 107	231 586	793 987	743 715	770 331	1 017 023	3 637 748	
Expenses	81 107	231 586	793 987	743 715	770 331	779 157	3 399 882	237 866
Execution Rate (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	77%	93%	7%

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff

Appendix 4. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ⁵⁴	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	Section 3.1
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 1
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	Section 3.1 / Findings 2, 3
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 4 Section 3.3 / Finding 18
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Section 3.2
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 6, 7, 8
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives		
- Outcome 1	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 8, 9, 10
- Outcome 2	MU	Section 3.2 / Findings 11, 12
- Outcome 3	S	Section 3.2 / Findings 13, 14, 15
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Section 3.2
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 10, 12, 14
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	Section 3.3 / Findings 17, 18
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Section 3.4
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 20
D1.2. Socio-political risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 21
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Section 3.4/ Finding 21
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Section 3.4 / Finding 19
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	Section 3.5.1 / Finding 23
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	Section 3.5.3
E3. Quality of project execution For decentralized projects: Project Management Unit/BH	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	Section 3.5.4 / Findings 27, 28
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	HS	Section 3.5.5 / Findings 29, 30
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	HS	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E7. Overall quality of M&E	HS	Section 3.5.2

⁵⁴ See rating scheme in Appendix 3.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating⁵⁴	Summary comments
E7.1 M&E design	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 24
E7.2 M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 25
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	Section 3.5
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	HS	Section 3.6.1 / Finding 32
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous peoples	HS	Section 3.6.2 / Finding 33
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	HS	Section 3.6.1 / Finding 34
Overall project rating	S	

Appendix 5. Rating scheme

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

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

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of design and implementation

SUSTAINABILITY

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	<i>There is little or no risk to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Likely (ML)	<i>There are moderate risks to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	<i>There are significant risks to sustainability.</i>
Unlikely (U)	<i>There are severe risks to sustainability.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.</i>

Appendix 6. GEF co-financing table

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type ⁵⁵	Type of co-financing ⁵⁶	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)				Materialized co-financing at 30 June 2022 (in USD)			
			Grant	In-kind	Cash	Total	Grant	In-kind	Cash	Total
MTA	National Government	Cash			4,800,000	4,800,000			4,800,000	4,800,000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)	Multi-lateral Agency (Establishment of REDD+ MRV platform)	Grant	5,000,000			5,000,000	5,000,000			5,000,000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)	Multi-lateral Agency (REDD+ Readiness Preparation Grant)	Grant	3,600,000			3,600,000	3,800,000			3,800,000
World Bank	Multi-lateral Agency (MOZFIP)	Grant	24,000,000			24,000,000	12,900,000			12,900,000
FAO	Multilateral	In-kind	200,000			200,000		200,000		200,000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)**	Multilateral (Emission Reduction Payment Agreement)	Grant	6,400,000				6,400,000			6,400,000
Grand total (in USD)			39,200,000		4,800,000	44,800,000	28,100,000	200,000	4,800,000	33,100,000

(**) New projects part of the Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Programme

⁵⁵ Examples of categories include: local, provincial or national government; semi-government autonomous institutions; private sector; multilateral or bilateral organizations; educational and research institutions; non-profit organizations; civil society organizations; foundations; beneficiaries; GEF agencies; and others (please explain).

⁵⁶ Grants, loans, equity participation by beneficiaries (individuals) in form of cash, guarantees, in-kind or material contributions, and others (please explain).

Appendix 7. Results matrix

Project objective and Outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Mid-term target	End-of- project target	Level at 30 June 2022	Evaluation assessment	Progress rating ⁵⁷	Justification for rating
Objective(s): Promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in <i>miombo</i> forest ecosystems, through the improvement of the existing revenue sharing mechanism that supports sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local peoples' livelihoods								
Outcome 1: National Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) improved	Forest law includes improved forest RSM	0	0	1	0		MS [S]	Technical assistance provided to DINAF was important in terms of improving the broader legal and technical environment of the project. A legal study and iterative proposals to revise the "20% Decree" were completed and submitted to DINAF. However, the approval of the Forest Law and its regulation has not been completed and payments to communities remain incipient.
	Joint inter-sector document to guide the sectors on PES produced	0	0	1	0		MS [S]	Progress has been made in the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and inclusion of the PES concept since now these discussions include seven different ministries. A draft document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF and was foreseen to be discussed and concluded in the next inter-ministerial working group,

⁵⁷ In [] has been left the rating provided in the 2022 FAO-GEF PIR report for the period July 2021-June 2022 for reference.

								planned for the second semester of 2022.
	Gender rules included in the Joint inter-sector document on PES	0	0	1	0		U [U]	Gender rules have not yet been delivered as planned, although the project expect to conclude this in the second semester of 2022, together with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES.
Outcome 2: Enhanced human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM	Number of government and NGO staff whose capacity to implement revenue sharing mechanisms (RSM) has improved as a result of the training received	0	Gov staff:5 NGO staff:5	Gov staff:15 NGO staff:15	21		MS [HS]	A training of trainer's session on community governance for natural resource management was carried out in October 2021 targeting a total of 21 individuals (6 from government institutions and 15 from civil society organizations), out of the 30 planned for this indicator.
	National plan for the improvement RSM designed and implemented	0	N/A	1	0		MU [S]	A specific discussion session on PES was also delivered in 2021 targeting a total of 12 government staff from different institutions (Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Directorate for Environment, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of See, Inland waters and Fisheries). An agreement was signed with DINAF to implement an action plan to improve the existing RSM, but document to guide the sectors on PES "rules of the game" was not yet approved.

Outcome 3: Improved, environmental performance-based version of existing government forestry tax revenue sharing mechanism operational in 7 districts of Zambezia Province	Percentage of households that are reporting revenue based sustainable alternative income-generating activities, disaggregated by male and female-headed households	12% (6% Male Headed Households and 6% Female Headed Households) <small>58</small>	N/A	14% (7% Male headed Households and 7% Female Headed Households)	N/A		S [S]	The results of the endline survey have not yet been release and therefore it is not possible to assess the actual percentage of households that are reporting revenue based sustainable alternative income-generating activities. However, the project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices allowing them to access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption. In regard to beekeeping, beneficiaries were unanimous in considering it profitable. The saving and credit groups have started to show a good level of organisation as the volume of savings and small credits granted have been increasing. However, agro-forestry practices still require years before their real benefits in the ecosystem and production systems can be observed. In the case of pisciculture there is no evidence of great success since communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the required amount of feed for the fish pounds as recommended by the project, and no significant amount of fish was found in the fish pounds visited.
	Number of NRMC with capacity to implement improved RSM and/or PES mechanism	0	N/A	16	18		MS	The project contributed to strengthen the community governance's systems for natural resources management. In total, the project managed to create

⁵⁸ This was estimated based on the HH survey conduct in the beginning of project implementation (625 people were interviewed and 124 reported revenue based on sustainable alternative income-generating activities, 50 female)

							[MS]	eight new NRMC and revitalize ten existing NRMC in the four target districts. However, only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation.
	Percentage of women represented in the social bodies of the NRMC	N/A	N/A	40%	N/A		HS [HS]	The results of the endline survey have not yet been release and therefore it is not possible to assess the actual percentage of women represented in the social bodies of NRMC. However, 51% percent of project beneficiaries reached under Component 3 are women

Appendix 8. Visibility and communication materials

Table 8. Examples of visibility and communication materials developed

Type	Material	Reference / Link
News	Lançado novo projecto florestal na província da Zambézia para beneficiar comunidades locais	https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1183864/
News	FAO promove o conceito de Pagamentos por Serviços Ambientais (PSA) aos funcionários do Governo	https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1475450/
News	FAO Promotes Payments For Ecosystem Services Concept to Government Staff	https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail-events/ar/c/1475447/
Video	Didactic video on "PES Approach"	Shared Folder
Video	"PES Concept" – Video for Steering Committee	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GcCn0yPpYyxnMtOMGhhHproAlloJ4TyJ/view
Success story	MULEVALA: Grupo de poupança contribui para a melhoria das condições de vida	https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1473009/
Knowledge product	Gender Assessment	FAO. 2019. Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Assessment. Maputo, May 2019
Knowledge product	Benchmark study	FAO, 2020. Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: Learning experiences from the forestry sector - Available at shared folder
Knowledge product	National study	CHICUE, Jorge 2019. Melhoria do mecanismo de distribuição dos benefícios ambientais pelo acesso e utilização sustentável dos recursos naturais. – Available at shared folder
Knowledge product	National assessment	Porras and Nhantumbo, 2019. PES in Mozambique: Supporting the 20% Decree revision – Available at shared folder
Success story	Revolução agrícola de pequena escala transforma vidas na Zambézia	Shared Folder
Knowledge product	Fact Sheet – Integração de Género	Shared Folder

Campaign	Promoção da Mulher	Shared Folder
Newsletter	Project Newsletter	https://us5.campaign-archive.com/?u=0d80eeb67ceb3cc89b0c6b6f6&id=cddb68a61
News	Projecto MUTACUANE - Pagamento por Serviços de Ecossistemas para Apoiar a Conservação Florestal e Meios de Subsistência Sustentáveis	http://www.dinaf.gov.mz/mutacuane/

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of reference for the evaluation

Annex 2. E-survey