

**PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES**

**Terminal Evaluation of the Project  
“Decision Support for Mainstreaming  
and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land  
Management”**

**GEF ID: GCP/GLO/337/GFF**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CACILM	Central Asia Countries Initiative for Land Management
CBL	Land and Water Division (FAO)
CDE	Center for Development and Environment
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought
DSF	Decision Support Framework
DS-SLM	Decision Support for Sustainable Land Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBiH	entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FPMIS	Field Project Management Information System
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HQ	Headquarters
LAC	Latin American Countries
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands
LD	Land degradation
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
LOA	Letter of Agreement
LTO	Lead technical officer
LTU	Lead Technical Unit
LUS	Land Use System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plans
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPCU	National Project Coordination Unit
NSC	National Steering Committee
OED	Office of Evaluation (FAO)
OPIM	Operational Partners Implementation Modality
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RS	entity Republic Srpska (of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TCID	Investment Centre Division (FAO)
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of trainers
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies



## Executive Summary

### Purposes of the evaluation

1. The terminal evaluation (TE) of the project serves a double purpose of accountability and learning. The TE documents important lessons to indicate future actions needed to expand on the existing project in subsequent phases, mainstream and upscale its products and practices, and disseminate information to inform continuity of the processes initiated by the project. It presents strategic recommendations in order to, among other purposes, foster the institutionalization and appropriation of the project's results by stakeholders and disseminate information to management authorities responsible for the management of other projects.

### Users of the evaluation

2. The TE is to be used for learning and for giving feedback from project implementation to identification and design of new projects. According to the TOR, the TE will also support the financiers and implementing partners to identify possible follow-up projects that are increasingly relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are the Project Management Team, members of Project Task Force in the FAO Headquarters, FAO Country Offices, Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the donor, National Government counterparts, as well as CDE/WOCAT.

### Scope and objective of the evaluation

3. The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the project in 2018 covered the period from January 2015 to March 2018, as well as its conceptual phase prior to January 2015. Consequently, this TE focuses in particular on the period from April 2018 to April 2019 and serves as a complementary exercise to the MTE. The TE does not give much emphasis on evaluating relevance and efficiency as they were well covered by the MTE. The TE covers all the geographical areas where the project has been implemented (Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan), with the remark that Nigeria never really started the project activities.
4. The TE identifies the project impacts and sustainability of project results and the likely degree of achievement of long-term results. The TE also considers the pre-conditions and arrangements in place that have contributed to, or hindered, the adequate implementation of the planned activities, including linkages and/or partnerships between the project and other major country initiatives.
5. The evaluation questions from the TORs of the TE by evaluation criteria are following:

Relevance	Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management?
Achievement of project results	To what extent have project outcomes and objectives been achieved, and how effective was the project in achieving them?

	Did the project produce any unintended results, either positive or negative? What were the contributing factors for the results achieved and what can be particularly attributed to the project?
	To what extent has the global DLDD and SLM decision-support platform been able to develop technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling?
Efficiency, project implementation and execution	How did the project's design, management and execution, institutional arrangements, partnerships, knowledge management and communications, and the financial and human resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?
	To what extent has the management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?
	To what extent were the recommendations provided by the MTE addressed in the second phase of the project?
Monitoring and Evaluation	How effective was the functioning of the project results-based M&E system?
	How was the information from this system used to make timely decisions during project implementation?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project created ownership among counterparts and stakeholders? How sustainable
	How sustainable are the results achieved at the environmental, institutional, social and financial levels?
Stakeholder engagement	To what extent has the project engaged stakeholders – in particular farmers and herders, in pilot site management?
	To what extent does the project develop new partnerships or enhance existing ones?
	What linkages, if any, exist between the capacities developed among diverse types of stakeholders? (government ownership, partnerships, capacity development)
	How have stakeholders contributed to the results achieved?
Gender	To what extent (and how) has the project contributed to the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups throughout its implementation?
Co-financing	To what extent has the expected co-financing been delivered?
Progress to Impact	To what extent and how is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in national or sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks?
	Is there any evidence of SLM mainstreaming at the decision-making level that can be attributed to the project?
	Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term results? What is the likelihood of longer-term impacts of the project?
Lessons Learnt	What lessons can be learned from the project, in terms of its design, new approaches (e.g. introduction of the Decision Support Framework), implementation, up-scaling and sustainability that may be useful for future and similar FAO interventions particularly funded by the GEF or other donors in general?



## Methodology

6. The approach and methodology that was used to conduct this terminal evaluation complies with FAO and GEF evaluation standards. It also complies with international criteria and professional norms and standards; including the norms and standards adopted by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).
7. The TE adopted a consultative, participative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation team's approach to the TE was constructive and pragmatic. It is more important to learn lessons that help in continuous improvement of project design and implementation than focusing on problems and possible mistakes.
8. The two Team Members visited Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Morocco and Turkey to interview key stakeholders and collect evaluative evidence. Originally also China was planned to be visited, but it learnt that the national project team members were not available, and thus the visit was cancelled. Country visits to Panamá, Morocco and Turkey included field visits to project demonstration sites allowing also to interview farmers and other ultimate beneficiaries of the project.
9. The countries visited were selected by the Office of Evaluation (OED) of FAO. The selection criteria included: (i) adequately representative sample by geographic regions, (ii) countries known to have interesting results, (iii) and not overlapping with those countries visited during the MTE.
10. Primary data (interviews by Skype, face to face or getting written responses to evaluation questions) collections sample was targeted: all National Project Coordinators (except for Nigeria for which the PCU could not provide name nor contact), FAO country or regional office representative in those countries which were feasible, Project Task Force members at FAO HQ, WOCAT representatives, representatives of project partners in countries visited, other key project stakeholders and beneficiaries in countries visited, and selected other relevant informants who have been involved in the project planning and / or implementation, e.g. FAO consultants.

## Data collection methods

11. Data collection methods included:

**Documentation Review:** The Evaluation Team conducted a documentation review (some 160 documents, reports, etc.) during the field missions and at home offices (see Appendix 2).

**Interviews:** Key Stakeholders were interviewed (see Appendix 3) either in person (91 persons) or with skype (26 persons) with some follow up using emails when needed. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings were incorporated in the final report.

**Global meeting:** The Team Leader and the Team Member together with the OED Evaluation Manager participated in the Project's 3rd and final global meeting and the Project Steering Committee meeting in Ankara, Turkey from 24 to 27 April 2019.

Parallel, it was possible to interview several country delegations present at these events.

**Country visits:** to Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Morocco and Turkey.

## **Main findings**

12. The main findings of the evaluation are presented below, grouped by evaluation question.

### **Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and stakeholders?**

Finding 1. In general, the project strategy and actions responded to the stakeholders and beneficiaries needs. The project addresses a common but differentiated problem of the participating countries.

Finding 2. In the project strategy right importance given to combining policy and strategy mainstreaming work with the implementation of SLM practices at pilot / demonstration scale.

Finding 3. Field observations showed that weak capacity of extension services to promote SLM may hinder the progress of SLM out-scaling.

Finding 4. The original results matrix had flaws but the modular implementation / decision support framework (DSF) introduced during inception phase facilitated the project implementation.

### **To what extent is the project effective in achieving its expected outcomes and objectives?**

Finding 5. Effectiveness had improved considerably since MTE, particularly in those countries that started late the implementation. Most countries had reached or are expected to reach the results in general. However, up-scaling particularly will require more time and financing, and also mainstreaming requires more time.

Finding 6. Project triggered positive regional and country-to-country cooperation (south-south).

Finding 7. Inter-institutional partnerships have been key for successful implementation. Global element of the project has facilitated broadening the perspectives (mainstreaming, strategies, up-scaling) of otherwise very technical work by technical staff.

Finding 8. Expectations on the global platform vary: database is in general highly regarded and appreciated but some countries expect more dynamic exchange of experiences & sharing technical information.

### **To what extent is the project making best use of human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results?**

Finding 9. The PCU performance, efficiency and responsiveness at FAO headquarters has been perceived as inconsistent, many stakeholders consider the PCU as efficient and

responsive whereas others as non-responsive and slow, and apparently there has been some persistent communication problems. FAO administration rules are found complicated and cumbersome by some countries.

Finding 10. Institutional arrangements have varied a lot from country to country, which is a positive reflection of flexibility and project's ability to adjust to country situations. In general, the established institutional arrangements have been contributing positively to the project implementation. Partnerships, either established already before or during the project, have been instrumental for the achievement of results..

Finding 11. The Project Coordination Unit of FAO headquarters was too thinly resourced and in general the project's budget for management and coordination was too tight in view of the project size and complexity.

Finding 12. Flexibility of the project has been important allowing to adapt to realities and changing conditions. The DSF is an important element of this flexibility.

Finding 13. The GEF co-financing concept appears to be difficult to understand and the actual spent amounts difficult to estimate by several project countries

**To what extent were the recommendations provided by the MTE addressed in the second phase of the project?**

Finding 14. The recommendations of MTE are not known by all countries; no major changes in implementation efficiency observed by countries after MTE.

**To what extent the project monitoring and evaluation system supported timely decision making?**

Finding 15. Project reporting system with templates and focusing on modules is considered clear and well-functioning. The original project results matrix (logical framework) contains overly ambitious indicators and goals.

Finding 16. The decision-making process using the M&E information was not entirely clear.

**To what extent stakeholder engagement contributed to project implementation?**

Finding 17. Stakeholder engagement has been adequate and extensive in general, with the exception of private sector involvement.

Finding 18. Project has positively contributed to the development of new partnerships (inter-institutional & cross-sectoral)

**To what extent and how is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in decision making at national and sub-national levels?**

Finding 19. Most countries are confident that the project will significantly contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in decision making at national and sub-national levels.

Finding 20. The potential role of SLM investments by private sector is not fully understood in many countries.

Finding 21. Up-scaling of SLM best practices will require more time and additional financing; in some countries such financing is expected to come mainly from domestic sources but in others additional external financing is needed.

### **To what extent the project considered gender in its implementation?**

Finding 22. Project's strategy and planned activities did not address specifically the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups. The project was considered by its stakeholders as gender neutral.

### **To what extent are steps being taken to ensure project sustainability?**

Finding 23. Project has strong national ownership in almost all the 14 countries.

Finding 24. Several countries have seen the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects.

Finding 25. Several countries have already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s).

Finding 26. The Project Management started thinking and planning an exit strategy quite late, only in 2019.

Finding 27. The incipient exit strategy is not robust enough.

Finding 28. The project results are environmentally sustainable.

Finding 29. The integration of the project into the relevant national and / or regional / provincial institutions has secured the institutional sustainability in many countries. However, although the project called the attention of key institutional actors and decision makers, on the need to address desertification and land degradation with concrete proposals referred to the generation of information, integration of SLM in planning and regulatory frameworks, as well as in practical actions at the local level, the high-level decision makers appear to require still more convincing information and advocacy, and the plan to organise a high-level meeting on DS-SLM at the COP14 is commendable.

Finding 30. Financial sustainability is secured in some countries through the mainstreaming strategy which is expected to lead to a situation where e.g. local municipalities will continue the implementation using local government budget. Additional and new project financing is also applied in many countries.

Finding 31. Social sustainability is considered satisfactory or good particularly in those countries where the pilot / demonstration activities are adopted by the local communities and where the introduced SLM practices are profitable at farm / community level.

### **What are the main lessons learnt from the project?**

Finding 32. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) as the principle target of the Convention at COP12, in October 2015. Countries are required to report on their process to achieve LDN. During the DS-SLM project, the participating countries have learnt that SLM approach is useful

element in the LDN process, and this link is intended to be advocated e.g. in the coming COP14.

Finding 33. In Latin American project countries, the work carried out by the project at local level, including the implementation of SLM practices in Argentina, Colombia and Panama, showed the weakness of the agricultural and livestock extension services

Finding 34. SLM best practices and approaches need to be either profitable, and thus self-financing in long term, or they need to be subsidised for e.g. environmental reasons by the government.

13. The GEF ratings of the TE are presented below.

GEF - FAO criteria/sub criteria	Rating <sup>1</sup>	Summary Comments
<b>A. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS</b>		
1. Overall quality of project outcomes		
1.1. Relevance	HS	See section 3.1
1.2. Effectiveness	S <sup>2</sup> /MS	See section 3.2
1.3. Efficiency	MU	See section 3.3
<b>B. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION RATING</b>		
2. Quality of project implementation	MU	See section 3.3
3. Quality of project execution	S <sup>3</sup> /MS	See section 3.3 & 3.5
<b>C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&amp;E) RATING</b>		
4. Overall quality of M&E		
4.1. M&E Design	MS	See section 3.4
4.2. M&E Plan Implementation	MS	See section 3.4
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
5. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability		
5.1. Financial risk	ML	See section 3.8
5.2. Socio-political risk	ML	See section 3.8 & 3.7
5.3. Institutional risk	ML	See section 3.8
5.4. Environmental risk	L	See section 3.8

<sup>1</sup> See rating scheme in Appendix 4

<sup>2</sup> Overall the rating is MS. However, the project results can be rated highly satisfactory in Argentina, Colombia, Morocco and Uzbekistan, and satisfactory in Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China, Ecuador, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey, and moderately unsatisfactory in Bangladesh and Lesotho, and highly unsatisfactory in Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> Overall the rating is MS. However, the project execution can be rated satisfactory at least in the following project countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey, and highly satisfactory in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama and Uzbekistan, and in Bangladesh and Lesotho, the execution is rated as moderately unsatisfactory, and in Nigeria as highly unsatisfactory..

## **Conclusions**

14. The conclusions of the Terminal Evaluation are following:

Conclusion 1. Although for the present decision support project the project's strategic focus was right, there is a need to focus more in the forthcoming follow-up projects on farmers / land users, their livelihoods and food security

Conclusion 2. Complex projects which need inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation require long-term commitment by partners and key stakeholders.

Conclusion 3. South-south cooperation appears to be a good cost-efficient option for the provision of training and capacity building.

Conclusion 4. Attractiveness, usefulness and expected positive impact of the WOCAT SLM platform would be enhanced by introducing a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window to the platform.

Conclusion 5. Fairly large and complex global and regional projects require adequate budget and staff for project management and coordination.

Conclusion 6. The modular Decision Support Framework is a useful innovation and merits to be advocated also in other countries.

Conclusion 7. Fairly large and complex global / regional projects need to have focussed and very clear logical framework / results matrix. Even without ambiguities such projects are difficult enough to implement.

Conclusion 8. Exercising discipline is needed in following up M&E information, as well as MTE recommendations as the day to day chores tend to take all the time and effort of a PCU. Regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, would provide the necessary structure for the decision making.

Conclusion 9. Successful partnerships have been instrumental in making the project successful in several countries, particularly due to the inter-sectoral nature of the SLM issues.

Conclusion 10. Private sector as the key player in the decision making and implementation of land-based productive investments has a central role and responsibility in securing sustainability of land management.

Conclusion 11. The project design was inadequate in addressing gender and vulnerable groups.

Conclusion 12. New and additional follow-on financing is needed to continue the good work started. Mainstreaming and up-scaling SLM will require more time to secure sustainability.

Conclusion 13. An exit strategy for the project needs to be prepared and in addition to the elements presented and discussed in Ankara there should be other elements..

Conclusion 14. High-level decision makers need further information and argumentation in order to achieve deeper SLM mainstreaming. It's recommended to project countries to promote high level decision makers discussions, capacity building and exchanges about SLM.

## **Recommendations**

15. The recommendations of the Terminal Evaluation are following:

Recommendation 1. FAO, GEF and project countries should support farmers / land users and strengthen agricultural and livestock extension services, so that they can bring practical solutions to farmers, to reduce land degradation, increase the provision of ecosystem services and, consequently, the productivity of their farms. This can be achieved by working with decision-makers and integrating specific actions in new projects.

Recommendation 2. GEF & FAO & project countries should seek ways to continue supporting and working on the SLM mainstreaming and up-scaling work that has now been well established in most of the project countries.

Recommendation 3. GEF & FAO & project countries could seek ways to continue and also to out-scale to other / new countries the south-south cooperation in SLM work.

Recommendation 4. WOCAT, GEF & FAO should seek ways to strengthen the SLM platform with a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window. WOCAT's SLM platform's financial sustainability need to be secured at the same time.

Recommendation 5. FAO & GEF should ensure that new global or regional projects have coordination units with adequate human and financial resources that allow them to maintain a constant and fluid communication with the partner countries, as well as provide permanent technical support and promote exchanges and feedback between countries.

Recommendation 6. FAO should consider supporting the use of the modular Decision Support Framework of DS-SLM project also in other countries.

Recommendation 7. FAO & GEF should pay particular attention to the clarity and focus of the project design of large and complex global / regional projects.

Recommendation 8. FAO should secure regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, to secure discipline and structure for decision making to follow-up M&E information and MTE recommendations.

Recommendation 9. FAO should consider promoting best practices in inter-sectoral and inter-agency partnership building in projects with significant cross-sectoral issues such as in SLM projects.

Recommendation 10. FAO & GEF should seek ways to engage the private sector players in future SLM projects. Partnerships with e.g. IFAD, World Bank and other development financing institutions could be considered in this regard. Countries should involve private sector in relevant policy, strategy and investment programming processes in SLM work.

Recommendation 11. FAO / GEF project designs should include an assessment of relevance and importance of gender and vulnerable groups issues, and if those issues are found relevant and important, the project strategy should include specific gender and vulnerable groups involvement or mainstreaming strategies, and the project activities should include specific activities planned or cleared by a gender specialist.

Recommendation 12. FAO & GEF should request the inclusion of a sustainability strategy / exit strategy as an expected outcome of any project.

Recommendation 13. FAO and project countries should encourage the country teams to write the best results and best SLM technologies and approaches in a form of an attractive and easily readable publication / book that can be given to decision makers, politicians, NGOs, farmer organizations, farmers, investors, financiers, private land-using companies. There should be handing-over meetings in every country with the presence of at least FAO, National Project Coordinator, high-level representative of the respective Ministry.

Recommendation 14. Project countries should promote high level decision makers' discussions, capacity building and exchanges about SLM, including but not limited to the planned high-level meeting on DS-SLM project at COP14.



## **2 Introduction**

16. This document presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation of Project GCP/ GLO/337/GFF - "Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management".
17. Field mission and skype interviews were carried out from April to June 2019 and covered the whole project execution period (2015-2019) with emphasis on the post-midterm evaluation – MTE period (2018-2019). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the general guidelines of the FAO and the GEF, based on the analysis of documents and missions with the project stakeholders.
18. The document is structured in accordance with the GEF guidelines for terminal evaluations (TE) and includes the purpose, scope of the final evaluation and methodology (section I), the background and context of the project as well as its Theory of Change (section II), the major evaluation findings structured according to the key evaluation questions (section III) and a final section with Conclusions and Recommendations (section IV).
19. Given the limited coverage of Latin American countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama) during the MTE, a separate self-standing report is presented in Annex 1. It contains the assessment of the project implementation in these countries and it contributes to the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report. Appendices and several other annexes also accompany this document.

### **2.1 Purposes of the evaluation**

20. The TE of the project serves a double purpose of accountability and learning. The TE documents important lessons to indicate future actions needed to expand on the existing project in subsequent phases, mainstream and upscale its products and practices, and disseminate information to inform continuity of the processes initiated by the project. It presents strategic recommendations in order to, among other purposes, foster the institutionalization and appropriation of the project's results by stakeholders and disseminate information to management authorities responsible for the management of other projects.

### **2.2 Intended users of the evaluation report**

21. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are the Project Management Team, members of Project Task Force in the FAO Headquarters, FAO Country Offices, Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the donor, National Government counterparts, as well as the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)/WOCAT.

### **2.3 Scope and objective of the evaluation**

22. The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the project in 2018 covered the period from January 2015 to March 2018, as well as its conceptual phase prior to January 2015. Consequently, this TE focuses in particular on the period from April 2018 to October 2019 and serves as a complementary exercise to the MTE. Considering that the MTE

has already covered relevance and efficiency aspects, the TE mainly focuses on results and their sustainability and covers all the countries where the project has been implemented (Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan), with the remark that Nigeria never really started the project activities.

23. The TE identifies sustainability of project results and the likely degree of achievement of long-term results (impact). The TE also considers the pre-conditions and arrangements in place that have contributed to, or hindered, the adequate implementation of the planned activities, including linkages and/or partnerships between the project and other major country initiatives.
24. As per the project document<sup>4</sup>, some critical issues to be evaluated in the TE are: (i) progress in finalizing Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) assessments, SLM mainstreaming, establishment of SLM pilot demonstration areas and implementation of approaches for upscaling; (ii) the functioning and effectiveness of the global DLDD and SLM decision-support platform in developing useful technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling; (iii) the functioning of the project results-based M&E system; (iv) the level of involvement of farmers and herders in pilot site management and their increased capacities and local socio-economic benefits to sustain the SLM practices at medium and long term and assess opportunities for upscaling; (v) and involvement of men as well as women in pilot site activities.
25. The evaluation questions from the TORs of the TE are presented in Box 1.

### Box 1. Key Guiding Evaluation questions

1. Relevance	1.1 Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management?
2. Achievement of project results	2.1 To what extent have project outcomes and objectives been achieved, and how effective was the project in achieving them?
	2.2 Did the project produce any unintended results, either positive or negative? What were the contributing factors for the results achieved and what can be particularly attributed to the project?
	2.3 To what extent has the global DLDD and SLM decision-support platform been able to develop technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling?
3. Efficiency, project implementation and execution	3.1 How did the project's design, management and execution, institutional arrangements, partnerships, knowledge management and communications, and the financial and human resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?

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<sup>4</sup> Information extracted from the Project Document, p. 127.

	3.2 To what extent has the management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?
	3.3 To what extent were the recommendations provided by the MTE addressed in the second phase of the project?
4. Monitoring and Evaluation	4.1 How effective was the functioning of the project results-based M&E system?
	4.2 How was the information from this system used to make timely decisions during project implementation?
5. Stakeholder engagement	5.1 To what extent has the project engaged stakeholders – in particular farmers and herders, in pilot site management?
	5.2 To what extent does the project develop new partnerships or enhance existing ones?
	5.3 What linkages, if any, exist between the capacities developed among diverse types of stakeholders? (government ownership, partnerships, capacity development)
	5.4 How have stakeholders contributed to the results achieved?
6. Progress to Impact	6.1 To what extent and how is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in national or sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks?
	6.2 Is there any evidence of SLM mainstreaming at the decision-making level that can be attributed to the project?
	6.3 Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term results? What is the likelihood of longer-term impacts of the project?
7. Gender	7.1 To what extent (and how) has the project contributed to the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups throughout its implementation?
8. Co-financing	8.1 To what extent has the expected co-financing been delivered?
9. Sustainability	9.1 To what extent has the project created ownership among counterparts and stakeholders?
	9.2 How sustainable are the results achieved at the environmental, institutional, social and financial levels?
10. Lessons Learnt	10.1 What lessons can be learned from the project, in terms of its design, new approaches (e.g. introduction of the Decision Support Framework), implementation, up-scaling and sustainability that may be useful for future and similar FAO interventions particularly funded by the GEF or other donors in general?

## 2.4 Methodology

26. The approach and methodology that was used to conduct this terminal evaluation complies with FAO and GEF evaluation standards. It also complies with international criteria and professional norms and standards; including the norms and standards adopted by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).
27. The TE adopted a consultative, participative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation team's

approach to the TE was constructive and pragmatic. It is more important to learn lessons that help in continuous improvement of project design and implementation than focusing on problems and possible mistakes. According to the TOR, the TE supports donors and implementing partners to identify possible follow-up projects that are increasingly relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable.

28. Field visits were conducted to Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Morocco and Turkey to interview key stakeholders and collect evaluative evidence. Originally also China was planned to be visited, but the national project team members were not available, and thus the visit was cancelled. Country visits to Panamá, Morocco and Turkey included field visits to project demonstration sites allowing also to interview farmers and other ultimate beneficiaries of the project.
29. The country selection criteria included: (i) adequately representative sample by geographic regions, (ii) extent of demonstration/ pilot field work, (iii) availability of the countries to receive the evaluation team and (iv) not overlapping with those countries visited during the MTE.
30. Primary data (interviews by Skype, face to face or getting written responses to evaluation questions) collections sample was targeted: all National Project Coordinators<sup>5</sup>, FAO country or regional office representative in those countries which were feasible, Project Task Force members at FAO HQ, WOCAT representatives, representatives of project partners in countries visited, and selected representatives of other country-based stakeholders such as relevant ministries or departments (at national, regional / provincial and local levels as appropriate), other land management and land use related institutions, local farmers, NGOs, CBOs, academia and research centres.
31. The full list of people consulted is presented in Appendix 3. All the stakeholders have been working directly on the project and / or are project beneficiaries, and thus the information received from them is considered to be directly relevant to the TE.

#### 2.4.1 Data collection methods

32. Data collection methods included:

**Documentation Review:** The Evaluation Team conducted a documentation review (some 160 documents, reports, etc.) during the field missions and at home offices (see Appendix 2).

33. **Interviews:** Key Stakeholders were interviewed either in person (91 persons) or with skype (26 persons) with some follow up using emails when needed. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings were incorporated in the final report. The project stakeholders interviewed and / or consulted during the TE is presented in Appendix 3. The stakeholders included the Project Task Force based at FAO-HQ, country-based Project National Coordinators and their teams, FAO project focal points at FAO country or regional offices, and selected representatives of other

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<sup>5</sup> With exception of Nigeria.

country-based stakeholders such as relevant ministries or departments (at national, regional / provincial and local levels as appropriate), other land management and land use related institutions, local farmers, NGOs, CBOs, academia and research centres.

**Global meeting:** The Team Leader and the Team Member together with the OED Evaluation Manager participated in the Project's 3rd and final global meeting and the Project Steering Committee meeting in Ankara, Turkey from 24 to 27 April 2019. Parallel, it was possible to interview several country delegations present at these events.

**Country visits:** to Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Morocco and Turkey.

34. Proof of evidence to each key finding is provided by giving more than one references (either documentary evidence from reports, publications etc. or evidence from several evaluation interviews – names of the persons are not mentioned but in most cases a list of countries from where the respective interviewees were from are given).

## 2.5 Limitations

35. The project has a fairly large number of countries (15, including one where project activities never really started), and partner that are spread over all the FAO regions. It was not possible, due to financial and time constraints, to visit all the countries to verify e.g. field implementation. Thus, proof of evidence depends in many cases on the quality and accuracy of the reports. Also, the field missions were relatively short by cause of necessity.
36. The ET mitigated the risk caused by these limitations by double or triple checking any major findings that lead to significant conclusions and recommendations, i.e. basing them on similar and triangulated information originating from more than one country. Actually, the ET based all its conclusions leading to recommendations on findings that are broad-based and common to several partner countries. Thereby the conclusions and respective recommendations have solid basis and substantive value. Therefore, they can be generalised to a broader variety of country situations.

## 3 Background and context of the project

37. This section presents the developmental context in which the project was formulated and its theory of change to provide an overall understanding of the project, including its logic and results chain.

### 3.1 Context of the project

38. According to the project document, about 52 percent of the land used for agriculture worldwide is estimated to be already moderately or severely affected by land degradation, and nearly 2 billion ha of land, an area twice the size of China, are already seriously degraded, some irreversibly. Land degradation reduces productivity and food security, disrupts vital ecosystem functions, negatively affects biodiversity and water resources, and increases carbon emissions and vulnerability to climate change. Some studies indicate that land degradation directly affects 1.5 billion

people around the world with a disproportionate impact on the poor, women and children, and has already reduced the productivity of the world's terrestrial surface by about 25% from 1981 to 2003. However, economic data on degradation is seriously lacking. The Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands project (LADA) cited a 1992 estimate of the annual global cost of land degradation at some USD 40 billion. However, this does not include degradation's hidden costs, such as the need for more external inputs when cultivating degraded lands and the loss of ecosystem services that are essential for food production, water provision and for regulating the global carbon cycle. The global reduction of soil services resulting from improper management has been estimated to be in excess of USD 1 trillion per year.

39. Despite the seriousness and huge negative impacts of land degradation, land use decision makers and particularly land users themselves have limited access to land resources mapping and land use planning tools, as well as to information about effectiveness of traditional and innovative Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approaches and technologies that would enable good or best land use and management practices to be adopted, sustained and upscaled. According to a review conducted as part of the preparation of the project, more than 90 SLM knowledge management platforms, databases and networks on SLM and land degradation were found, but the information is fragmented and there is no "standard and all comprising platform", but many different types and structures of platforms that emphasize or cover different functions and topics. There are also major knowledge gaps related to the costs and benefits of various SLM practices and their values and impacts, both direct and indirect. It is thus difficult to make a convincing case to policy makers on the importance of investing in SLM and preventing land degradation.
40. Another challenge is the limited capacity to adapt to new and emerging threats to land resources, such as increasing competition for land due to population increase, land fragmentation, biofuel production, change of markets, variability in food prices and impacts of climate change and associated changes in rainfall and hydrological regimes. These capacity-related barriers to SLM are often coupled with weak enabling environments toward harmonization and coordination of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks: a) between sectors competing for land area and natural resources; b) across landscapes and river basins; and c) among weak institutions in charge of coordinating land issues and the implementation of the National Action Plans (NAPs) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
41. Following the 1st Scientific Conference of the UNCCD (September 2009), where ten priorities for improving the monitoring and assessment of land degradation and SLM to support decision making in land and water management were identified, the 2nd Scientific Conference of the UNCCD (April 2013) focused on the economic assessment of desertification, SLM and resilience of drylands. At this conference it was concluded that the evidence base needs to be expanded further in a systematic way and that improving estimates of the magnitudes of economic and social impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) would require better measurement of the extent and rate of change of land degradation.
42. Therefore, the project was conceptualized to contribute filling these evidence gaps by providing improved tools and methods for assessing the impacts of DLDD and

the benefits of SLM, as well as providing new assessments and data from representative countries in four regions affected by DLDD. In addition to the needs of filling these evidence gaps, the project was also developed to address key barriers for DLDD assessment and SLM upscaling existing in the 15 participating countries. These barriers are complex and interlinked and their respective importance can vary from country to country, but they can be grouped into three main types of barriers: (i) institutional and policy barriers (top-down approaches to land management limits the participation of local people in sustainable land management projects; compartmental approach of many SLM programmes and knowledge management systems); (ii) economic and financial barriers (limited access to financial resources by governments and donors) and (iii) knowledge and technology barriers (inadequate access to information and knowledge by smallholders and existing knowledge is fragmented and not sufficiently disseminated and implemented).

43. The total budget of the project is USD 44,214,077 of which USD 6,116,730 (14%) comprises a Full-Sized project (FSP) grant from GEF. The co-financing amounted USD 38,097,347 (86%) and was to be committed by the national governments and other country partners (USD 30,717,347; 70%), CDE/WOCAT Secretariat (USD 1,500,000; 3%) and USD 5,880,000 (13%) from the FAO (USD 4,820,000 from the field programme and USD 1,060,000 from headquarters).
44. The project was initially planned to be conducted in a three-year period. A first no-cost extension of one year was granted in February 2018, and another for addition half a year in April 2019. The implementation started in May 2015 and will reach its expected closure in October 2019. The project is a joint effort between the 15 government partners (Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Morocco, Nigeria<sup>6</sup>, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan), the Center for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
45. The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of 2018 identified that the project was highly relevant and aligned with the GEF, UNCCD and FAO objectives and stressed that the progress made towards the achievement of project objectives was limited. The implementation of the project had been delayed by numerous administrative bottlenecks and by the lack of responsiveness from the PCU, which resulted in a low disbursement of the GEF grant. The prospect of sustainability of project achievements was considered limited, due to the fact that it was based on a series of valid assumptions but in which some of them had a high level of risks and may not be materialized. The overall performance according to the GEF rating scheme presented in the MTE report is presented in the table below.

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<sup>6</sup> Nigeria did not establish an approved work plan with FAO, nor started project activities; thus at the time of the TE Nigeria could not really be considered as a partner country of the project. The TE could not interview any representative of Nigeria as the Project Management Team was unable to provide any names and contacts in Nigeria. The original National Project Coordinator of Nigeria had left his position.

**Table 1 GEF ranking table (Mid Term Evaluation)**

GEF - FAO criteria/sub criteria		Rating <sup>7</sup>
1.	Overall quality of project outcomes	
1.1	Relevance	HS
1.2	Effectiveness	MS
1.3	Efficiency	MU
2.	Quality of project implementation	MU
3.	Quality of project execution	MU
4.	Overall quality of M&E	
4.1	M&E Design	MS
4.2	M&E Plan Implementation	MS
5.	Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	
5.1	Financial risk	ML
5.2	Socio-political risk	ML
5.3	Institutional risk	ML
5.4	Environmental risk	L

Source: Information extracted from the Mid-Term Evaluation Report.

### **Project objectives**

46. According to the project document, the project's **global environmental objective** is to contribute to combating desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) worldwide through scaling up sustainable land management best practices based on evidence-based and informed decision making. In line with FAO's global mandate to achieve food security for all, the **project's development objective** is to increase the provision of ecosystem goods and services and enhance food security in countries and regions affected by DLDD through the promotion of SLM, integrated management, and efficiency in the use of natural resources. It was planned that these objectives are achieved through a set of 3 components, which are divided in four outcomes and 11 outputs, as presented below:

**Component 1:** National and local decision-support on combating DLDD and promoting mainstreaming and up-scaling of SLM best practices

**Outcome 1.1:** SLM best practices mainstreamed into national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programs to address DLDD in 15 countries

Output 1.1.1: Countries delivering reliable DLDD and SLM assessments and information on SLM best practices suitable for mainstreaming at national or sub-national levels

Output 1.1.2: DLDD and SLM assessments findings mainstreamed into planning and investment processes at national and sub-national levels

<sup>7</sup> See rating scheme in Appendix 4



Output 1.1.3: Strengthened regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing for DLDD and SLM

**Outcome 1.2:** *Upscaling of SLM best practices catalyzed in countries through targeted actions on the ground and strategic decision making from local to national levels*

Output 1.2.1: Strengthened delivery mechanisms for SLM demonstration, awareness raising and training

Output 1.2.2: Implementation of SLM best practices leading to adoption and progressive upscaling of cost effective and innovative SLM technologies covering a spectrum of LUS

Output 1.2.3: Strengthened country and regional capacity for DLDD and SLM scaling up delivered by FAO-WOCAT and through regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing processes

**Component 2:** Global DLDD and SLM Knowledge Management and Decision-Support Platform

**Outcome 2.1:** Knowledge management and decision-support system and tools used to support evidence-based strategy formulation at national level for promoting SLM and contributing to global processes to address DLDD.

Output 2.1.1: A federated FAO-WOCAT, online and open access DLDD and SLM decision support platform established that links technical and scientific information and data, networks, country partners and 2-5 global/ (sub)regional partners and programs

Output 2.1.2: Guidelines for harmonized approaches and standardized methods and tools to assess land management systems in terms of DLDD and SLM available and supporting informed decision making for upscaling of SLM best practices

**Component 3:** Monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of project results.

**Outcome 3.1:** Project implementation based on adaptive results-based management

Output 3.1.1: Project web-based monitoring system established

Output 3.1.2: Midterm and final evaluation carried out

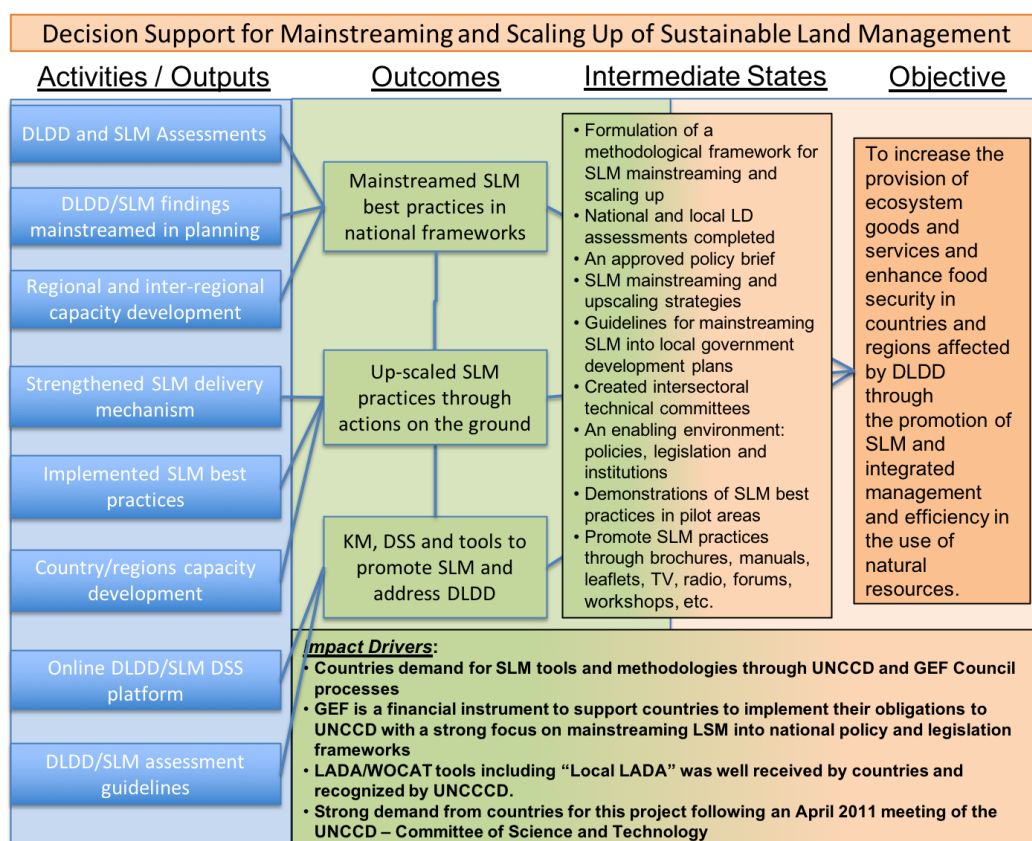
Output 3.1.3: Communication and dissemination of project results

## 3.2 Theory of change

47. The FE used the TOC developed and validated in the MTE. The overall logic of the project is to mainstream SLM practices into related national and sub-national development frameworks and to upscale these practices in each country through demonstration areas, while at the same time, establishing a global DLDD and SLM knowledge management and decision-support online platform to provide information, guidelines and links on technical and scientific information and data as well as networks among country, regional and global partners. All this was to be achieved through the development of nationally-based capacities and the development and provision of tools, knowledge and best practices on SLM to national decision-makers.

48. The MTE described the TOC in the means of a logical pathway (Figure 1). This logical pathway is also supported by key impact drivers. The foremost driver for this project is that under the UNCCD and the GEF Council processes, countries are demanding for SLM tools and methodologies. This interest was confirmed at an April 2011 meeting of the UNCCD-Committee of Science and Technology where over 40 countries participated to a side event on these SLM tools and methodologies organized by FAO and WOCAT. The interest shown by the participating countries at this event is referred by key people involved in the formulation of this project as a key starting point for the conceptualization of this project.
49. The review of this logical pathway also indicates that there is a somewhat "built-in" sequential approach. In order to succeed and reach the expected outcome, the project needs to mainstream SLM in national planning and policy frameworks, which starts with the need to conduct SLM assessments. Then, once SLM starts to be mainstreamed nationally, activities to improve the delivery of SLM practices can be expected to be upscaled nationally, using tools and methodologies to promote these practices. It is a coherent approach to disseminate SLM best practices and address land degradation and desertification issues. A summary of the "outcomes-impact pathways" is presented in the diagram below. This pathway shows clearly the logic and the coherence behind this project strategy.

**Figure 1 Theory of Change of the project**



Source: Mid-Term Evaluation Report.

## 4 Evaluation criteria: Key Findings

### 4.1 Main findings and Ratings

50. The project was found to be highly relevant, similarly to what stated by MTE. Land degradation is a serious problem in the project countries and thus SLM is considered to be very important. Decision support for SLM mainstreaming was found to be important prerequisite for broader adoption of SLM practices, i.e. for SLM up and out scaling. The combination of policy / strategy work (mainstreaming to policies, strategies, investment frameworks and programs) with demonstration / pilot field implementation of SLM best practices (technologies and approaches) was found to be the right approach. The TE understands that the project strategy was purposefully selected not to focus on working with the ultimate beneficiaries (farmers, land users), but the FE understands the concern by the MTE of weak beneficiary / farmer involvement, as they are those, in addition to the private sector land-using companies, who will make the eventual land use decisions: which land and how to use the land; to choose sustainable or unsustainable technologies and approaches. Therefore, SLM policy and strategy work needs to involve not only policy makers and expert organizations but also the ultimate decision takers, farmers and land-using companies.
51. During the last year of implementation, after the MTE, the project effectiveness has improved significantly especially in those countries in which the implementation had started late. Most of the project countries are expected to achieve the project results, however, the implementation effectiveness varies a lot between the countries: some of the countries (Argentina, Colombia, Morocco and Uzbekistan) have achieved highly satisfactory results, some others (Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China, Ecuador, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey) have achieved satisfactory results and in few others (Bangladesh and Lesotho) the results are still moderately unsatisfactory, and in Nigeria highly unsatisfactory. However, it is clear that both the SLM mainstreaming and particularly up-scaling will still require considerably more time and resources that are beyond the present project's timeline and budget. The knowledge management component has reached its expected results.
52. The implementation efficiency and the quality of project implementation have improved slightly since the MTE. Already the MTE identified some communications and responsiveness problems within the PCU. The FE found that indeed there has been some persistent communication problems in the axis of PCU – some countries, PCU – some FAO country / regional offices, and PCU – some other key stakeholders. On the other hand, many other countries and stakeholders have not experienced problems in communication and efficiency of the PCU, on the contrary. It appears that the resourcing (staffing) of the PCU (management and coordination function) has been insufficient. The FE did not find major problems in the country execution efficiency and the quality of project execution, apart from one or two countries. Most countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), Ecuador, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey) have executed the project satisfactorily, and a few countries the execution efficiency could be rated as highly satisfactory (Argentina, China, Colombia, Morocco and Uzbekistan), particularly considering the complexities in the

project and the short duration. In Bangladesh and Lesotho, the execution is rated as moderately unsatisfactory at the time of the FE.

53. Project's monitoring and evaluation system design and plan implementation were found to be moderately successful. The reporting system templates and focusing on modules is considered clear and well-functioning. The original project results matrix (logical framework) contains overly ambitious indicators and goals. The decision-making process using the M&E information was not entirely clear, to large extent due to the very few and deferred steering committee meetings.
54. The likelihood of the sustainability of project outcomes was found to be reasonably good, and the likelihood of risks to sustainability low (environmental risks) or moderately low (financial, socio-political and institutional risks). The project was found to have strong national ownership in almost all the 14 countries. Several countries have seen the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects. Many countries (e.g. Bangladesh, FBiH, RS, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) have already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s). However, the Project Management started thinking and planning an exit strategy for the global project quite late, only in 2019.
55. The project results are environmentally sustainable. The integration of the project into the relevant national and / or regional / provincial institutions has secured the institutional sustainability in many countries. Financial sustainability is secured in some countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH & RS), China, Morocco) through the mainstreaming strategy which is expected to lead to a situation where e.g. local municipalities will continue the implementation using local government budget, and e.g. in Lesotho the government now finances community engagement in SLM activities. Additional and new project financing is also applied in many countries. Social sustainability is considered satisfactory or good particularly in those countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH & RS), Colombia, Morocco, Panama, Uzbekistan) where the pilot / demonstration activities are adopted by the local communities and where (Morocco, Uzbekistan) the introduced SLM practices are profitable at farm / community level.

**Table 2 GEF ranking table (Terminal Evaluation)**

GEF - FAO criteria/sub criteria	Rating <sup>8</sup>	Summary Comments
<b>A. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS</b>		
1. Overall quality of project outcomes		
1.1 Relevance	HS	See section 3.1
1.2 Effectiveness	S <sup>9</sup> /MS	See section 3.2

<sup>8</sup> See rating scheme in Appendix 4

<sup>9</sup> Overall the rating is MS. However, the project results can be rated highly satisfactory in Argentina, Colombia, Morocco and Uzbekistan, and satisfactory in Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China,

GEF - FAO criteria/sub criteria	Rating <sup>8</sup>	Summary Comments
1.3 Efficiency	MU	See section 3.3
<b>B. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION RATING</b>		
2. Quality of project implementation	MU	See section 3.3
3. Quality of project execution	S <sup>10</sup> /MS	See section 3.3 & 3.5
<b>C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&amp;E) RATING</b>		
4. Overall quality of M&E		
4.1 M&E Design	MS	See section 3.4
4.2 M&E Plan Implementation	MS	See section 3.4
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
5. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability		
5.1 Financial risk	ML	See section 3.8
5.2 Socio-political risk	ML	See section 3.8 & 3.7
5.3 Institutional risk	ML	See section 3.8
5.4 Environmental risk	L	See section 3.8

## 4.2 Relevance

1.1 Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management?

**Finding 1. In general, the project strategy and actions responded to the stakeholders and beneficiaries needs. The project addresses a common but differentiated problem of the participating countries.**

56. In most participating countries (e.g. Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Morocco, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan) the project contributed significantly to attract the attention of key institutional actors and decision makers, on the need to address desertification and land degradation with concrete proposals related to information, planning and regulatory frameworks at the national and regional level, as well as in practical terms at the local level.
57. In a few countries (e.g. Morocco, entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) representatives of beneficiaries and key stakeholders were consulted in the project approval and / or launching stage and their needs and expectations were assessed as well. FBiH used FAO Participatory land use development methodology to carry out the stakeholders' analysis. China reported that there has been already several earlier land degradation and SLM projects working with beneficiaries and stakeholders, and

Ecuador, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey, and moderately unsatisfactory in Bangladesh and Lesotho, and highly unsatisfactory in Nigeria.

<sup>10</sup> Overall the rating is MS. However, the project execution can be rated satisfactory at least in the following project countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey, and highly satisfactory in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama and Uzbekistan, and in Bangladesh and Lesotho, the execution is rated as moderately unsatisfactory, and in Nigeria as highly unsatisfactory.

thus the needs, capacities and resources were known. For example, Thailand's National Land Development Department (LDD) has 77 sub-stations all over the country and a network on 70,000 volunteer soil doctors, and thus the LDD has an excellent outreach and understanding of the capacities, needs and expectations of key beneficiaries and stakeholders.

58. Two countries (Bangladesh and Lesotho) reported that the needs, capacities and resources of the beneficiaries and stakeholders were not known in the beginning of the project. There was also an opinion that the original project design was top-down.
59. The project's planned activities<sup>11</sup> allowed to address the needs of the beneficiaries and stakeholders. The actions were jointly planned with the beneficiaries and stakeholders (Morocco) or the actions allowed sufficient flexibility to respond to the needs and realities (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan). According to Bangladesh the planned actions met only partially the needs, capacities and resources, and according to Lesotho project duration was too limited to allow this.

**Finding 2. The project strategy is considered highly appropriate in combining policy and strategy mainstreaming work with the implementation of SLM practices at pilot / demonstration scale.**

60. The project's strategy, including the combination of policy work with the field implementation of SLM best practices at pilot / demonstration scale<sup>12</sup>, is generally considered appropriate (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, the Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan). As an example, in the Philippines, there is already a wealth of knowledge on SLM and on the SLM best practices in the country, but the problem has been limited use of the knowledge in the decision making.
61. Two countries (Bangladesh and Lesotho) had reservations - e.g. for the reason that the strategy did not cater for the local needs.
62. Turkey mentioned that the project's strategy did not adequately address the barriers for SLM investments from the point of view of farmers and land-based investors; sustainable (SLM) production and investment is often more expensive and may be less profitable in short term than a respective unsustainable one. This is a key issue that need to be addressed and solved (See Section 5.3 Lessons Learnt, Paragraph 242).

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<sup>11</sup> Project document, pages 138 – 144: Appendix 2: Work Plan (Results Based).

<sup>12</sup> The level of work at pilot / demonstration scale varied considerably among countries and the involvement of farmers varied considerably between countries. At least in Colombia, Morocco, Panama and Uzbekistan the pilot / demonstration work had a strong farmer involvement. In some other countries, e.g. Argentina, Bangladesh, China, Philippines and Turkey, the farmer involvement was limited.

**Finding 3. Field observations showed that weak capacity of extension services to promote SLM may hinder the progress of SLM out-scaling.**

63. Particularly in Latin American project countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama) the field observations revealed that the extension services have limited capacity to promote and support SLM implementation<sup>13</sup>. Lesotho reported similar problems related extension service. It is observed that such weakness may act as a bottle neck for the out-scaling of SLM best practises.
64. FAO has strong experience in supporting and strengthening extension services<sup>14</sup>. The extension services have not been commonly working on sustainable land management. However, this does not mean that they could not do that. For example, in Thailand there is an innovative system of voluntary soil doctors who are assigned by the Land Development Department<sup>15</sup>. These voluntary soil doctors are not linked with the extension system as such but in reality they are providing a typical extension service function. Another example is Uzbekistan where Farmer Field Schools have already included land management / SLM in their curriculum.

**Finding 4. The original results matrix had flaws but the modular implementation / decision support framework (DSF) introduced during inception phase facilitated the project implementation.**

65. Original project results matrix (logframe) is not entirely clear and logical, and particularly the targets for outcome indicators were overly ambitious vs. the project duration and budget (e.g. size of targeted areas). The countries report their results following the modular project DSF, although the PIRs compiled by the Project Manager report against the results and indicators of the project results matrix.
66. The DSF allowed to address the needs of the beneficiaries and stakeholders. The introduction of the project's modular DSF (Figure 2) was considered complicated at first, but once those responsible for its implementation had properly internalized it, it was considered a relevant, useful and adequately flexible methodological framework that allowed adapting to the realities of the different project countries.
67. As indicated on the diagram below, the DS-SLM DSF is composed of seven modules:
- **Module 1:** Operational Strategy and targeted action plan for SLM mainstreaming and scaling out (Phase A: Review and initial strategy and action plan; Phase B: Partnerships and capacity development; and Phase C: Scaling out through policies, territorial strategies, incentives, financing mechanisms)

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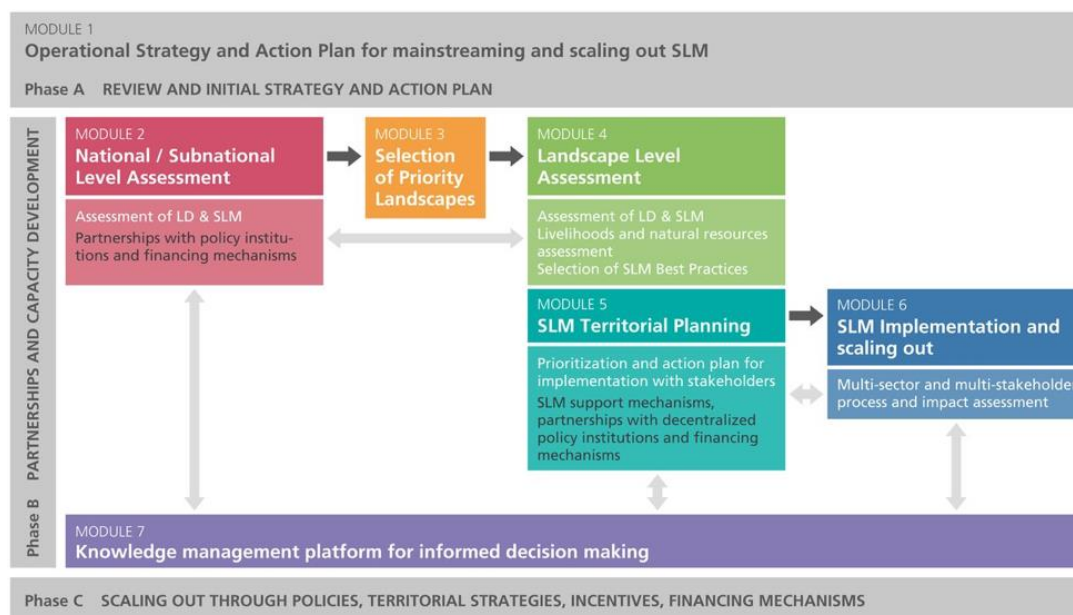
<sup>13</sup> The weakness of extension services was mentioned as a knowledge and technological barrier in the Project Document p. 35: " In many countries formal extension services are very weak as funding is very limited and there is a need to strengthen the capacity of alternative service providers such as NGOs and civil society organisations in promoting adapted SLM technologies and participatory experiential approaches including facilitating expansion of successful FFS approaches, through self-financing strategies and access to alternative funding sources.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. <http://www.fao.org/research-and-extension/en/>

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. [http://www.idd.go.th/idd\\_en/en-US/soil-doctor-volunteer/](http://www.idd.go.th/idd_en/en-US/soil-doctor-volunteer/)

- **Module 2:** National/Subnational Level Assessment
- **Module 3:** Selection of Priority Landscapes
- **Module 4:** Landscape Level Assessment
- **Module 5:** SLM Territorial Planning
- **Module 6:** SLM implementation and scaling out
- **Module 7:** Knowledge management platform for informed decision making

**Figure 2 Project's modular Decision Support Framework**



Source: FAO / DS-SLM factsheet: <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2855EN/ca2855en.pdf>

### 4.3 Effectiveness / Achievement of project results

- 2.1 To what extent have project outcomes and objectives been achieved, and how effective was the project in achieving them?
- 2.2 Did the project produce any unintended results, either positive or negative? What were the contributing factors for the results achieved and what can be particularly attributed to the project?
- 2.3 To what extent has the global DLDD and SLM decision-support platform been able to develop technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling?

**Finding 5. Effectiveness had improved considerably since MTE, particularly in those countries that started late the implementation. Most countries had reached or are expected to reach the results in general. However, up-scaling particularly will require more time and financing, and also SLM mainstreaming requires more time.**

68. The main stakeholders in the project countries have now understood and internalised the importance of the project's expected outcomes which are, though, very ambitious in view of the project's resources and duration (1. SLM best practices mainstreamed into national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programs to address DLDD in 15 countries, 2. Upscaling of SLM best practices catalyzed in countries through targeted



actions on the ground and strategic decision making from local to national levels, 3. Knowledge management and decision-support system and tools used to support evidence-based strategy formulation at national level for promoting SLM and contributing to global processes to address DLDD, and 4. Project implementation based on adaptive results-based management.) Mainstreaming has now been started, upscaling has been catalysed but still in limited scale, knowledge management and decision support system and tools have been produced and there is evidence of their use.

69. Under the global component, the project has prepared, in collaboration with countries, three methodological guidelines (i) Mainstreaming SLM into National Policy Instruments - Guideline and Toolkit, (ii) Guidelines for the national assessment of land degradation and conservation using the LADA-WOCAT mapping approach, and (iii) The Sustainable Land Management Mainstreaming Tool.
70. For the assessment and documentation of SLM best practices, training was provided in collaboration with CDE/WOCAT to national counterpart institutions in Bangladesh, BiH (in both entities), Morocco, Panama, Thailand and Tunisia, as well through a workshop at regional level in Uzbekistan with participants from Turkey and Bosnia & Herzegovina (PIR 2018).
71. WOCAT has established the DS-SLM Knowledge Management Platform designed in support of the project and countries have started to contribute with relevant information on the respective country page.
72. The Land and Water Division of FAO has developed, in parallel but in coordination with the project, an e-learning course on SLM and Land Restoration<sup>16</sup> that is available and can be used for additional training and capacity building.
73. At the time of the FE, the project was well under implementation in fourteen of the 15 partner countries<sup>17</sup>, and five (Argentina, Colombia, China, Ecuador and Uzbekistan) of them had already basically completed the project. Table 3 below summarises the status of implementation at countries at the time of the FE. The information is drawn from the implementation monitoring templates distributed at the Project's last global meeting in Ankara, as well as from the country presentations in the Ankara meeting and national project reports.
74. Module 1: Ten countries had formulated a national or local level mainstreaming strategy (Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina (both entities), China, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey (upscaling), and Uzbekistan). Depending on national priorities and conditions, some countries have advanced in integrating SLM strategies into their national planning processes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan) and e.g. Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia and Uzbekistan also in the local government planning processes, and other Latin

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<sup>16</sup> <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=454>

<sup>17</sup> Nigeria had not started the project, see Paragraph 94 under Section 3.4.

American project countries than Argentina are planning or are in process of doing the latter. Others have done relevant elements or related other activities.

75. Module 2: Nine countries have concluded the national or sub-national assessments of land degradation and SLM options (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan). China had done the national assessment already under LADA-1 and Turkey has well-established assessment with LUS maps already from before. Both entities of BiH and Lesotho were carrying out the assessment at the time of the TE, and others had started relevant elements of the work.
76. Module 3: All other countries except Philippines and Thailand have selected the pilot landscapes or sites for demonstration activities. The Philippines have chosen an approach to focus on a propriety river basin across several provinces, and Thailand will do the landscape selection using a multi-disciplinary expert group. Also, Thailand identified the hotspots and bright spots according to the rate and degree of land degradation from the LUS. Local level assessments and demonstration sites for scaling up have been conducted in these landscape areas which were determined based on their soil problems of salinity, acidity and erosion problems, as well as within lowland areas surrounded by steep mountains, in highland areas of the Northeast and in the agriculture areas in the lowland.
77. Module 4: Landscape level assessment and the selection of SLM best practises has been done by eight countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan). In Bangladesh consultations have been conducted but the assessment still on-going, in Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska local stakeholder workshops and trainings are done, in FBiH SLM conference, trainings, PLUD meetings and technologies were selected, in China the landscape level assessment was completed already under LADA-1, in Lesotho the project districts were visited and within a district a watershed was selected where demonstrations were going to be conducted, agreements with NGOs and ministries were established and SLM technologies were tentatively identified, in the Philippines SLM best practices were selected, and in Turkey trainings are done.
78. Module 5: entity FBiH, Morocco and Uzbekistan have duly implemented the territorial planning with prioritization and action planning for implementation. Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina RS, Colombia, Lesotho, and Panama are in the process of doing this. Thailand is starting to work on it. Argentina and Ecuador decided not to do this due to budget constraints. Other countries have chosen different but related approach to proceed with the work, such as using a national project for the implementation the module in China, promotion and capacity building in the Philippines, Consultation meetings in Tunisia, and in Turkey a "techno-economic" farm was selected without planning per se to showcase SLM practices.
79. Module 6: Nine countries have implemented selected SLM best practices in pilot / demonstration sites (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina (both entities), China, Colombia, Lesotho, Morocco, Panama, Philippines and Uzbekistan). Bangladesh, Thailand and Tunisia have plans to start the implementation, Ecuador has provided capacity building to local stakeholders without implementing the SLM best practises, Lesotho is scaling-up the implementation to other locations. Colombia, Bosnia-

Herzegovina (both entities) and Uzbekistan, are using existing policy tools, territorial strategies, incentives and financial mechanisms to promote the implementation of SLM best practices.

80. Module 7: All countries have either published policy briefs, guidelines, other publications, or organised conferences, seminars, meetings, trainings, and / or exchanged experiences and information in regional or global events. At the time of the FE, the countries had published under the WOCAT SLM Platform 42 SLM technologies and 27 approaches of which 1 technology from Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic of Srpska and 2 technologies from entity Federation of BiH, 5 technologies from Colombia, 7 technologies and 3 approaches from Morocco, 3 technologies and nine approaches from the Philippines, 1 technology and 1 approach from Thailand<sup>18</sup>, 12 technologies and 14 approaches from Tunisia, and 11 technologies from Uzbekistan.
81. Those countries which started the project implementation late (particularly Bangladesh and Lesotho, and to a lesser degree also Bosnia and Herzegovina and Thailand) have still considerable work to accomplish before the project closure.
82. Argentina (Text box 1) carried out the national assessment adapting the LADA WOCAT methodology to the conditions of the country and availability of information. Ecuador carried out the evaluation at the national and subnational level. Colombia and Panama conducted subnational evaluations. In Argentina, Colombia and Panama, SLM practices were implemented in pilot sites. In Colombia the benefits of SLM practices were assessed (Text box 2). The project managed to attract the attention of multiple actors triggering diverse actions such as the integration of the SLM in proposals for new projects and in regulatory frameworks. Another example of an innovative project work is the production of a mobile application of the WOCAT QA/QT questionnaires by the Kasetsart University in Thailand. The application will be available for wider use after the current test phase. Further example of innovative project execution is the consolidation of two groups of young agro-environmental leaders, from agrotechnical schools, who were trained in the use of drones to monitor the land use and land degradation in Panama. Yet another example is from Lesotho where officers were trained on land monitoring tool (Collect earth). Lesotho has managed to collect around 7000 plots of 2km by 2km on Collect earth. The ministry has integrated this tool within its activities, and it is through this tool that the ministry is able to locate both land degradation and SLM hotspots. This Collect earth tool also is important in helping with monitoring and evaluation of activities done within the catchments using the change in Normalized Difference Vegetation Index values before and after the activities have been done. It also helps the country to recognise its restoration potentials.

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<sup>18</sup> E.g. Thailand has submitted 40 documented approaches and technologies to WOCAT which had not been cleared yet by CDE/WOCAT at the time of the TE.

Text box 1 Innovative and effective implementation in **Argentina**

In Argentina the project developed a geographic web-based validation system associated with GeoServer, for the **national assessment validation** by qualified specialists. For the validation process, three online applications were developed, which allowed the validation of the LUS, QM and NDL models, which are part of the LADA WOCAT Platform. These applications are simple and low-cost tools, that allowed the collection of systematic and objective information, facilitating the analysis and interpretation of results. Other countries and stakeholders could carry on similar processes, with their own human and technological resources (see TE recommendations 2, 3, 13 and 14)

The role given to SLM specialized human resources stands out, including technicians, academics and researchers from different institutions, who were grouped themselves into four committees (*ad doc*) to work on project implementation, consolidating a specialized inter-institutional and interdisciplinary team.

The project identified SLM practices along the country, publishing 6 documents compiling SLM practices targeting different regions. Publications are available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/desertificacion/publicaciones> and <http://www.desertificacion.gob.ar/manejo-sostenible-de-tierras/practicas-de-mst/>

Local-level mainstreaming actions were developed in the two pilot sites. In the province of Entre Ríos, private actors began to take interest in learning more about SLM and its impact on agricultural and livestock production. The provincial government promotes the Law of Promotion to the Agroecological Productive Systems, that seeks the transition of the land-based production towards more sustainable practices. In the province of Salta, the municipality of Embarcación gave an endorsement to the SLM technology through a declaration of interest in one of the SLM practices implemented in the pilot site. According to the stakeholders interviewed, the declaration aims to promote the use of SLM technology by local stakeholders with their own resources which in some cases could help also fundraising by local organizations.

## Text box 2 Quantification of SLM benefits in Colombia

In Colombia the project partners quantified environmental and socio-economic benefits associated with the establishment of silvopastoral systems in an extensive livestock degraded land.

### **Socio-economic benefits:**

- Fodder production increased 6% with the implementation of SLM technologies
- Animal production increase from 1 animal/ha to 4-5 animals/ha
- Lower investment in agricultural material cost including fertilizers and labor
- Milk production increased from 15 liters to 45 liters
- Increase in milk production and cattle weight generated an increase in the total agricultural income

### **Environmental benefits:**

- Available soil moisture increased from 7,7 cm/m to 9,6 cm/m due to an increase in soil porosity and improvement of soil structure and organic matter content
- Pasture and *Leucaena* bushes enhanced ground coverage preventing runoff and erosion
- Soil compaction decreased due to an increase in soil porosity
- Degraded land in the property decreased 23%
- Soil organic carbon below ground level increased from 1,1% to 2,2% of the soil stock

**Table 3 Progress of implementation by country by project modules**

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
<b>Argentina</b>	Mainstreaming strategy for each pilot site (local level)  Integration of 4 stakeholders commissions ( <i>ad doc</i> ) responsible for project implementation within the National Observatory of Desertification and Soil Degradation.	National Assessment with an upgraded methodology  Online app for National Assessment validation	Pilot sites: 1) Arroyo Las Estacas (provincia Entre Ríos) y 2) Chaco semiárido (provincia de Salta)	Local assessment in five pilot sites	Due to funding and time constraints, agreed not to address module 5 and focus on the other modules	SLM practices implemented in both pilot sites  Capacity building of local stakeholders (farmers mainly)	Strengthening of the National Observatory and Infodesert websites  6 publications on SLM practices for different regions
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Mainstreaming strategy formulated in March 2019	National training on WOCAT tools (QA & QT) conducted  Vegetation, water and soil degradation maps prepared	Four degradation hotspots selected: Chittagong Hill Tracts, High Barind Tract, Waterlogged area, Saline prone area	Four sub-national consultations conducted in the identified hotspot areas  50 SLM practices identified of which 33 have been visited and data collected	Barriers and opportunities of SLM technologies identified in the 4 hotspots  National strategy under development	Not yet implemented, but respective LoAs in pipeline with a plan to establish 3 SLM demonstration plots and to conduct 10 sub-national ToT as well as to carry out field visits	Two videos on SLM prepared  Leaflets prepared  A national web platform to be developed  A publication on SLM to be published  All SLM practices will be submitted to WOCAT platform
<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina (entity Republic of Srpska)</b>	Mainstreaming strategy done	National assessment being done	Three municipalities (Pelagicevo, Samac, Trebinje) selected	Local stakeholder workshops on SLM delivery building capacities hold in 3 pilot sites and trainings on WOCAT tools provided	Revision of a national strategic document done, and respective strategic documents for pilot municipalities produced	SLM practices implemented: irrigation, flood protection, reforestation  Scaling out SLM implemented: irrigation, flood	Media presentations and broadcasts over national TV, Youtube, websites  2 SLM technologies documented and uploaded to WOCAT SLM platform of which 1 published

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
						protection, soil amelioration for natural forest regeneration, reforestation	
<b>FBiH</b>	Mainstreaming strategy being done	National and subnational (cantonal) level assessment was done, inception workshop, roundtable	9 municipalities of Tuzla Canton (Tuzla, Gradacac, Gracanica, Banovici, Sapna, Zivinice, Kalesija, Kladanj, Srebrenik) and Ravno Municipality in HNK Canton selected	Trainings on WOCAT tools organized, Conference on SLM held, Several PLUD meetings in pilot municipalities held, 18 SLM technologies selected from WOCAT to be applicable in FBiH, consultative meetings organized	Territorial planning was conducted using PLUD, hotspots and priority areas for interventions identified	Implementation of four demonstration activities being implemented: (i) growing blueberries in containers in a mine disposal site, (ii) fishbone structures for erosion control, (iii) land consolidation, and (iv) contour ploughing	Two SLM technologies are published in WOCAT database, media presentations and broadcasts over national and international TV and radio as well as newspaper articles, a book on Sustainable land management – approaches and practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina being prepared in Bosnian and English languages.
<b>China</b>	National operational strategy and recommendations for mainstreaming and scaling up SLM into national policy instruments done in 2017	National level assessment done under LADA-1 in 2014  Research on national hotspots and bright spots in arid region lead to landscape selection	Wengniute banner in Inner Mongolia selected as a demonstration site.  Training on national desertification monitoring and land degradation assessment organised	Sub-national assessments completed under LADA-1  SLM practices and models to combat desertification: road building in sandy land, green house agriculture,	Plan to scale up the selected SLM practices with support from China national project to combat land degradation in Inner Mongolia	The selected SLM practices being implemented in the demonstration sites	Training and capacity building for SLM implementation and scaling up organized  "Best sustainable land management in dryland areas of China III" published with the cooperation of GEF OP12  "Strategies, Policies and Methods of Land Degradation Assessment and Mainstreaming and Scaling-out of Sustainable Land Management in China" published 2018

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
				desert tourism and desert park  China's Sustainable Land Practice 3 will be published			"Strategies, Policies and Methods of Mainstreaming and Scaling-out Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management in China" published 2019  "Strategies, Policies and Methods of Mainstreaming and Scaling-out Sustainable Land Management at Local Level" published 2019  Participated in COP13 and attended FAO/WOCAT side events and seminars
<b>Colombia</b>	Mainstreaming strategy at national level  Creation of the Mesa Técnica Institucional as an institutional consultative body	Subnational Assessment in four departments	Landscape of the San Juan de Nepomuceno municipality (Departamento Bolívar) includes 5 pilot sites	Local Assessment at the San Juan de Nepomuceno municipality level	Support to the land use planning of the San Juan de Nepomuceno municipality	SLM practices implemented in pilot sites  Capacity building of local stakeholders (farmers mainly)	5 SLM technologies published in the WOCAT Platform
<b>Ecuador</b>	Creation of the Grupo Núcleo Institucional as an institutional consultative body and strategy prepared.	National Assessment with support from Cuba	Landscape of the Loja province, where SLM practices were identified	Local Assessment of a landscape in the Loja province  Manual with the SLM practices identified	Due to funding constraints, agreed not to address module 5	Capacity building of local stakeholders (they didn't implement SLM practices)	<i>Policy brief</i> with the main project results (no disseminated yet)
<b>Lesotho</b>	No done yet; two-day workshop with focus group discussions organized; engagement strategy established	Being done; baseline establishment by a local consultant	Three demonstration sites identified: (i) Leribe – foothills site, (ii) Berea –	Visits to 4 project districts and agreements with NGOs and line ministries.	Delineation of catchments at community level conducted	SLM demonstrations conducted at Mphosong catchment in	Knowledge collected and documented SLM Information Centres at local and national level established DS-SLM database on WOCAT country profiles established



Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
		Capacity building done	lowlands site, (iii) Quthing – Senqu river valley site	SLM technologies tentatively identified: Diversion furrows / Infiltration furrows and pits Brush control and Brush packs/ Trash-lines Reseeding of marginal lands Gully Structures Rainwater harvesting including in-field structures		Leribe. Scaling out activities done in two other locations.	Ministerial website maintained
<b>Morocco</b>	Mainstreaming strategy formulated, including:  National Land Degradation Neutrality Plan and a related Investment Plan – under finalisation  Regional 3-year Action Plan in Souss-Massa - still under negotiation  Three commune level 3-years Action Plans (Amskroud, Aziar and Tamri) - finalised	National assessment finalised	Souss-Massa region and there three communes: Amskroud, Aziar and Tamri	QM assessment and mapping at Souss-Massa region as well as in 3 pilot communes Amskroud, Aziar and Tamri  Analysis of erosion biological degradation	Training needs assessment with gender assessment  Training of trainers  Workshop producing Territorial Development Plans for 3 Communes  3-year SLM Action Plan for the province of Agadir – Ida- Outanan	Demonstration activities under implementation (with financing from other projects and / or from government financing) in the three pilot communities (Amskroud, Aziar and Tamri)	Series of capacity building and trainings on LADA / WOCAT tools at Souss-Massa  7 best practices and 3 approaches submitted and published at WOCAT SLM Platform  Synthesis report "Evaluation de la dégradation des terres et la promotion des meilleures pratiques de GDT au niveau de la région Souss-Massa/Maroc" published  Experience sharing at COP13 & a regional workshop on SFA, as well as in the FAO Land and Water Day in Cairo March 2019  Provided experience sharing for a Sudanese delegation in April 2019
<b>Nigeria</b>	Nigeria has not started the project execution.						

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
<b>Panama</b>	<p>Strategy prepared and Soil Law project proposal underway</p> <p>SLM practices economic assessment and financial mechanism consultancy study used to feed discussions for the creation of a new Ministry of Environment trust fund (fideicomiso)</p>	<p>Subnational Assessment in the Herrera province, with support from Cuba</p>	<p>Parita y Tonosi watersheds as pilot sites</p>	<p>Local Assessment using QM tool in the pilot sites</p>	<p>Watershed committee's creation and kick off, including its regulation</p>	<p>SLM practices implemented in both pilot sites</p> <p>Capacity building of local stakeholders (farmers mainly)</p>	<p>Capacity building and dissemination events at national level</p>
<b>Philippines</b>	<p>Integrated Land Management Framework Plan and Guidelines for Mainstreaming Integrated Land Management Framework/Sustainable land Management (ILMF/SLM) into the Comprehensive Land Use Plans of LGUs finalised</p> <p>Comprehensive Land Use Planning tested in 2 LGUs in the South</p> <p>Mainstreaming of SLM into the Strategic Plans of Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) piloted</p>	<p>Assessment of land degradation hotspots done using Land Use System Map</p> <p>Two consultation meeting and two workshops conducted</p>	<p>Assessment of priority river basin and delineation of provinces within the river basin under LDN</p>	<p>SLM best practices selected: Vegetative strips, sloping agricultural land technology, Rainwater harvesting, Multi storey, Stonewall terraces, Watershed forest, Agro-forestry</p> <p>16 demonstration farms established in different regions to showcase the SLM best practices</p>	<p>Effective soil and water conservation approaches and technologies for broader adoption promoted LGUs in the promotion and implementation of soil and water conservation measures at the local level capacitated</p>	<p>Implementation of SLM was initiated in sloping areas being cultivated to herbicide-resistant corn varieties</p> <p>Conducted awareness-raising and advocacy campaign through technology briefing to 850 farmers and agricultural technicians as participants; Conducted 11 specialized capacity building activities on soil</p>	<p>Documented 22 technologies and 9 approaches covering five ecosystems</p> <p>3 technologies and 9 approaches published under the WOCAT Platform</p> <p>Conducted trainings and workshops on WOCAT SLM documentation tools, processes and methodologies</p> <p>Developed decision support tool in Java script</p> <p>Developed a spreadsheet on Financial Analysis as another decision support tool in the selection of appropriate SLM practices</p> <p>Produced a compilation of SLM practices summarising case studies (WOCAT format), 600 printed copies</p> <p>Generated IEC materials in form of leaflets/flyers in English and translated to three local dialects</p>

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
						conservation and management Testing 21 SLM technologies and practices	Processed documentation which can be accessed through Youtube Established on-line database on SLM knowledge management: <a href="http://www.bswm.da.gov.ph/philcat-slm/">http://www.bswm.da.gov.ph/philcat-slm/</a>
<b>Thailand</b>	Mainstreaming strategy formulated with focus on:  Promotion and facilitation of innovative financing mechanisms and incentives to support farmers and land users to adopt SLM practices; e.g. working with Agriculture Bank of Thailand to provide incentives to farmers  Integration of SLM best practices into land use planning at sub-district, local and farm levels  Promoting inter-institutional dialogue on SLM  Building partnerships	Land Use System (LUS) maps of Thailand and LUS administrative maps developed	Identification of bright spots and hotspots  A multi-disciplinary expert group will select agro-ecosystems / landscapes (not yet done)	Adaptation of Training modules on LADA and QA & QT for Thailand context  Training of trainers on LADA & LD Mapping (QM) and QA/QT by national consultants among LDD 12 Regional Offices and sub-stations  Documentation of at least 40 SLM good practices (not yet done)	Not yet done	Identify three demonstration sites (not yet done)	1 technology and 1 approach published under the WOCAT Platform  National on-line database & inventory of existing data and tools  Mobile application on QA & QT  Regional partnership networking exchanges: biochar with Indonesia, regional forum, exchange visit in the Philippines
<b>Tunisia</b>	Mainstreaming strategy produced  Financing mechanism DGFIOF	Assessment of Land Degradation at national / subnational levels done and	Local scale mapping done to target the selected priority landscapes for the	LD and SLM evaluated and participatory expert assessment workshops done	Sandy soil amendment selected for application through consultation	Demonstration sites selected and training organised	World Soils Day organised in 2017  12 technologies and 14 approaches published under the WOCAT Platform  Regional demonstration visits

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
		2 maps produced  Four evaluation studies on goods practices produced	implementation of good practices	Four best practices selected	meetings at different levels		
<b>Turkey</b>	SLM Upscaling Strategy formulated	Not addressed under this project; well established already	Karapinar basin area selected to work with private sector	The Great Konya Basin in Central Anatolia has been the area selected for evaluation. SLM assessment tools training and introduction done.	A "techno-economic" farm was selected to showcase SLM practices	Existing policy tools, territorial strategies, incentives and financing mechanisms are used to promote SLM practices.	Exchange of experiences with other countries, including during the workshop and training course in Uzbekistan  Two field trips with experts and to inform local actors about sustainable land, water and forest management
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Operational strategy and targeted action plan for mainstreaming and scaling out at local level finalised  Assessment of SLM policies, legislative and institutional frameworks and national sector programs done	LUS maps developed for 2 project regions  National Soil Organic Carbon Map developed  DLDD assessment at national level done	2 regions selected: (i) rainfed lands in the southern semi-desert region (Kashkadarya), (ii) irrigated croplands in salt-affected areas in central semi-desert region (Djizak)	Assessments done and SLM options formed, long list of 60 technologies and 5 approaches prepared and selection of 11 technologies for scaling out by a workshop	Local participatory land use planning done using FAO PLUD approach in selected 4 local communities (151 participants including 39 women)  Limiting factors and barriers identified and respective strategy prepared	TOT workshops (10) and trainings of target groups of FAO FFS in project area provided to 216 participants including 62 women  Stimulation of 133 local households for upscaling agroforestry with 2500 almond and fruit seedlings	11 technologies published under the WOCAT Platform  Publication of project results and sharing experiences in forums and conferences  Global Landscapes Forum 2018 Bonn  10th International Soil Science Congress in 2018 Almaty  XI Congress of Ukraine Soil Scientists 2018 Kharkiv

Country	Module 1. Mainstreaming strategy	Module 2. National assessment	Module 3. Landscape selection	Module 4. Subnational	Module 5. Territorial planning	Module 6. Implementation	Module 7. Knowledge Management
						Demonstration of 4 technologies at 2 project sites	

Source: adapted by the TE team using mainly material compiled by Soledad Bastidas, DS-SLM Consultant

**Finding 6. Project triggered positive regional and country-to-country cooperation (south-south), particularly in training and capacity building from more experienced countries to less experienced ones.**

83. Several project countries have benefitted from regional and / or country-to-country cooperation. Some of the cooperation was generated at the project countries' own initiative, but under the framework and general support of the project, e.g. in Latin America the countries contacted Cuba, which was a LADA country, and also China was proactive by its own initiative. The Uzbekistan trainings and visits were promoted and supported by the PCU to speed up the project in Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Colombia, Ecuador and specially Panama benefitted from the alliance with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba, whose specialists played a role of technical advisors. Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina benefitted from trainings and field visits organized by the project in Uzbekistan.
84. South-South cooperation was echoed during the Asian SLM Forum organized by DS-SLM in Thailand in January 2019 and attended by 9 countries from the Asian and Pacific Region. The Region has been proactively advocating for strategic South-South Cooperation opportunities particularly in the context of capacity development and learning opportunities. For example, Thailand benefitted from training and guidance given by China and from a study tour to the Philippines, the Philippines learnt from Thailand (use of vetiver grass).
85. Some countries (e.g. Morocco) have also received missions from third countries to learn from project experiences, thus the project has presumably had also a wider impact beyond the project countries.
86. In Latin American project countries, according to interviewees in the four countries as well as most of the producers in the pilot sites in Panama, the project contributed to reduce migration from the countryside to the cities. Small producers and farmers usually leave the countryside when their production systems cease to be profitable, in many cases due to the degradation of the soil. The project offered an alternative to small producers of degraded sites, by implementing SLM practices that helped them increase production and improve the flow of ecosystem services. Finding statistical evidence to proof this opinion of the interviewees is beyond the scope of the TE, and thus the opinion is just recorded here in view of possible further analytical work by other projects or research groups.
87. In Argentina, given its participation in the LADA project, the methodology for assessing land degradation was upgraded. The baseline of land use systems and their functional degradation was updated using improved information, which was validated by specialists. For the validation process, three online applications were developed, which allowed the validation of the LUS, QM and LDN models, which are part of the LADA WOCAT Platform. These applications, developed by national technicians, are simple and low-cost tools, that allowed the collection of systematic and objective information, facilitating the analysis and interpretation of results. The adjustment of the LADA WOCAT methodology and the use of internet-based applications for the validation process of the degradation map are considered positive and un-intended results. It is planned to publish these results, with the idea

that other actors can develop similar processes, with the human and technological resources available in each institution and country.

88. In Panama, an un-intended result is the consolidation of two groups of young agro-environmental leaders, from agrotechnical schools, who were trained in the use of drones to monitor the land use and land degradation.
89. In some countries (e.g. Lesotho, Morocco, Thailand) the project has triggered cooperation and co-financing with other existing projects. For example, in Morocco practically all field implementation of SLM demonstrations have been financed by other projects (by Government, UNDP, GTZ, national financing agencies, etc.) which has (i) allowed much more significant outreach than the small project budget would have allowed, and (ii) fostered inter-institutional partnerships that are likely to be highly useful also in the future in SLM mainstreaming and up-scaling. This excellent cooperation was possible due to the well-functioning inter-institutional Project Task Force in Morocco. The Task Force enabled the exchange of information between different projects and financiers as well as on funding opportunities related to SLM best practises and their piloting / demonstration. The project's own resources alone would not have allowed such broad and well-organised piloting work. In Lesotho, the Lesotho Soil Information System (LESIS) under project, also implemented by the Ministry of Forestry, purchased equipment for laboratory, GPSs, computers, GIS server and a plotter. Cooperation with LESIS initiative made it easy for the DS-SLM project to have maps, make soil and water analyses in laboratories. LESIS also hired temporary staff in a laboratory to conduct analyses which DS-SLM project also was able to use freely.
90. In Thailand the project became a national project although the original intention was to focus only on a one watershed. Thus, the project impact in Thailand has become larger than originally planned. Some SLM technologies identified were such that the farmers had been using them but for the Land Development Department (LDD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives they had been unknown before the project.
91. In some countries (e.g. Bangladesh) the tools and SLM technologies produced by the DS-SLM project are going to be used in other larger projects, including investment projects financed e.g. by the World Bank, and projects implemented in landscapes affected by migration/refugee settlements.
92. In Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska the mainstreaming strategy prepared under the project lead to the increased appreciation of the Institute of Agroecology and Soil Science of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Banja Luka by the government of the country. This led the government to commission to the University the preparation of the RS entity Strategy on SLM.

**Finding 7. Global element of the project has facilitated broadening the perspectives (mainstreaming, strategies, up-scaling) of otherwise very technical work by technical staff.**

93. The good quality of the technical expertise and technical know-how provided by FAO and WOCAT was quoted by many interviewees (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia and Uzbekistan) as an important factor behind project achievements. The quality of FAO & WOCAT technical experts visiting the countries and the quality of trainings provided were rated as good.

94. In the Latin American project countries, the technical project teams and their networks, at national, regional and local level, have been a key factor that has contributed to the results achieved that can be attributed to the project. In general terms, the synergies and alliances with institutions, programs and projects working on SLM, have contributed significantly to the achievement of results.
95. Another key factor for Latin American project countries was the alliance with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba, whose specialists played a role of technical advisors, promoting the exchange of experiences and information among Latin American project countries.

**Finding 8. Expectations on the global platform vary: database is in general highly regarded and appreciated but some countries expect more dynamic exchange of experiences & sharing technical information.**

96. The WOCAT inputs to (i) the project's conceptual development (Project Modules and their contents), (ii) the development of and training on the LADA / WOCAT tools, and (iii) and the Knowledge component of the project have been generally highly appreciated. The WOCAT inputs to making the SLM Platform operational have been appreciated generally, but some country stakeholders had expected more in terms of an interactive forum to exchange experiences and information. Several interviews confirmed that such dynamic element of the Platform had been discussed during the project implementation, but it was not implemented under the present project due to the lack budget.
97. The expectations in relation to the LADA WOCAT Platform vary among actors. The platform is visualized as a global database, which will remain beyond the life of the project, so they consider it important to incorporate the information generated in the pilot sites of each country, to ensure its future availability. Many countries (Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan) mentioned that the platform has been very useful, and in some countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Morocco) there is evidence that some land users / land investors / financiers have learnt about the platform due to the DS-SLM project and are now actively and regularly using it for their own purposes.
98. Some actors (e.g. Argentina, Thailand, Tunisia) propose that the platform should be more interactive and user friendly (simplified questionnaire for farmers as the present WOCAT questionnaire is too academic), allowing a greater exchange of experiences and dynamic discussions. WOCAT representatives were aware of such expectations which were active in 2016, but they underlined that the project's financial resources were not sufficient to allow staff costs that would have been required for the introduction of a dynamic element (e.g. questions and answers, moderated discussion forum, inter-active blog, etc.) in the platform.
99. At the time of the FE, the WOCAT Platform had under the DS-SLM project search criteria 42 SLM technologies and 27 approaches published of which 1 technology



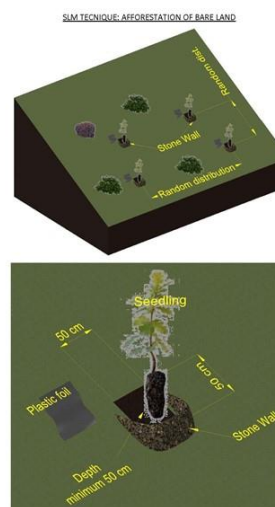
from Bosnia and Herzegovina R S and 2 technologies from FBiH, 5 technologies from Colombia, 7 technologies and 3 approaches from Morocco, 3 technologies and nine approaches from the Philippines, 1 technology and 1 approach from Thailand, 12 technologies and 14 approaches from Tunisia, and 11 technologies from Uzbekistan. Text box 3 and Text box 4 below present brief summaries of two examples of published SLM technologies.

### Text box 3 Technical Specifications- Afforestation of bare land in karst areas, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The natural conditions of the Herzegovinian karst greatly reduce the range of plant species that could be considered for afforestation. Also, limestone-dolomite soils are usually shallow, dry and xero-termophilic and require irrigation to increase success. Container seedlings whose root system is coated with high quality substrate and protected by plastic foil have been used for afforestation.

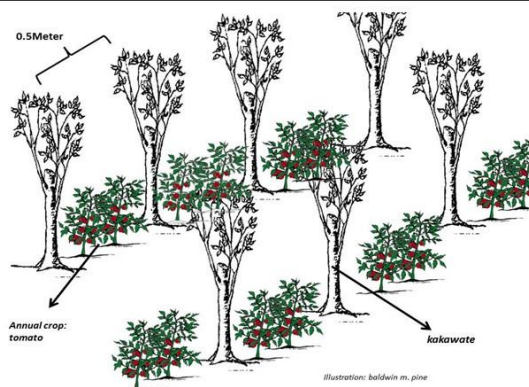
The dimensions of each hole are 50x50x50cm. Due to the unfavorable conditions (high level of rockiness, shallow soils, steep slopes, water deficit etc.), around 1150-1400 trees can be planted per hectare. This technology requires manual work, without any use of machines, due to steep slopes and high rockiness. A stone wall is being built at the lower part of the mountain which acts as a barrier. The role of this barrier is to slow down the water movement down the slope and retain the soil moisture. After having planted the tree polyvinyl foil has been placed in funnel form, to collect rain and create a compact compound of the substrate in the touching zone with the soil around the root. For the Herzegovina area, the best time for afforestation is October and November.

Afforested plants have to be protected from animals at least for the first 3 years. Also, fertilization is applied once per year and mechanic weed control techniques are used for plant protection and treatment of soil surface.



### Text box 4 Technical Specifications - Highly Diversified Cropping in Live Trellis System, Philippines

Kakawate cuttings are planted with an estimated planting distance of 0.5 m to 1 m. They are trimmed and maintained at around 3 meters high for every 3-6 months or as needs arise. In between the kakawate are annual crops like tomato, chayote, beans, cucumber, lettuce and cabbages which are planted in rotation depending on the season.



## 4.4 Efficiency of the project implementation and execution

3.1 How did the project's design, management and execution, institutional arrangements, partnerships, knowledge management and communications, and the financial and human resources available contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?

3.2 To what extent has the management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?

3.3 To what extent were the recommendations provided by the MTE addressed in the second phase of the project?

**Finding 9. The PCU performance, efficiency and responsiveness at FAO headquarters has been considered by many stakeholders as efficient and responsive whereas others as non-responsive and slow, and apparently there has been some persistent communication problems. FAO administration rules are found complicated and cumbersome by some countries.**

100. Most of the interviewed National Project Coordinators (Bosnia and Herzegovina, both entities, China, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan) considered FAO's Project Coordination Unit and the Project Manager as efficient and responsive. According to other countries and the FAO GEF Coordination Unit, there has been communication problems and lack of responsiveness by the PCU, thus hindering the achievement of results and objectives. Particularly, the Latin American countries project team members, considered that the Project Coordination Unit, located at FAO Rome, didn't provide the coordination and technical support expected. These problems seem to be, at least partly, due to the understaffing of the PCU compared to the amount of work.
101. The technical support, assistance and training (i.e. the knowledge inputs) provided by the PCU in terms of visiting experts, both from FAO and WOCAT, has been highly appreciated by several countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina both entities, Morocco, Thailand). It was also mentioned that the visits of FAO experts increased the positive attention to the project by the decision makers.
102. The efficiency and / or responsiveness of some FAO country or regional offices were criticized by some of the interviewees. The country / regional offices were mainly involved in administrative and financial matters. The TE was informed that the links with Country Offices can help to a) communicate key messages from the project to policy makers at the national level; b) create within FAO a virtuous circle of lessons learnt across countries and; c) enhance quality of project delivery and sustainability of results from the capitalization of Country Offices' knowledge of the context and technical expertise.
103. The necessity to establish bilateral Government Cooperation Programme (GCP) agreements between FAO and the project countries (well documented by the MTE) as well as Work Plans and Letters of Agreement (LoA) before the project start-up in a country, has clearly delayed significantly the project's execution in some countries, notably in Colombia, Bangladesh, Lesotho, Thailand and Turkey. This issue is particularly relevant in global projects with fairly large number of project countries and thus a large number of separate agreements to be negotiated and signed. According to interviews, it appears to be common that there are delays in project start-up in FAO implemented global / regional GEF-financed projects. The TE was informed that there is an alternative implementation modality<sup>19</sup>, Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) under the FAO Manual Section 701, that can be suggested as an implementation modality for similar projects. For smaller

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<sup>19</sup> See e.g. <http://www.fao.org/europe/events/detail-events/en/c/898150/>

amounts (e.g. up to 200,000 USD) the signing of a Letter of Agreement (LoA) would be the appropriate instrument to implement the project at country level.

104. Some countries (e.g. Lesotho, Thailand) mentioned that FAO administrative rules are complicated and cumbersome and hindered the implementation to some degree. Similarly, another interviewee mentioned that a major challenge for FAO is to work with countries on project management because FAO lacks service orientation; the country governments are clients of FAO, but there are so many complicated rules by the administration that the sense of service orientation is lost, and the transaction costs are high.
105. There has been some unclarities on the roles of, and communication problems with FAO country and / or regional offices. The key issue seems to be the role of FAO Country or Regional offices in a centrally (headquarters) implemented project, and the availability of project financing (recording working time and field trip travel costs) for oversight at a Country or Regional Office. Some Country Office Focal Points mentioned that they did not have any budget allocation to provide support to the project<sup>20</sup> whereas PCU informed that such allocations / rights to record project costs had been given. Apparently, there seems to have been lack of communication / misunderstandings. It must be mentioned also that some interviewed Country office Focal Points told that the roles and responsibilities have been very clear and there has been no problems and the communication with HQs has been prompt and good.
106. Some high-level interviewees commented that the project management's time and energy appear to have gone to solving daily problems and doing necessary chores (which they however understood as the project has been complex) and less attention has been given to "bigger picture". The opportunity to make a real difference in terms of getting global and / or high-level attention to project's objectives and potential impacts, as well as to best results of the project may have lost. FAO's good expertise in SLM is still appreciated in the project countries (ref. evaluation interviews) but the opportunity to become a globally recognized knowledge centre in SLM / LDN was not achieved by FAO during the project. One interviewee expressed that "the project management lacked leadership and vision".
107. At the time of the evaluation, the review of financial records as recorded in the FAO FPMIS indicates that the actual expenditures disbursed against the GEF grant from May 2015 to end of May 2019 represent about 97% (USD 5,927,620) of the approved budget of USD 6,116,730. Unspent balance of the project was about 190,000 USD at the end of May 2019. The PCU is confident that all funds will be spent by the end of October. The breakdown of project expenditures by country and by FAO so far is presented in the table below.

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<sup>20</sup> The FE was informed that funding should not be a precondition of engagement by Country Offices. Involvement can also take other forms beyond the administrative support. This can include discussions with Country Offices during the project design phase to ascertain relevance of the project to the work of the Country Office, engaging the Country Office in relevant activities during project implementation, ensuring the Country Office is provided copies of relevant publications and awareness raising tools, and briefing the Country Office at the conclusion of the project.

**Table 4 Financial Status as of 31 May 2019 in USD<sup>21</sup>**

	GEF-5 STAR allocation	Expenditures + Commitments	HQ Exp. for Countries	Total	Balance	Delivery (%)
Argentina	79 118	69 608	4 449	74 058	5 060	94 %
Bangladesh	250 000	215 108	9 106	224 214	25 786	90 %
Bosnia & Herzegovina	290 000		278 832	278 832	11 168	96 %
China	131 364		114 570	114 570	16 794	87 %
Colombia	209 839	221 861		221 861	-12 022	106 %
Ecuador	86 000	89 974		89 974	-3 974	105 %
Lesotho	303 500	149 908	9 123	159 031	144 469	52 %
Morocco	309 182	231 075	21 272	252 347	56 835	82 %
Nigeria	86 500		11 923	11 923	74 577	14 %
Panama	448 636	411 400	11 974	423 374	25 262	94 %
Philippines	41 000	20 755	5 486	26 240	14 760	64 %
Thailand	1 328 545	1 295 346	6 929	1 302 275	26 270	98 %
Tunisia	131 364	57 240	64 965	122 205	9 159	93 %
Turkey	86 000	31 711	8 251	39 962	46 038	46 %
Uzbekistan	171 818	170 787	758	171 545	273	100 %
Subtotal Countries	3 952 866	2 964 773	547 638	3 512 411	440 455	89 %
HQ	2 163 864	2 962 847	-547 638	2 415 209	-251 345	112 %
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>6 116 730</b>	<b>5 927 620</b>		<b>5 927 620</b>	<b>189 110</b>	<b>97 %</b>

Source: financial reports from FAO Headquarters

108. At the country level, the level of disbursements of the respective STAR allocations varies a lot but it is in line with the progress made in each country. According to the table above, the rate of disbursement varies from 46% in the case of Turkey (excluding Nigeria which is an outlier<sup>22</sup>) to 106% in Colombia. Overall, 89% of the participating countries STAR allocations have been disbursed (USD 3.51M of USD 3.95M) so far, and HQ has also absorbed costs that were incurred by direct country support missions and international consultancies.

**Finding 10. Institutional arrangements have varied a lot from country to country, which is a positive reflection of flexibility and project's ability to adjust to country situations. In general, the established institutional arrangements have been contributing positively to the project implementation. Partnerships, either established already before or during the project, have been instrumental for the achievement of results.**

109. The institutional agreements in general for the project and partnerships established in the countries, including the institutional arrangements for the coordination and implementation of the project, contributed positively to the achievement of the objectives and proposed results. Practically all the project countries underlined the important role of the established partnerships. In some countries (e.g. Morocco) the partnerships have led e.g. to accessing significant additional financing to project field demonstration activities.

<sup>21</sup> The column "HQ Exp. for Countries" refers to expenditures that have entered the system with the HQ budget code but should have been charged to the respective country code.

<sup>22</sup> Nigeria participated in the first global meeting of the project but according to the information received from the PCU, the National Coordinator resigned after that and Nigeria did not nominate a new National Project Coordinator, and the contacts with Nigeria stopped.

110. The institutional home of the project and the project coordinator varies significantly from country to country but no correlation between the successfulness of the project execution and the institutional home can be drawn. For example, in Argentina and Panama, the project coordinator is part of the environmental authority, in Argentina the Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development (SADS) of the Nation, and in Panama, the Ministry of the Environment. In Colombia and Ecuador, the project coordinator is based in FAO and has a support team in a national government institution, the Rural Agricultural Planning Unit (UPRA), a technical unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) in Colombia and the Ministry of the Environment (MAE) in Ecuador. In Bangladesh the project coordinator is a staff of Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change. In Morocco the project coordinator is part of Agadir Provincial Directorate of Water, Forests and Fight Against Deforestation. In Uzbekistan the project coordinator is technical director of a scientific research & design and surveying institute. In those countries where the project coordinator and the National Project Coordination Unit is embedded in a national or regional / local level government department / unit, the sustainability of the arrangement can be assessed to be better (see finding 29 under section 3.9 Sustainability).
111. In Argentina, the role given to SLM specialized human resources stands out, including technicians, academics and researchers from different institutions, who were grouped into four committees or commissions (*ad doc*) within the Observatory to work on project implementation.

**Finding 11. The Project Coordination Unit of FAO headquarters was too thinly resourced and in general the project's budget for management and coordination was too tight in view of the project size and complexity.**

112. Some countries, (e.g. Thailand and Turkey) noted that the FAO PCU was understaffed particularly in view of the project's scope (15 countries widely scattered) and complexity. Some interviewees noted that the GEF's decision to cut the regional coordination units and to reduce the project management staff and budget was a mistake that reduced the project's capacity to achieve results and impacts.
113. GEF rules allowed earlier 6% and now 5% of the project GEF financing to be used for project management and coordination<sup>23</sup>. This allocation appears to be same for all projects regardless the complexity of the project, i.e. the same percentage is applied for both national and global projects, although the management and coordination requirements and the levels of challenges are quite different in diverse types of projects. It is clear that the "transaction costs" are higher in global projects than in national ones.
114. Similarly, the budget allocation for technical assistance was small compared to the country requirements in this kind of a project where new concepts and planning frameworks are introduced to organisations that have not prior experience of similar

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<sup>23</sup> Information received from FAO GEF Unit.

processes, and whose capacities need strengthening in terms of training and technical assistance.

115. The project countries understood well the reason for fairly small project budget at country level, and they adapted to the available financing. The financing, even if small, was not criticized. However, several country representatives mentioned that they could have achieved much more if the financing had allowed. Particularly, scaling up was pointed as a topic which suffered from limited funds.
116. In Morocco the project team succeeded to access additional financing from national project partners.
117. In Argentina, the committees or work teams, led by the main project partners, fostered collaborative work and capacity building among governmental, academic, scientific and technical institutions, consolidating an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary specialized SLM team.
118. In Colombia, the evaluation of the degradation at the national level was not carried out, given that the resources assigned to the project and the socio-ecosystem diversity of the country did not allow to carry out the exercise with quality standards. In Ecuador, the project did not implement SLM practices in pilot sites due to the lack of financial resources.

**Finding 12. Flexibility of the project has been important allowing to adapt to realities and changing conditions. The DSF is an important element of this flexibility.**

119. The original project design did not include modular implementation approach which is inbuilt in the DSF. The seven modules were introduced during the inception phase. This innovation allowed during the course of the project implementation is considered by many interviewees as instrumental and positive to the success of project implementation. The modular DSF of the DS-SLM project could well be useful also in other countries and could be advocated.
120. The delays in getting the GCP agreements and LOAs signed in some countries, and the subsequent delay in starting project activities necessitated extension of the project which was accepted twice, i.e. the project duration was extended by 50% from 3 years to 4.5 years which is cited as a credit to the project management by several interviewees. The other side of the coin was that the project did not have the required Results-Based Budget which makes it difficult to assess the opportunity cost of the two extensions.

**Finding 13. The GEF co-financing concept appears to be difficult to understand and the actual spent amounts difficult to estimate by several project countries**

121. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project were USD 38,097,347 (see *table below*), which represented over 86% of the total amount USD 44,214,077 of the resources allocated in the project document for the implementation of the project. The co-financing status reported by the project countries at the end of June 2019 is presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 Co-financing Status as of 30 June 2019 in USD**

Partners	Type	Co-financing at CEO Endorsement	Actual as of June 30. 2019	% actual/ committed	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
Argentina	In-kind/Cash	270,318	113,539	42%	270,318
Bangladesh	In-kind	610,000	40,099	7%	610,000
Bosnia & Herzegovina	In-kind/Cash	990,000	1,319,951	133%	1,319,951
China	In-kind	700,000	200,000	29%	700,000
Colombia	In-kind	560,000	669,304	120%	669,304
Ecuador	In-kind/Cash	300,000	345,483	115%	450,483
Lesotho	In-kind/Cash	950,000	946,000	100%	950,000
Morocco	In-kind	950,000	29,000	3%	950,000
Nigeria	In-kind	18,400,000			
Panama	In-kind	2,040,000	750,400	37%	2,040,000
Philippines	In-kind	181,394	338,394	187%	338,394
Thailand	In-kind	3,985,635	3,271,659	82%	3,985,635
Tunisia	In-kind	430,000	142,000	33%	430,000
Turkey	In-kind	200,000	200,000	100%	200,000
Uzbekistan	In-kind	150,000	193,120	129%	201,620
<b>Subtotal Countries</b>		<b>30,717,347</b>	<b>8,558,949</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>13,115,705</b>
<b>WOCAT</b>	<b>In-kind/Cash</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>
<b>FAO (HQ)</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	<b>1,060,000</b>	<b>1,253,042</b>	<b>118%</b>	<b>1,290,000</b>
<b>FAO (Field Projects)</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>38,097,347</b>	<b>16,131,991</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>20,725,705</b>

Source: PIR 2019

122. At the end of June 2019, the official reported co-financing by the 15 project countries was only 28% of the committed (co-financing at the CEO endorsement) amounts. Other project partners, WOCAT and FAO (headquarters and field projects recorded separately) have reported 100% or more (118% by the FAO headquarters) use of the co-financing. The project total co-financing use was 42% which can be considered very low. However, the single most important factor behind the low reported use of co-financing is fact that Nigeria did not really start the project implementation, and thus Nigeria's very large (18,4 million USD) co-financing commitment did not materialise at all. When Nigeria is eliminated from the co-financing status analysis, the actuals become more reasonable; see Table 6 below.

**Table 6 Co-financing Status as of 30 June 2019 in USD without Nigeria**

Partners	Co-financing at CEO Endorsement	Actual as of June 30. 2019	% actual/ committed
<b>Subtotal Countries without Nigeria</b>	<b>12,317,347</b>	<b>8,558,949</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>WOCAT</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>FAO (HQ)</b>	<b>1,060,000</b>	<b>1,253,042</b>	<b>118%</b>
<b>FAO (Field Projects)</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,697,347</b>	<b>16,131,991</b>	<b>82%</b>



Source: calculated by the TE team from the official figures in Table 5.

123. After eliminating Nigeria from the co-financing table, the actuals / committed of remaining 14 countries was 69% and the total actuals / committed was 82%, still a bit low in a terminal evaluation.
124. The official (reported) co-financing figures indicate a large variation in co-financing actuals / committed, ranging from 3% (Morocco) to 187% (the Philippines). Some of the countries with lower than 100% actuals are late starters such as Bangladesh and Thailand. In some others (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia, China, Panama) there seem to be estimation and reporting problems. Several countries have reported over 100% actuals which is likely to be correct, at least partly due to the nature of the project which aims at mainstreaming and up-scaling SLM, using national, regional or local government financing, or financing from other partners and projects. Successful execution of the project will trigger much larger downstream SLM investments and other expenses, some of which could be considered as co-financing during the project period.
125. The co-financing concept as defined in the GEF projects appears to be difficult to understand as there seem to be difficulties by several countries in estimating and reporting the actual use of co-financing. Based on TE field observations and other information from interviews and documentary sources, it is quite obvious that some countries (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia, China, Panama) have been under-reporting the actuals.
126. Co-financing has been particularly important for the project implementation in countries such as Morocco, the Philippines, Thailand. In all these countries, the interviewees mentioned that there has been high country ownership of the project because of the significant co-financing. Yet the official reporting of the co-financing in countries is lacking behind.

**Finding 14. The recommendations of MTE are not known by all countries; no major changes in implementation efficiency observed by countries after MTE.**

127. When the MTE was carried out (first quarter 2018), all the Latin American project countries as well as Uzbekistan had already implemented most of the proposed project actions, which is stated in the evaluation report, so when they received the MTE recommendations, they considered that these did not affect the implementation and results of the project in their countries. They also did not receive feedback from the Project Coordination Unit regarding the recommendations received and how they would be put into practice.
128. Some countries (Bangladesh, Morocco, the Philippines, Tunisia) mentioned that they had not received or did not see the MTE report nor its recommendations<sup>24</sup>. Lesotho noted that as they had not really started that time the project the recommendations

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<sup>24</sup> All the project countries / National Project Coordinators have been on the delivery list, but there may be various reasons why the report has not been received or seen: e.g. the email has gone to trash folder, email inbox has been full, etc.

could not be used. Bosnia and Herzegovina both entities, China and Uzbekistan noted that they received the MTE report (however, Uzbekistan noted that they did not receive the annexes which contained e.g. the MTE field mission report to Uzbekistan which they did not ever see) and used the recommendations to modify and speed up the project implementation at national level. Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic of Srpska was of the opinion that after the MTE project implementation by FAO and WOCAT speeded up in RS. Thailand and Turkey had received the report but because they had just recently started, the report was not really relevant to their situations. The observed (by the TE) improvement of execution effectiveness in the countries cannot be attributed to any follow-up actions on MTE recommendations.

129. Specifically, in the Latin American project countries, according to stakeholders interviewed, the recommendations of the MTE did not affect the implementation of the project, nor did they bring about changes in the relationship with the Project Coordination Unit.
130. Table below assesses the implementation of the MTE recommendations. The assessment is done by the TE as the PCU was not able to provide such an assessment despite several attempts. The TE could not find evidence on improvement of implementation efficiency of the project since the MTE.

**Table 7 Assessment of the implementation of MTE recommendations**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Recommendation 1 To the Project Implementation Team (PCU)	The project implementation team needs to be more responsive to country-based implementation teams requests. It is suggested for instance that a brief project update should be sent electronically to all once a month and quarterly reports should be exchanged with each participating country using a basic one-page template listing key activities implemented the past quarter and an update on the GEF grant budget obtained from the FPMIS.	Not done.
Recommendation 2 To the Project Implementation Team (PCU) and PSC	A greater focus on sustainability and upscaling project achievements during the last period of this project is necessary. The assumption that upscaling SLM practices can be achieved through mainstreaming SLM approaches into sectoral policies is valid but the mainstreaming strategy formulated in the project document is not convincing. Improving national policy frameworks and the adoption of best practices by users are difficult results to be achieved; and "unleashing" funding from regular national government budgets is even more difficult. The implementation strategy documented in the project document, focusing mostly on some training and implementation of pilot sites will not be enough. Discussions with participating countries on exit strategies are needed to identify what the project could support to improve the likelihood of project achievements to be sustained over the long term.	Expert support provided for the preparation of national mainstreaming strategies in several countries. Exit strategy discussions with project countries started in April 2019 in the Ankara meeting.
Recommendation 3 To the Project Implementation Team (PCU) and PSC	More PSC meetings (2-3?) are recommended during the last year of the project, focusing on the project exit.	One PSC meeting organised in April 2019 in Ankara. GEF Unit informed the TE that 2 remote PSCs were planned in December 2018 to communicate and discuss results from the MTR exercise. This was an explicit request by the GEF Coordination unit, in an attempt to improve communication with countries, and share the management response and actions in response to MTR

		recommendations. It is not well understood why these video conference PSC meetings did not take place.
Recommendation 4. To the Project Implementation Team (PCU) and PSC	Increase the financial transparency of the project disbursements and the reliability of the information to produce timely and accurate financial reports per project outcome. It is necessary for an implementing agency to rely on a financial system producing transparent and reliable project financial reports.	No evidence provided to verify any progress.
Recommendation 5 To the Project Implementation Team (PCU)	Strengthen the monitoring and reporting on gender disaggregated data and information. Gender disaggregated reporting on related outputs in the indicator tracking table should be made mandatory. Recording the participation of men and women land users in project activities at the land use level should be encouraged so as to get a better understanding of the impact of the project at the local level. This will also help to assess results in the final evaluation of the project. Countries that have just started implementing their project should consult with the Gender Focal Points in the FAO country offices in order to promote greater participation by men and women land users. Efforts can be made to identify the more vulnerable land users or communities in the project areas.	Some countries provide gender disaggregated data in their reports, but not all. No evidence provided on strong follow-up. Those countries that started the project implementation during 2018 had not contacted the Gender Focal Points in the FAO country offices.
Recommendation 6 To the Project Implementation Team (PCU)	Add and monitor the risk "weak coordination and networking hampering the exchange of knowledge and experiences among the Parties" to the project risks log; including the formulation of mitigation actions as needed. The lack of coordination and networking has been affecting the delivery of the project. Adding this risk log and monitoring it will allow the project implementation team to quicker act upon any deterioration of these critical functions of the project.	No evidence provided on the implementation.
Recommendation 7	Focus the global and regional project support on countries with the most needs, including Tunisia, Bosnia, Morocco, Thailand, China, Turkey, Philippines, Nigeria, Lesotho and Bangladesh.	Expert support was provided, after the MTE recommendation, at least to Bosnia, Morocco, Thailand, China, Turkey, Lesotho and Bangladesh and Tunisia.

To the Project Implementation Team (PCU) and PSC		
Recommendation 8 To FAO and CDE/WOCAT	Conduct an independent assessment of the DS-SLM methodological framework, including the LADA tools, LADA local and the WOCAT knowledge platform. The current focus is much on SLM tools and methodologies and training of stakeholders/SLM decision makers. It focuses more on land use and less on land users. There is a need to assess the implicit objective of this framework that by applying SLM best practices, land productivity and sustainability will increase, and by extension it is assumed that land users will benefit from this and sustain these practices.	According to the PCU, all tools and methodologies included in the DS-SLM project have been developed, tested, assessed and peer-reviewed under separate projects and programmes, often also including independent evaluations, and are generally accepted by countries and partners.  No independent assessment of the DS-SLM methodological framework, including the LADA tools, LADA local and the WOCAT knowledge platform, has been done as such.
Recommendation 9 To FAO and GEF	As an implementing agency, FAO needs to find a more efficient way to mobilize project financial resources to a project with a global reach; particularly when these resources are small grants. Within this project, the average budget per country is USD 263.5k, yet for each country, a GCP needed to be established and LOAs have been developed based on detailed work plans. The result is that "transaction costs" are very high for a limited value added to the project.	The TE was informed that FAO has been looking for solutions to avoid project specific GCP agreements, and to reduce transaction costs. However, no robust solution has been found and effected yet.

## 4.5 Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.1 How effective was the functioning of the project results-based M&E system to follow up progress?
- 4.2 How was the information from this system used to make timely decisions during project implementation?

**Finding 15. Project reporting system with templates and focusing on modules is considered clear and well-functioning. The original project results matrix (logical framework) contains overly ambitious indicators and goals.**

131. The project results-based M&E system, using pre-established formats, is clear, simple and functional. The follow up carried out by each country has focused on the implementation of the Decision Support Framework modules, a tool used to guide the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project (see Figure 2 in Section 4.3). This had led to the situation where the project's M&E system focused mainly on the project process and outputs instead of outcomes.
132. The project results matrix (logical framework) and the Table 2.3 of the project document contains overly ambitious indicators and targets in relation to the duration and budget available. Also, indicators aggregated at global/regional level over different countries, scales, and agro-ecosystems are difficult to monitor. Specifically, the targets related to Project Development Objective and Outcome 1.2 related to the increase of parameters such as land use productivity (10% increase by the end of the project), and the project country specific targets (in Table 2.3), such as increase in productivity, total carbon sequestration by the end of the project, increase in land cover by the end of the project, are difficult to achieve in a period of three years. On the other hand, the FAO GEF Unit informed the TE that a number of indicators in the results matrix are indicators mandatory to be monitored and reported against for the donor. These indicators are common to all GEF projects in the specific focal area and are used by the GEF to report on portfolio wide progress and achievements to its constituency.
133. The MTE found that there were too many indicators and many of the indicators are not SMART<sup>25</sup>. The present TE subscribes that finding but does not need to repeat it. In relation to this, the FAO GEF Unit further informed the TE that A M&E specialist was hired at the early stages of the project to rework the results matrix, and ensure that a solid baseline situation was provided, and countries were equipped to provide evidence of progress against a common set of indicators (for instance, all countries would use the same tool to report on carbon benefits). It is unclear what happened to the work of this consultant, and why the project entirely moved away from the results matrix in the project document agreed upon by the donor, FAO and all partners of the project. Furthermore, the GEF Unit informed that they had made several efforts to obtain FAO mandatory 6-monthly progress reports, all in vain.

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<sup>25</sup> MTE, p. 46.

134. In reality, the Global Environmental Objective and Global Development Objective related indicators of the results matrix have not been really monitored. Several targets that had not been specified in the project document, and there were just "XX" in the respective places in the results matrix with a note "To be defined during first phase of project ....". However, those targets were never defined, and they were thus not monitored.
135. Colombia was the only country that had reported data at the time of the TE, in the final national report, for the indicators of result 1.2, obtaining increases in carbon sequestration, vegetation cover and productivity of the pilot sites. The quantification of these values was possible thanks to the fact that the five pilot sites were previously linked to other projects coordinated by FAO, where SLM practices were already being implemented. The project focused on measuring and monitoring the SLM practices using impact indicators in accordance with the ones proposed in the project document.

**Finding 16. The decision-making process using the M&E information was not entirely clear.**

136. The M&E system has provided information from the countries to FAO HQs. The feedback to countries from FAO has been less clear. Country representatives told that the decision on project implementation at national level were decided by large extent by the National Project Coordinators, either independently or in consultation with their superiors and / or other national project partners, within the limits of approved budgets and transfers of funds by FAO.
137. The Project Steering committee had met only three time during the project implementation: at (i) the Global Inception Meeting, (ii) the Second Global Meeting of the Project in Rome in 2018, and (iii) the Third and Last Global Meeting of the Project in Ankara in 2019. The M&E system information has been used in these three meetings. Apparently, the limited number of Steering Committee meetings has been due to high costs involved in organizing such meetings for a project with 15 countries, 2 global level implementing partners (FAO and WOCAT) and a donor (GEF). The FAO GEF Unit informed the TE that at the first PSC meeting in Rome, it was decided that regular PSC meetings would take place via video conferencing. It was recognised that for a global project, regular exchanges amongst participating countries is fundamental. However, this decision was not implemented.
138. The MTE recommended more frequent Steering Committee meetings. This recommendation is at least partially implemented as two of the total three Steering Committee meetings were organized in the last year of the project.
139. The FAO GEF Unit had requested already before and again after the MTE once a month meeting with the PCU. Those meetings had not taken place. The FAO GEF Unit informed the TE team that they had not received the PPRs of the project.

## **4.6 Stakeholder engagement**

5.1 To what extent has the project engaged stakeholders – in particular farmers and herders, in pilot site management?
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- 5.2 To what extent does the project develop new partnerships or enhance existing ones?  
5.3 What linkages, if any, exist between the capacities developed among diverse types of stakeholders (government ownership, partnerships, capacity development)?  
5.4 How have stakeholders contributed to the results achieved?

**Finding 17. Stakeholder engagement has been adequate and extensive in general, with the exception of private sector involvement.**

140. Stakeholder involvement, including farmers and other local level stakeholders (CBOs, NGOs) has been broad and intensive in almost all the countries (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina (both entities), China, Colombia, Lesotho, Morocco, Panama, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan) to large extent thanks to the LADA / WOCAT assessment tools and FAO PLUD methodology, both of which have been widely utilised in the project. Stakeholders have been involved in workshops and trainings, as well as in the pilot / demonstration implementation.
141. In some countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic of Srpska, Morocco) the stakeholders (partner institutions including representatives of farmer organisations and NGOs as well as municipalities / local communities) have been involved from the very beginning of the project in planning and setting up project activities. On the other hand, e.g. in Panama, it was observed that the farmers, despite being totally motivated by the implementation of SLM practices, in some cases were not involved in the property planning phase, carried out prior by consultants. From the conversations held with them, is deduced that SLM practices will be maintained and expanded to the extent that they have a positive economic impact. The environmental impact may be reflected in variables such as increased productivity and improvements in the quality of production and ecosystem services, which is not always perceived by farmers.
142. In Argentina, Colombia, Morocco and Panama the farmers from the pilot sites, defined the SLM practices to be implemented in their farms assuming the responsibility to keep them.
143. Private sector<sup>26</sup> has been involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska, Turkey, the Philippines and Thailand, and to a limited extent also in Morocco. In most other countries, private sector has not been involved which could be considered as a mistake because, nevertheless, it is the private sector that takes many of the key decisions related to land use investments in most of the countries, including the project countries. In the interviews, many country representatives noted this omission

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<sup>26</sup> The **private sector** is the part of the economy which is owned by private individuals or groups. The private sector that is relevant in the context of SLM includes companies (small, medium and large / domestic, international and multinational) that finance, invest in and / or produce agricultural, agro-industrial, animal husbandry or forestry products. Private farmers (family farms) can be also considered part of private sector, but for analytical and planning reasons it is better to keep the family farmers and rest of the private sector separated as their behaviour and investment decision processes are typically different. From the SLM investment point of view, the whole production chain from field to markets is relevant as sustainably produced products need to reach the markets to make SLM-based production profitable and financially sustainable.



and e.g. In Morocco also the high-level government representatives interviewed mentioned that their intention is to involve the private sector in the "next stage of the project".

144. Several interviewees mentioned that, at hindsight, they now realise that the omission of banks / financiers and the private sector as a key stakeholders has been a mistake: "the project is talking about developing SLM technologies and best practices to be used by investors, but were are not involving them nor talking with them".

**Finding 18. Project has positively contributed to the development of new partnerships (inter-institutional & cross-sectoral). Inter-institutional partnerships have been key for successful implementation.**

145. In several countries (e.g. Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan) the project has succeeded establishing good inter-institutional partnerships that have been instrumental for the progress in mainstreaming and up-scaling of SLM. For example, in Morocco all the interviewed project partners from other sectors, agencies, academia or NGOs praised the good cooperation and transparent communication by the project's National Project Coordinator, and the project in Morocco has indeed secured good alliances and also significant co-financing from other national project partners. Also, in the Philippines cooperation with various other related projects was a significant contributing factor. Lesotho noted that the project revived the inter-ministerial good relations in the government sector.
146. In Argentina, the commitment of a group of technicians, academics and researchers from different governmental, academic, scientific and technical institutions, within the Observatory, stands out, who grouped together (*ad doc*) to develop a collaborative work, consolidating a specialized inter-institutional and interdisciplinary team. In the province of Entre Ríos, private actors such as the Rural Society and the Bolsa de Cereales began to take an interest in learning more about SLM and its impact on agricultural and livestock production; The Provincial Commission for Soil Conservation and Management, which brings together public and private actors, was also reactivated, which has defined soil conservation as one of its flagship.
147. In Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska farmers and agricultural company formed a public private partnership (PPP). The partnership building is based on trust that is gained little by little.
148. In Colombia, the project convened an institutional technical board with a consultative role, which gave guidance to the development of the subnational assessment. The board was inactive once the project finished, however some of its members expressed their interest in developing a roadmap that allows their reactivation. In the pilot sites, agreements were made between owners and private actors to purchase their production directly.
149. In Ecuador, the creation of an institutional working group, facilitated the development of the national assessment. The group disintegrated at the end of the project.

150. In Morocco, most of the interviewed project partners mentioned that this project has been innovative and transformational in the proactive manner it has brought relevant partners (government departments, other public agencies, financing institutions, research organisations, NGOs) together and fostered good cooperation. Here the secret for the success has been in the excellent communication and coordination capabilities of the National Project Coordinator.
151. In Panama, a framework cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Panama and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba, which facilitated the achievement of the results of the project and will allow the country to receive technical assistance beyond the project's closing date.

#### 4.7 Progress to impact

- 6.1 To what extent and how is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in national or sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks?
- 6.2 Is there any evidence of SLM mainstreaming at the decision-making level that can be attributed to the project?
- 6.3 Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term results? What is the likelihood of longer-term impacts of the project?

#### **Finding 19. Most countries are confident that the project will significantly contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in decision making at national and sub-national levels.**

152. In Argentina, local-level mainstreaming actions were developed in the two pilot sites. In the province of Entre Ríos stands out the proposal of a provincial law called Law of Promotion to the Agroecological Productive Systems, promoted by the provincial government. This normative proposal seeks the transition of the provincial production towards more sustainable practices. In the province of Salta, the municipality of Embarcación declared one of the SLM practices implemented in the pilot site of municipal interest.
153. In Bangladesh, the project has a good potential to have bigger impacts as there is evidence on high demand by various land users for the knowledge, information and tools produced by the project. However, that would require translation of the best practices and lessons to local languages and written in a manner that the farmers understand. The private sector would need to be get involved too to make a significant impact.
154. In the entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the very complex administrative situation in the FBiH it was decided to focus on subnational (cantonal) level as well as on the local level. Mainstreaming strategy is prepared for Tuzla Canton and activities will be funded by canton and municipalities.. Federal government recommended to cantonal ministries responsible for agriculture to initiate land capability mapping with a study on SLM approach. During the project four municipalities prepared such maps. Land capability study and maps are being prepared for nine municipalities of Tuzla Canton in total. The preparation of land capability studies and maps are financed by cantonal governments which is an evidence for the ownership and commitment to continue the work to produce the expected impact.

155. In Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska, the entity SLM strategy is now being developed and the SLM best practices are now supported by the government, thus the government is committed to continue the work to achieve the expected positive impact of increasing the sustainability of land use. The DS-SLM project can be considered as a game changer in RS in terms of public recognition of SLM which is now a lot in the mass media; e.g. there has been many TV and radio shows on land degradation.
156. In China, the provided guidance and methods in mainstreaming SLM in planning and policy formulation are used in the national and provincial processes to improve the sustainability of land use e.g. in road construction, selection of agricultural crops and other SLM best practices, etc. in local level, as well as to provide model and guidance for the similar work at national level.
157. In Colombia, the project supported the formulation of the Land Management Plan (POT) of the municipality of San Juan Nepomuceno, where the results of the local assessment were incorporated. The Land Management Plan is being implemented and it is expected to achieve the impact of improving the sustainability of land use, as well as improving livelihoods of local farmers.
158. In Ecuador, FAO and a public bank BanEcuador signed an agreement for the creation of a green credit line that incorporates SLM practices in the livestock sector.
159. In Lesotho, it is expected that the project is likely to contribute very positively both at national and sub-national levels to the sustainability of land use and management with the long-term positive impact of improving the sustainability of local livelihoods, provided there will be no negative political interference.
160. In Morocco, the project is based on the National Plan to Combat Desertification (2013) and is considered as one important element / step in the implementation of that National Plan to reduce desertification and land degradation which are the expected key impacts together with the improvement of land productivity and increasing the profitability of dryland agriculture in long term. Project is considered as successful and having produced or is foreseen to produce all the expected results:
  - Mainstreaming strategy has been produced
  - National Land Degradation Neutrality Plan and a related Investment Plan are under finalisation, and the key elements are already finalised
  - The Regional 3-year Action Plan in Souss-Massa is still under negotiations
  - Three community level 3-years Action Plans have been finalised
161. In Panama, the project is supporting the draft of a new Soil Law that will integrate SLM, which if approved would facilitate the integration of the SLM into the country's planning, financing and policy frameworks. The ecological economic assessment study of the best SLM technologies including the proposal of a financial mechanism for its implementation in the Parita and Tonosi basins, financed by the project, was used as a technical input in the discussions for the creation of a new trust fund for Water, Protected Areas and Wildlife created by the Ministry of Environment. At sub-national level the project played also a key role in the creation and kick off the Parita

River Basin Committee integrated in 2017 and the Tonosi River Basin Committee formed in 2019. The first already has its own regulatory framework and the second one is working on it. The basin committees are autonomous entities that promote SLM actions as contemplated in the Land Management Plan and the Basin Management Plan. All these outputs and outcomes are expected to contribute positively to the achievement of the expected impact which is the improved sustainability of land use, and related sustainability of local livelihoods.

162. In the Philippines, the integration of SLM best practises in the Land Use Planning Guidelines of the Local Governments is expected to bring about significant long-term impact as these Guidelines are an effective instrument in guiding land use decisions. However, the mainstreaming work needs to be carried out still for more years to see real long-term impact. In the Philippines the DS-SLM project is seen as a good contribution towards reaching the LDN target by 2030. The DS-SLM project is also seen to contribute positively to next generation of SLM / LDN projects.
163. In Thailand, Tunisia and Uzbekistan, the project is expected to have a significant contribution to the mainstreaming of SLM in national and sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks, and thus increasing the sustainability of land use as well as increasing the long-term profitability of agriculture under sustainable practises. However, Thailand noted that some activities, such as erosion prevention and control will require more time and financing.

#### **Text box 5 Success story from Uzbekistan**

In Uzbekistan the project institutions and partners understood the importance of studying and communicating the positive benefits of the SLM in general and of the project in particular. The project's National Lead Agency was capable of assessing the socio-economic and environmental benefits of demonstrated SLM technologies.

##### **Socio-economic benefits:**

- SLM technologies demonstrated at the project sites lead to adoption and out-scaling of at least 4-6 cost effective and innovative SLM technologies in salt affected and drought-prone landscapes;
- The area under SLM during two crop seasons are increased from 2,347 ha (2017) to 4,723 ha (2018). In future, expected area under SLM will be increased up to 10,000 ha (2025).
- **Farmer benefits are:** (i) increasing cotton yield of "Gulistan" variety from 1.8 t/ha to is 3.2 t/ha at average; (ii) **farmer income increased up to 4.8 times.**

##### **Environmental benefits:**

- 10-20% increase of vegetation cover and biodiversity;
- water saving during vegetation season about 1,600-2,000 m<sup>3</sup>/ha that equal 2 watering's;
- decrease of soil erosion in rainfed areas by cultivating desert perennial plants and almonds;
- sequestration of carbon in biomass and soil in the amount of 4,5 tons/ha (equivalent to 16,5 tons CO<sub>2</sub>) by cultivating desert perennial crops and tree species (almond).

**Finding 20. The potential role of SLM investments by private sector is not fully understood in many countries which is a key barrier to achieving a major positive SLM impact in terms of improved land use and increased long-term productivity and profitability of agriculture under the climate change threat.**

164. The identified barriers to private sector investments in SLM include:

- Profitability of the SLM investments (Morocco, Turkey)
- Availability of and access to both budget and / or donor financing for public sector activities and loans and / or other types of investment financing for SLM investments (F BiH, Morocco).
- Political interference or lack of political support, including the changes in policies due to elections and changing governments at different levels (F BiH, Lesotho).
- Too short duration of support projects such as the DS-SLM; introduction and implementation of SLM is a complex and time-demanding process. Long-term and sustainable support is necessary. E.g. DS-SLM project had not long-term vision and commitment, nor financing to continue (China, Morocco).
- Climate change impacts that may trigger land degradation and desertification (Bangladesh)
- Land tenure system that acts as a disincentive or barrier for introducing SLM (Lesotho)

165. In Latin American project countries, the articulation between the environmental sector and the agricultural and livestock sector is a barrier to the integration of SLM into national and regional planning, financing and policy frameworks. To which is added the weakness or absence of state agricultural extension systems in the four countries, limiting progress towards long-term results.

166. Another limitation in Latin American project countries is information and knowledge at the level of government officials, especially with the level of staff turnover that occurs in state entities. The availability of financing is another barrier.

**Finding 21. Up-scaling of SLM best practices will require more time and additional financing; in some countries such financing is expected to come mainly from domestic sources but in others additional external financing is needed.**

167. To the extent that the project's actions continue, once the project has been completed, there will be long-term project impacts. The sustainability section details the measures that countries are taking to ensure the continuity of the actions initiated by the project, as well as new actions and projects focused on SLM.

168. Several countries / entities (F BiH, China, Morocco, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) were of the opinion that with the dynamism established, consultations on priorities and needs carried out and the initiated local level SLM investments which will have positive impact on land productivity and food security, the project will lead to the intensification of the application of good SLM practices, and thus there will be positive longer-term impacts on land resources and their use.

169. However, it is clear that particularly the up-scaling and out-scaling of SLM best practices will require considerably more time and also additional financial resources, both from the public sector and in the private sector investments (Bangladesh, FBiH, China, Morocco, the Philippines). Also, extensive mainstreaming into policies, strategies, financing, programs and plans at all levels (national, regional, provincial, local) will require more time as the cross-sectoral nature of the challenges causes the processes to be complicated and time-consuming (e.g. Colombia, Morocco and Panama). Also, the very fact that SLM is by nature tightly related to land and land tenure causes the mainstreaming processes to be highly political in many countries (e.g. Lesotho).

## 4.8 Gender

7.1 To what extent (and how) has the project contributed to the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups throughout its implementation?

**Finding 22. Project's strategy and planned activities did not address specifically the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups. The project was considered by most of its stakeholders as gender neutral and believed they did not need to address gender.**

170. The project document included several generic statements on addressing gender considerations, including the involvement of women and vulnerable groups in the project implementation, e.g:
- [under] Participants and other stakeholders: Assisting in involvement of vulnerable and marginalised groups including the poor and ethnic minorities and ensuring gender balance in project activities and awareness programs<sup>27</sup>
  - [under] Alignment with FAO Strategic Framework and Objectives: The GEF project will also pay attention to Gender and Governance as essential considerations in promoting sustainable land management, thereby addressing also FAOs two cross-cutting themes of relevance: i) Gender – ensuring that gender equality becomes a regular feature of work on standard setting and of regional, sub-regional and country-level programme and projects.<sup>28</sup>
  - [under] FAO's role and responsibilities, as the GEF Agency and the global financial and administrative executing agency: A multidisciplinary Project Task Force will be established ... Participating units from across FAO will be involved in supporting the project's work and in ensuring that the project stays on track ... When appropriate, these units and offices will provide technical support in areas such as: land resources assessment and sustainable land management, climate smart agriculture, gender, climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation.<sup>29</sup>
  - [under] Indicators and information sources: On-the-ground impact indicators will track: *The level of adoption by farmers and herders of environmentally and climate friendly production practices, productivity increase, and hectares covered to be*

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<sup>27</sup> Project Document, p. 40

<sup>28</sup> Project Document, p. 57

<sup>29</sup> Project Document, p. 114

monitored in a gender disaggregated way to ensure adequate participation of women.<sup>30</sup>

- [under] Sustainability of results [and further under] Social sustainability: This global Project will contribute to national socio-economic benefits through demonstration activities at pilot sites in 15 countries, which will include: (i) •Sustained livelihoods for people dependent on the use and management of land resources (soil, water, biodiversity): The project will pay special attention to assessing the impacts of land degradation on vulnerable groups, such as female headed households, and identifying gender sensitive SLM solutions. (ii) •The project will ensure that it works with a representative number of female-headed households at pilot sites; that recommended SLM solutions are benefiting men and women equally; and that there will be at least 30 percent women participating in training activities.<sup>31</sup>

171. However, as pointed out also by the Mid-term Evaluation of the project<sup>32</sup>, the project's strategy did not include clear and specific approaches or activities to address the gender considerations. Neither did the project's Implementation and Management arrangement include specific allocations or responsibilities or resources to secure that the gender considerations are adequately addressed. The project's Results Matrix included only two items where gender is taken into consideration, and both of those were related to the target groups of capacity building / training:

- Output 1.1.1: Countries delivering reliable DLDD and SLM assessments and information on SLM best practices suitable for mainstreaming at national or sub-national levels.

*Target:* 15 countries delivering reliable assessments and having selected cost-effective and adapted SLM best practices for various LUS suitable for mainstreaming into policies and programmes; and 50 persons in key institutions per country (40% women) using assessment and best practices tools.

- Output: 1.2.1: Strengthened delivery mechanisms for SLM demonstration, awareness raising, and training.

*Target:* At least 900 facilitators, extension workers and technical staff with acquired skills in SLM demonstration, awareness raising and training (60 per country, at least 30 % women)"

172. Both the latest Project Implementation Review (1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018)<sup>33</sup> and the evaluation interviews (e.g. Argentina, Bosnia Herzegovina entity Republic of Srpska, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Lesotho, Morocco, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia and Uzbekistan) confirm that about ½ of the gender target related to Output 1.1.1 has been met. Similarly, and the same sources confirm that the gender specific target related to Output 1.2.1 has been reached only partially (again some 50%) although in most of the evaluation interviews the partner country representatives have mentioned that both men and women have participated in trainings.

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<sup>30</sup> Project Document, p. 123

<sup>31</sup> Project Document, p. 129

<sup>32</sup> FAO-OED, Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project, p. 46

<sup>33</sup> FAO, GEF, FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review, 2018

173. According to the interviews in the Philippines there is a law requesting to address gender issues in all governmental activities, and the project e.g. had a special workshop on gender issues in 2018. In the Philippines, the documentation of SLM practices addresses gender issues which is likely to result in a better selection of SLM practices that specifically target sustainable income generation for female farmers.
174. In Bangladesh, one interviewee frankly said that gender and vulnerable groups have not been addressed at all under the project, as it is too complicated matter in the country; 90% of the stakeholders are male.
175. According to the evaluation interviews and project reports vulnerable groups have not been addressed specifically during the project implementation, with the exception of the entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia and Lesotho. In the FBiH vulnerable groups are addressed in mainstreaming strategy drafted. In Colombia, according to actors interviewed, the project worked with farmers who were displaced by violence and who, recently, following the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016, have returned to their lands. Displaced farmers are a vulnerable group that has been empowered by the project by involving them in local level territorial planning and selecting SLM practices to be promoted. In Lesotho the SLM activities were equally implemented by all the groups in the community more especially in the country where land resource management is in the hands of women, youth and the elderly.
176. In general, the project was considered by its stakeholders as gender neutral. This opinion can be contested. The project is not only about technical tools, but this project aims at decision support for mainstreaming (to policies, strategies, investment frameworks) and up-scaling of SLM. I.e. the project has a highly political element as the land-related policy, strategy and investment planning issues are always political, and can potentially have significant impacts on the rights, roles and responsibilities of women and men in any country. Land management and land management practices have significant impact on the roles, responsibilities, workload, income and income distribution among land users, both male and female. When land management practices are changed, e.g. from unsustainable to sustainable and new sustainable land management practices and tools are adopted, the change process can have significant impacts, either positive or negative, on different land user groups. Decision makers need to be made aware of such potential changes, and the decision support systems need to be able to track, measure and point out such changes.

## 4.9 Sustainability

- 9.1 To what extent has the project created ownership among counterparts and stakeholders?
- 9.2 How sustainable are the results achieved at the environmental, institutional, social and financial levels?

### **Finding 23. Project has strong national ownership in almost all the 14 countries.**

177. In almost all the 14 countries (Nigeria excluded), the project created a sense of ownership among counterparts and stakeholders. The interviews have conveyed a clear sense of ownership. Many counterparts are visibly proud of the work they have



done. Stakeholders have appropriated the project through active participation in various workshops and meetings, and many of them in most of the countries are hands-on involved in the implementation of various activities (territorial assessments, prioritization workshops, pilot / demonstration implementation) of the project. For example, in Morocco it was clear from the various interviews of stakeholders at all levels, including the community visits, that the stakeholders feel proud of the work that they are doing. Practically all stakeholders emphasised that they are doing the work not alone but together and in good cooperation with relevant other stakeholders, such as the Directorate for Water, Forests and Combatting Desertification.

178. At least in Lesotho, Morocco, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey it is very clear that the project has been very well embedded in the programs of the key ministry in the country.
179. In some countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska, Morocco, Thailand) the interviewees have mentioned that they have learnt a lot during the project which is also a good indication of the sense of ownership and commitment.
180. Only in Bangladesh the interviews indicate that the local FAO office, instead of the National Project Coordinator, has been the driving force of the project. On the other hand, there has been a lot of demand for the information (documented SLM tools & best practises) produced by the project; there are daily requests by various stakeholders to get the information.
181. International commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically objective 15 and the agreements linked to the UNCCD including the goals for the Land Degradation Neutrality, provide a space to continue promoting SLM actions at the national, regional, provincial and local levels. Several project countries have identified this opportunity, even though the LDN targets and commitments had not been on the international agenda at the time of project formulation.

**Finding 24. Several countries have seen the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects.**

182. Several countries (Bangladesh, FBiH, Morocco, Philippines, Turkey) have seen the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects.

**Finding 25. Several countries have already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s).**

183. Several countries (e.g. Bangladesh, FBiH, RS, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) have already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s):
  - Bangladesh has another GEF-6 SLM project with UNEP and has also submitted in cooperation with FAO PIF to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) under GEF; under approval (Information presented in the Ankara meeting). These other

projects, however, are not results of the DS-SLM project, but could use DS-SLM project tools and lessons in their execution.

- FBiH: has already started development of new joint projects and expects to receive technical support from FAO for the preparation of project proposals. Also, project partners and stakeholders have sent joint request to the federal government to support joint project for land management and SLM in Spreca valley. In addition, some new municipalities are going to implement land capability study/map with the support of faculty and technical institutions as well as cantonal ministry of agriculture.
- RS: next steps are very likely to be financed by domestic budget resources; e.g. municipal level incentives for SLM have been now already established thanks to the project. However, in addition there is a regional project proposal prepared by the RS.
- China: There are several projects related to combatting desertification and land degradation in China, and they will continue for long period, some for 10 years and others (e.g. natural forest protection programs) for 20 years.
- Colombia: FAO integrated SLM on new project proposals including a climate smart agriculture proposal presented to IKI Germany.
- Ecuador already has a SLM project funded by the Korean Forest Service (2019 - 2020) and submitted a PIF to GEF (GEF-7) in cooperation with FAO on a SLM project in the context of LDN (Information presented in the Ankara meeting and confirmed during interviews) and is working on a proposal that will present to the Green Climate Fund.
- Morocco: The established 3-years Action Plans (at regional and communal levels in 3 local communities) and the national Investment Plan for Land Degradation Neutrality give all good guarantee for the continuation of the work. The implementation of those plans is expected to be financed mainly from the national / provincial / local government budgets. However, the Directorate for Water, Forests and Combatting Desertification, as well as the Provincial Administration indicated that they are formulating requests for financing to various donors / international financing mechanisms (GEF, CGF, etc.). There are also already existing other relevant projects with financing from e.g. UNDP, German government (GIZ), Swiss Development Cooperation, GEF, FAO (Regional TCP Re: Global Coalition of Soils). Particularly useful partner for accessing additional financing appears to be ANDZOA which has capacity to formulate bankable project proposals (e.g. currently having (i) 49 million USD GCF project (2017 – 2021) aiming to plant 10 000 ha, of which 6 000 ha in Souss-Massa, with Argan trees on private lands, (ii) Women empowerment in Argan area project financed by Canada, and (iii) GIZ-financed research project supporting Argan communities).
- Philippines used the DS-SLM project to develop a tool to be used in a new national GEF project, and the SLM issues will be also budgeted under the regular

budgets of the Local Government, thanks to the integration of SLM guidelines into the Comprehensive Land Use Plans of the LGUs.

- Thailand: Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has a GEF7 funding, and the Land Development Department intends to work together with the Forestry Department.
- Turkey has submitted a proposal to GEF (GEF-6) in cooperation with FAO on a SLM project in the context of LDN; implementation about to start (Information presented in the Ankara meeting).
- Turkey and Uzbekistan (as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) are partners in Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM) II Project which is supported by GEF and is implemented by FAO. The overall objective of CACILM 2 is to scale up integrated natural resources management (INRM) in drought prone and salt affected agricultural production landscapes in the Central Asian countries and Turkey (Information presented in the Ankara meeting; see also: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/cacilm-2/en/>).

**Finding 26. The Project Management started thinking and planning an exit strategy quite late, only in 2019.**

184. The project document of the DS-SLM project did not specify the need of an exit strategy for the project. Neither did the MTE point out that the project should develop such a strategy. However, the project management / PCU had realised by the approaching end of the project such a need, and incipient elements of an exit strategy were presented at the Ankara Steering Committee meeting in April 2019.

**Finding 27. The incipient exist strategy is not robust enough.**

185. The incipient elements were mainly focusing on (i) accessing financing for follow-on projects globally / regionally / nationally, (ii) preparing for UNCCD COP 14, (iii) linkages with LDN, (iv) SLM criteria and indicators, (v) mainstreaming SLM into financing mechanisms, (vi) South-South cooperation.
186. Other elements for the Exit strategy that would need to be considered include e.g. (vii) Strengthening the knowledge sharing, and at the same time publicity and credibility, by encouraging the Country teams to write the best results and best SLM technologies and approaches in a form of an attractive and easily readable publication / book that can be given to decision makers, politicians, NGOs, farmer organizations, farmers, investors, financiers, private land-using companies, etc. (if additional financing is needed, it should be easily available for such a purpose), and (viii) Handing-over: there should be handing-over meetings in every country with the presence of at least FAO, National Project Coordinator, high-level representative of the respective Ministry.

**Finding 28. The project results are environmentally sustainable.**

**Finding 29. The integration of the project into the relevant national and / or regional / provincial institutions has secured the institutional sustainability in many countries.**

**However, although the project called the attention of key institutional actors and decision makers, on the need to address desertification and land degradation with concrete proposals referred to the generation of information, integration of SLM in planning and regulatory frameworks, as well as in practical actions at the local level, the high-level decision makers appear to require still more convincing information and advocacy, and the plan to organise a high-level meeting on DS-SLM at the COP14 is commendable.**

**Finding 30. Financial sustainability is secured in some countries through the mainstreaming strategy which is expected to lead to a situation where e.g. local municipalities will continue the implementation using local government budget. Additional and new project financing is also applied in many countries.**

**Finding 31. Social sustainability is considered satisfactory or good particularly in those countries where the pilot / demonstration activities are adopted by the local communities and where the introduced SLM practices are profitable at farm / community level.**

187. The factors and facts behind environmental, institutional, financial and social sustainability are mostly interlinked, and thus difficult to separate from each other. Thus, the sustainability issues are described jointly as follows.
188. In Argentina, in the pilot site of Salta, the National University of Salta will continue supporting local stakeholders implementing SLM practices. The Observatory<sup>34</sup> laid the foundations for a permanent national system for the evaluation and standardized monitoring of desertification, including socioeconomic aspects. The project strengthened the capacities installed in several governmental, academic, scientific and technical institutions, consolidating an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary team linked with the Observatory that will be active in the long term. Some of these institutional actors will be making efforts to obtain funds to continue promoting the SLM through new projects, which could be financed by state entities and by international cooperation. In the province of Entre Ríos, the Provincial Commission for Soil Conservation and Management, composed of public and private actors, has championed soil conservation as a topic that should be present in the discussions related to production at the provincial level, as well as in spaces for capacity building.
189. In Bangladesh, the project is considered to support environmental sustainability in general. Achieving institutional, financial and social sustainability would require more time.
190. In the entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the results are considered highly sustainable at environmental level as the SLM demonstration activities have successfully addressed the issue of degraded soils due to mining which is a significant environmental problem in FBiH. It has to be noted that the technology of cultivating blueberries on infertile/degraded soils using plant pots could be easily replicated on degraded soils elsewhere; only in Tuzla canton there are some 5,000 ha of degraded soils due to mining and industry. The results of the project are

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.desertificacion.gob.ar/el-observatorio/presentacion/>

considered very sustainable also at the institutional level thanks to the efforts on capacity building and dissemination. Financial sustainability will strongly depend on political situations.

191. In China, the project results are expected to be environmentally sustainable in long term as the project addresses fragile and degraded ecosystems. Institutionally the project results are expected to be sustainable in China, but not necessarily financially as the long-term financial support from GEF / FAO is not foreseen. Scaling up SLM will increase the land productivity and restore ecosystem functions in the project regions, which is expected to provide sustainable social benefit.
192. In Colombia the GEF Connection Biocaribe project implemented by FAO and the Natural Wealth project funded by USAID, will continue activities on the pilot sites.
193. In Lesotho, the project results are expected to be environmentally very sustainable as the activities are implemented at local level with the local people in environmentally friendly manner. Likewise, the project results are expected to be institutionally and financially sustainable because the technologies implemented are very simple, and also because there are synergies with other projects which helps in securing sustainability. The activities are socially acceptable and hence socially sustainable.
194. In Morocco, the project is clearly considered as an integrated element of the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Desertification. High-level interviewee stated that "We will not finish the work with this project, but this project is one step in a long process [in combating desertification and land degradation] which is not a simple process to manage." Environmentally, the project is considered highly sustainable as degradation of soils and desertification are serious environmental threats in Morocco and the project has successfully addressed that threat, although still at a relatively limited scale. Financially and institutionally the project has good potential to be sustainable as it has ingrained itself well in the national policies and key institutions and it has succeeded to establish well working partnership of relevant institutions, although at a regional level in one region of the country. Financial sustainability of SLM activities will depend on the profitability of the activities / investments at farm / community level. So far, too little attention has been paid to secure the financial and economic profitability. Social sustainability has similarly positive prospects as the project pilot / demonstration activities are very well established and appropriated by the farmers and local communities.
195. In Panama, the establishment of two water basins committees in 2017 and 2019, including its regulatory framework, composed by multiple stakeholders from each basin, will secure the promotion of SLM practices at watershed level as well as interinstitutional cooperation. The basin committees will promote the sustainable management and territorial organization of the basins. The Ministry of the Environment will continue supporting stakeholders implementing SLM practices at the pilot sites, with a budget assigned until the year 2021. It is planned to link the producers with other initiatives and projects that allow sustainability. The synergies established with other national plans and programs such as the National Action Program to Combat Drought and Desertification, the National Water Security Plan, Alliance for the Million (includes forest restoration actions), LDN program, will

support the continuity of the activities initiated by the project. The draft Soil Law, if approved, will facilitate the integration of the SLM in decision-making.

196. In Tunisia, the project results are expected to be sustainable, but more work and support is need for mainstreaming and up-scaling. So far, only 4 SLM practices out of 26 have been tested in 4 regions out of the 24 regions of the country.
197. In Turkey, the financial sustainability of the project is strengthened by the strong private sector involvement which is a unique example in the DS-SLM project. Private sector implementation of the SLM approaches increases also the institutional sustainability in Turkey. However, an interviewee in Turkey mentioned that "mapping and producing guidelines are easy things to do, but the difficult thing is to get the SLM investments mainstreamed by farmers and investors".
198. In Uzbekistan, the financial sustainability of the project is proofed by the profitability analysis of the introduced SLM practices showing the practices to be highly profitable, and thus self-financing. Social sustainability is enhanced by the farm-level financial profitability.
199. An interviewee in Bangladesh suggested that the institutional sustainability could be enhanced by the cooperation with relevant regional international organisations, such as SARC, CATIE and Mekong River Commission in the case of South and South-East Asia. Such cooperation would still increase the leverage of the project as these regional organisations would promote the project and its results to its other member states.
200. In order to summarise the discussion on sustainability the TE presents here a somewhat unorthodox SWOT analysis of the project. The analysis, which is purposefully simplified to highlight the "big issues", presents the project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Opportunities and threats are purposefully focusing on the future (i.e. possible follow-up) and are FAO-centred.
201. Some interviewees expressed their concern over the financial and institutional sustainability of WOCAT in general and the platform in particular. WOCAT is a global network hosted by the University of Bern and has only a very small staff. It is core financing from the Swiss government has been declining over the years. The financing of the platform derives partly from the WOCAT's core financing and partly from various projects, such as DS-SLM, and thus the platform's financing requires constant replenishment and marketing work.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly relevant</li> <li>• Modular implementation model</li> <li>• Participatory approach (instead of purely technocratic)</li> <li>• Several excellent country-cases</li> <li>• Enthusiasm among most of the country Project Teams</li> <li>• LADA / WOCAT tools and platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication at global level</li> <li>• Delays due to LoA bureaucracy</li> <li>• FAO's administrative bureaucracy</li> <li>• Slow delivery in some countries</li> <li>• Lack of leadership and vision</li> <li>• Lack of understanding land-based investments and how private sector operates</li> </ul>

<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLM is an increasingly big issue globally and in countries</li> <li>• Climate change work and financing</li> <li>• Land degradation neutrality (LDN) target</li> <li>• UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration<sup>35</sup></li> <li>• Potential role of FAO as the main SLM/LDN Knowledge Centre</li> <li>• Availability of financing from various sources (GEF, GCF, Adaptation Fund, etc.)</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition for attention by other global big issues</li> <li>• Competition by other incumbent SLM/LDN knowledge centres</li> <li>• Sustainability of WOCAT</li> </ul>

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

202. The evidence-based logical chain from Key Findings to Conclusions and further to Recommendations is presented below and summarised in Table 8. The recommendations are also targeted to either GEF, FAO, WOCAT or the project countries. Prioritization of recommendations in two categories, High priority and Medium priority. Low priority recommendations are not given in this FE. The prioritization is presented in Table 8.

### 5.1 Conclusions

203. **Conclusion 1: Although for the present decision support project the project's strategic focus was right, there is a need to focus more in the forthcoming follow-up projects on farmers / land users, their livelihoods and food security.**
204. **Conclusion 2: Complex projects which need inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation require long-term commitment by partners and key stakeholders.**
205. **Conclusion 3: South-south cooperation appears to be a good cost-efficient option for the provision of training and capacity building.**
206. **Conclusion 4: Attractiveness, usefulness and expected positive impact of the WOCAT SLM platform would be enhanced by introducing a dynamic exchange**

<sup>35</sup> In March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 – 2030 the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. UN Environment and FAO will lead the implementation.

**of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window to the platform.**

- 207. **Conclusion 5: Fairly large and complex global and regional projects require adequate budget and staff for project management and coordination.**
- 208. **Conclusion 6: The modular Decision Support Framework is a useful innovation and merits to be advocated also in other projects/countries.**
- 209. **Conclusion 7: Fairly large and complex global / regional projects need to have focussed and very clear logical framework / results matrix. Even without ambiguities such projects are difficult enough to implement.**
- 210. **Conclusion 8: Exercising discipline is needed in following up M&E information, as well as MTE recommendations as the day to day chores tend to take all the time and effort of a PCU. Regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, would provide the necessary structure for the decision making.**
- 211. **Conclusion 9: Successful partnerships have been instrumental in making the project successful in several countries, particularly due to the inter-sectoral nature of the SLM issues.**
- 212. **Conclusion 10: Private sector as the key player in the decision making and implementation of land-based productive investments has a central role and responsibility in securing sustainability of land management.**
- 213. **Conclusion 11: The project design was inadequate in addressing gender and vulnerable groups.**
- 214. **Conclusion 12: New and additional follow-on financing is needed to continue the good work started. Mainstreaming and up-scaling SLM will require more time to secure sustainability.**
- 215. **Conclusion 13: An exit strategy for the project needs to be prepared and in addition to the elements presented and discussed in Ankara there should be other elements.**
- 216. **Conclusion 14: High-level decision makers need further information and argumentation in order to achieve deeper SLM mainstreaming.**

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- 217. **Recommendation 1: FAO, GEF and project countries support farmers / land users and strengthen agricultural and livestock extension services, so that they can bring practical solutions to farmers, to reduce land degradation, increase the provision of ecosystem services and, consequently, the productivity of their farms. This can be achieved by working with decision makers and integrating specific actions in new projects.**



218. **Recommendation 2: GEF & FAO & project countries seek ways to continue supporting and working on the SLM mainstreaming and up-scaling work that has now been well established in most of the project countries.**
219. **Recommendation 3: GEF & FAO & project countries seek ways to continue and also to out-scale to other / new countries the south-south cooperation in SLM work.**
220. **Recommendation 4: WOCAT, GEF & FAO seek ways to strengthen the SLM platform with a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window. WOCAT's SLM platform's financial sustainability need to be secured at the same time.**
221. **Recommendation 5: FAO/GEF ensure that new global or regional projects have coordination units with sufficient human and financial resources that allow them to maintain a constant and fluid communication with the partner countries, as well as provide permanent technical support and promote exchanges and feedback between countries.**
222. **Recommendation 6: FAO should consider supporting the use of the modular Decision Support Framework of DS-SLM project also in other projects/countries.**
223. **Recommendation 7: FAO & GEF pay particular attention to the clarity and focus of the project design of large and complex global / regional projects.**
224. **Recommendation 8: FAO should secure regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, to secure discipline and structure for decision making to follow-up M&E information and MTE recommendations.**
225. **Recommendation 9: FAO should consider promoting best practices in inter-sectoral and inter-agency partnership building in projects with significant cross-sectoral issues such as in SLM projects.**
226. **Recommendation 10: FAO & GEF should seek ways to engage the private sector players in future SLM projects. Partnerships with e.g. IFAD, World Bank and other development financing institutions could be considered in this regard. Countries should involve private sector in relevant policy, strategy and investment programming processes in SLM work.**
227. **Recommendation 11: FAO / GEF project designs should include an assessment of relevance and importance of gender and vulnerable groups issues, and if those issues are found relevant and important, the project strategy should include specific gender and vulnerable groups involvement or mainstreaming strategies, and the project activities should include specific activities planned or cleared by a gender specialist.**
228. **Recommendation 12: FAO & GEF should request the inclusion of a sustainability strategy / exit strategy as an expected outcome of any project.**

229. **Recommendation 13: FAO and project countries should encourage the country teams to write the best results and best SLM technologies and approaches in a form of an attractive and easily readable publication / book that can be given to decision makers, politicians, NGOs, farmer organizations, farmers, investors, financiers, private land-using companies. There should be handing-over meetings in every country with the presence of at least FAO, National Project Coordinator, high-level representative of the respective Ministry.**
230. **Recommendation 14: project countries to promote high level decision makers discussions, capacity building and exchanges about SLM, including but not limited to the planned high-level meeting on DS-SLM project at COP14.**

**Table 8 Conclusions and Recommendations Matrix**

Key findings (evaluation sub-question number)	Conclusions	Targeted recommendations	Priority
Relevance			
1. In general, the project strategy and actions responded to the stakeholders and beneficiaries needs. The project addresses a common but differentiated problem of the participating countries. (1.1 & 1.2)	C1. Although for the present <u>decision support</u> project the project's strategic focus was right, there is a need to focus more in the forthcoming follow-up projects on farmers / land users, their livelihoods and food security.	R1. FAO, GEF and project countries should support farmers / land users and strengthen agricultural and livestock extension services, so that they can bring practical solutions to farmers, to reduce land degradation, increase the provision of ecosystem services and, consequently, the productivity of their farms. This can be achieved by working with decision-makers and integrating specific actions in new projects.	Medium
2. The project strategy is considered highly appropriate in combining policy and strategy mainstreaming work with the implementation of SLM practices at pilot / demonstration scale. (1.1 & 1.2)			
3. Field observations showed that weak capacity of extension services to promote SLM may hinder the progress of SLM out-scaling. (1.3)			
4. The original results matrix had flaws but the modular implementation / decision support framework (DSF) introduced during inception phase facilitated the project implementation. (1.3)			
Effectiveness			
5. Effectiveness had improved considerably since MTE, particularly in those countries that started late the implementation. Most countries had reached or are expected to reach the results in general. However, up-scaling particularly will require more time and financing, and also SLM mainstreaming requires more time. (2.1)	C2. Complex projects which need inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation require long-term commitment by partners and key stakeholders.	R2. GEF & FAO & project countries should seek ways to continue supporting and working on the SLM mainstreaming and up-scaling work that has now been well established in most of the project countries.	High

6. Project triggered positive regional and country-to-country cooperation (south-south), particularly in training and capacity building from more experienced countries to less experienced ones. (2.2)	C3. South-south cooperation appears to be a good cost-efficient option for the provision of training and capacity building.	R3. GEF & FAO & project countries could seek ways to continue and also to out-scale to other / new countries the south-south cooperation in SLM work.	
7. Global element of the project has facilitated broadening the perspectives (mainstreaming, strategies, up-scaling) of otherwise very technical work by technical staff. (2.3)			
8. Expectations on the global platform vary: data base is in general highly regarded and appreciated but some countries expect more dynamic exchange of experiences & sharing technical information. (2.4)	C4. Attractiveness, usefulness and expected positive impact of the WOCAT SLM platform would be enhanced by introducing a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window to the platform.	R4. WOCAT, GEF & FAO should seek ways to strengthen the SLM platform with a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information element / window. WOCAT's SLM platform's financial sustainability need to be secured at the same time.	High
<b>Efficiency</b>			
9. The PCU performance, efficiency and responsiveness at FAO headquarters has been considered by many stakeholders as efficient and responsive whereas others as non-responsive and slow, and apparently there has been some persistent communication problems. FAO administration rules are found complicated and cumbersome by some countries. (3.1)	C5. Fairly large and complex global and regional projects require adequate budget and staff for project management and coordination.	R5. FAO & GEF should ensure that new global or regional projects have coordination units with adequate human and financial resources that allow them to maintain a constant and fluid communication with the partner countries, as well as provide permanent technical support and promote exchanges and feedback between countries.	High
10. Institutional arrangements have varied a lot from country to country, which is a positive reflection of flexibility and project's ability to adjust to country situations. In general, the established institutional arrangements have been contributing positively to			

the project implementation. Partnerships, either established already before or during the project, have been instrumental for the achievement of results.. (3.2)			
11. The Project Coordination Unit of FAO headquarters was too thinly resourced and in general the project's budget for management and coordination was too tight in view of the project size and complexity. (3.3)			
12. Flexibility of the project has been important allowing to adapt to realities and changing conditions. The modular DSF in an important element of this flexibility. (3.4)	C6. The modular Decision Support Framework is a useful innovation and merits to be advocated also in other countries.	R6. FAO should consider supporting the use of the modular Decision Support Framework of DS-SLM project also in other countries.	
13. The GEF co-financing concept appears to be difficult to understand and the actual spent amounts difficult to estimate by several project countries (3.5)			
14. The recommendations of MTE are not known by all countries; no major changes in implementation efficiency observed by countries after MTE. (3.6)			
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>			
15. Project reporting system with templates and focusing on modules is considered clear and well-functioning. The original project results matrix (logical framework) contains overly ambitious indicators and goals. (4.1)	C7. Fairly large and complex global / regional projects need to have focussed and very clear logical framework / results matrix. Even without ambiguities such projects are difficult enough to implement.	R7. FAO & GEF should pay particular attention to the clarity and focus of the project design of large and complex global / regional projects.	Medium
16. The decision-making process using the M&E information was not entirely clear. (4.2)	C8. Exercising discipline is needed in following up M&E information, as well as MTE recommendations as the day to day chores tend to	R8. FAO should secure regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, to secure discipline and structure for decision making to follow-up M&E information and MTE recommendations.	Medium

	take all the time and effort of a PCU. Regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, would provide the necessary structure for the decision making.		
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>			
17. Stakeholder engagement has been adequate and extensive in general, with the exception of private sector involvement. (5.1)	(See below re: sub-question 6.4)		
18. Project has positively contributed to the development of new partnerships (inter-institutional & cross-sectoral). Inter-institutional partnerships have been key for successful implementation. (5.2)	C9. Successful partnerships have been instrumental in making the project successful in several countries, particularly due to the inter-sectoral nature of the SLM issues.	R9. FAO should consider promoting best practices in inter-sectoral and inter-agency partnership building in projects with significant cross-sectoral issues such as in SLM projects.	Medium
<b>Progress to impact</b>			
19. Most countries are confident that the project will significantly contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in decision making at national and sub-national levels. (6.1, 6.2, 6.3)			
20. The potential role of SLM investments by private sector is not fully understood in many countries which is a key barrier to achieving a major positive SLM impact in terms of improved land use and increased long-term productivity and profitability of agriculture under the climate change threat. (6.4)	C10. Private sector as the key player in the decision making and implementation of land-based productive investments has a central role and responsibility in securing sustainability of land management.	R10. FAO & GEF should seek ways to engage the private sector players in future SLM projects. Partnerships with e.g. IFAD, World Bank and other development financing institutions could be considered in this regard. Countries should involve private sector in relevant policy, strategy and investment programming processes in SLM work.	High
21. Up-scaling of SLM best practices will require more time and additional financing; in some countries such financing is expected to come mainly			

from domestic sources but in others additional external financing is needed. (6.5)			
<b>Gender</b>			
22. Project's strategy and planned activities did not address specifically the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups. The project was considered by most of its stakeholders as gender neutral and believed they did not need to address gender. (7.1 & 7.2)	C11. The project design was inadequate in addressing gender and vulnerable groups.	R11. FAO / GEF project designs should include an assessment of relevance and importance of gender and vulnerable groups issues, and if those issues are found relevant and important, the project strategy should include specific gender and vulnerable groups involvement or mainstreaming strategies, and the project activities should include specific activities planned or cleared by a gender specialist.	Medium
<b>Sustainability</b>			
23. Project has strong national ownership in almost all the 14 countries. (8.1 & 8.2)			
24. Several countries have seen the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects. (8.1 & 8.2)	C12. New and additional follow-on financing is needed to continue the good work started. Mainstreaming and up-scaling SLM will require more time to secure sustainability.	See recommendations (R2 & R3) related to sub-questions 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3	High
25. Several countries have already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s). (8.1 & 8.2)			
26. The Project Management started thinking and planning an exit strategy quite late, only in 2019. (8.1 & 8.2)	C13. Exit strategy needs to be prepared and in addition to the elements presented and discussed in Ankara, there should be other elements.	R12. FAO & GEF should request the inclusion of a sustainability strategy / exit strategy as an expected outcome of any project.	High
27. The incipient exist strategy is not robust enough. (8.1 & 8.2)		R13. FAO and project countries should encourage the country teams to write the best results and best SLM technologies and approaches in a form of an attractive and easily readable publication / book that	High

		can be given to decision makers, politicians, NGOs, farmer organizations, farmers, investors, financiers, private land-using companies. There should be handing-over meetings in every country with the presence of at least FAO, National Project Coordinator, high-level representative of the respective Ministry.	
28 The project results are environmentally sustainable. (8.3)	C14. High-level decision makers need further information and argumentation in order to achieve deeper SLM mainstreaming.	R14. Project countries should promote high level decision makers' discussions, capacity building and exchanges about SLM, including but not limited to the planned high-level meeting on DS-SLM project at COP14.	Medium
29. The integration of the project into the relevant national and / or regional / provincial institutions has secured the institutional sustainability in many countries. However, although the project called the attention of key institutional actors and decision makers, on the need to address desertification and land degradation with concrete proposals referred to the generation of information, integration of SLM in planning and regulatory frameworks, as well as in practical actions at the local level, the high-level decision makers appear to require still more convincing information and advocacy, and the plan to organise a high-level meeting on DS-SLM at the COP14 is commendable. (8.4)			
30. Financial sustainability is secured in some countries through the mainstreaming strategy which is expected to lead to a situation where e.g. local municipalities will continue the implementation using local government budget. Additional and new project financing is also applied in many countries. (8.4)			



<p>31. Social sustainability is considered satisfactory or good particularly in those countries where the pilot / demonstration activities are adopted by the local communities and where the introduced SLM practices are profitable at farm / community level. (8.5)</p>			
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### **5.3 Lessons learnt**

10.1 What lessons can be learned from the project, in terms of its design, new approaches (e.g. introduction of the Decision Support Framework), implementation, up-scaling and sustainability that may be useful for future and similar FAO interventions particularly funded by the GEF or other donors in general?

231. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) as the principle target of the Convention at COP12, in October 2015. Countries are required to report on their process to achieve LDN. However, the LDN concept is much harder to intuitively understand by relevant key stakeholder (such as politicians and farmers and other land users) than SLM, and thus it is unlikely the LDN concept can be used efficiently for planning (strategic, operational and investment planning) and development purposes. It will remain as a technical concept used by specialist. There is a need to continue using more operational concepts such as SLM to have actual impact on land uses. During the DS-SLM project, the participating countries have learnt that SLM approach is useful element in the LDN process, and this link is intended to be advocated e.g. in the coming COP14 which could be learnt also by other countries.
232. The Decision Support Framework of DS-SLM approach works well in cutting across national, regional, provincial, landscape and local levels issues (Morocco, the Philippines, Thailand). The approach with seven modules allows adequate flexibility that enables adjusting the framework to varying country contexts which avoids the risk of force feeding a fit-for-all-solution to situations where it does not actually work. At the same time, the framework gives adequate guidance and structure to the process. The Decision Support Framework could be an important tool for other new projects.
233. In similar global or regional projects, adequate allocation of funds for coordination and project management at global / regional level, including specialized technical personnel that can provide advice and continuous support to the participating countries, as well as promote the exchange of experiences and feedback between countries, using on-line and face-to-face tools would improve the project effectiveness and efficiency, and would avoid unnecessary delays and confusion.
234. Proactive and regular communication with all key partners and stakeholders is instrumentally important in other similar projects that require involvement of many sectors and stakeholders at various levels in order to achieve the project objectives.
235. The cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation (participatory approach) has proven to be crucial (combined with good and transparent communication) for securing involvement of relevant key stakeholders and sectors. Sustainable land management requires cross-sectoral decision making and action which is an important lesson for other SLM projects.
236. Projects that have among their objectives the impact on public policies require periods of at least 5 years for their implementation, which allow working with multiple stakeholders to establish a roadmap for the integration of a specific topic in the policy frameworks, as well as in the decision-making processes regarding planning and financing.

237. Proactive assessment of strategic South-South Cooperation opportunities are useful elements also in project design particularly in global / regional projects as it improves the efficiency and project buy-out / sustainability and avoids untried theoretical solutions that may not work in the end. FAO has established SSC approaches and tools which could be used more actively in formulating other similar projects.
238. Global or regional approach is useful when new approaches and methodologies are introduced and developed, and where policy issues are brought to normally very technical work. Such an approach allows the participating countries to share experiences, compare results and lessons.
239. LADA / WOCAT tools and DS-SLM experiences are useful elements for LDN monitoring improving the practicality and usability of the information generated and avoiding the production of unnecessary information just for the sake of reporting and monitoring purposes. These tools and experiences could be useful to be promoted to other countries under new projects.
240. The development of sustainability strategies and / or exit strategies as part of the necessary planning for the implementation of a project, will facilitate its linkage with other ongoing initiatives, as a measure to guarantee the sustainability of the actions initiated by the project and the long-term impacts. Inclusion of a sustainability strategy / exit strategy as an expected outcome of any project will act as a reminder for the project managers / coordinators from the very beginning of the project to think and plan the future after the project all along the project implementation.
241. Introduction of SLM requires long-term financing in any country. Financing strategies are a useful tool to map opportunities, plan action and unleash such financing. New and additional domestic or donor financed projects could be one element of such a strategy, but not necessarily the most important one. Attracting private sector investment in profitable productive SLM could be more important in many situations which is an important lesson for designing new projects.
242. SLM best practices and approaches need to be either profitable, and thus self-financing in long term, or they need to be subsidised for e.g. environmental reasons by the government. Such subsidies need to be long term to trigger real and sustainable impact. Thus, departments and institutions advocating SLM best practices need to know if the best practices promoted are going to be profitable or not for the farmers / communities. Consequently, there is a need to focus more on the financial and economic analysis / studies of the SLM best practices / technologies and approaches in similar new projects.
243. Similar projects should take better into consideration existing national plans and strategies, such as the National Adaptation Plan, Zero Land Degradation Target, National Development Plans and Strategies (e.g. Bangladesh) and the National Biodiversity Strategies, Actions and Programs (NBSAPs).
244. The DS-SLM approach to link policy (mainstreaming) work with field level pilot / demonstration work appears to be right one. Successful implementation of SLM best practices is important to get political and local buy-out. People in general, and decision makers / politicians in particular, want to see in the own eyes before they

believe. This has been acknowledged by practically all the project countries. In many countries the availability of existing / on-going other relevant projects active with similar SLM implementation has proven a useful leveraging factor, a lesson to be remembered when formulating new similar projects.

245. Land tenure may need more attention in similar new projects because land tenure is a founding institutional arrangement either acting as a barrier to sustainable land management and investments, or encouraging such investments, depending on the clarity and specifications of the land tenure system.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Evaluation Matrix

Appendix 2: List of Documents Consulted

Appendix 3: List of People Consulted

Appendix 4: FAO - GEF Evaluation Criteria Rating Table and Rating Scheme

Appendix 5: Project Expected Results and Planned Activities

Appendix 6: FAO-GEF Co-financing Table

## Appendix 1: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Main Questions	Sub Questions (research questions)	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<b>1. Relevance</b>	Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and stakeholders?	1.1 Were the needs, capacities and resources of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management known in the beginning of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence and adequacy of a base-line study during the project preparation</li> <li>-Degree to which the project takes into account beneficiaries and stakeholders needs</li> <li>- Beneficiaries and stakeholders perceptions respect to adequacy of project's strategy and activities to national realities and existing capacities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents and reports</li> <li>- Project MTE</li> <li>- FAO, project staff and project partners</li> <li>- Government officials</li> <li>- Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents analysis</li> <li>- Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partners, government officials and beneficiaries</li> <li>- Field visit</li> </ul>
		1.2 Were the project's strategy relevant and adequate to meet the needs, capacities and resources of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management?			
		1.3 Were the project's planned actions (activities) adequate to meet the needs, capacities and resources of the beneficiaries and all stakeholders involved in sustainable land management?			

<b>2. Achievement of project results (Effectiveness)</b>	To what extent is the project effective in achieving its expected outcomes and objectives?	2.1 To what extent have project outcomes and objectives been achieved? <i>- SLM best practices mainstreamed into national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programmes</i> <i>- Up-scaling of SLM best practices catalyzed in countries through targeted actions on the ground and strategic decision making from local to national level.</i> <i>- Knowledge management and decision support system and tools used to support evidence-based strategy formulation at national level for promoting SLM, and contributing to global processes to address DLDD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New methodologies, skills and knowledge</li> <li>- SLM relevant changes in national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programmes</li> <li>- Change in capacities for information management</li> <li>- Upscaled SLM methodologies adopted in new agricultural or forestry investments (by investors, companies, communities, farmers)</li> <li>- Change in capacities for awareness raising</li> <li>- Change in capacities for policy making and planning</li> <li>- New technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National or sub-national plans, investment frameworks, policies, programs</li> <li>- Project documents and reports</li> <li>- Project MTE</li> <li>- FAO, project staff and project partners</li> <li>- Government officials</li> <li>- Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents analysis</li> <li>- Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partners, government officials and beneficiaries</li> </ul>
		2.2 Did the project produce any unintended results, either positive or negative?			
		2.3 What are the contributing factors for the results achieved that can be particularly attributed to the project?			
		2.4 To what extent has the global DLDD and SLM decision-support platform been able to develop technical and scientific tools and methods for SLM upscaling?			

<b>3. Efficiency of the project implementation and execution</b>	To what extent is the project making best use of human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results?	3.1 How did the project's management and execution contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in project implementation approach to improve efficiency</li> <li>- Availability and quality of financial and technical project reports</li> <li>- Planned vs. real funds leveraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents and reports</li> <li>- Project MTE</li> <li>- FAO, project staff and project partners</li> <li>- Government officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents analysis</li> <li>- Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partners and government officials</li> </ul>
		3.2 How did the project's institutional arrangements and partnerships contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?			
		3.3 How did the project's financial and human resources contribute to, or impede, the achievement of the project's results and objectives?			
		3.4 To what extent has the management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?			
		3.5 To what extent has the expected co-financing been delivered?			
		3.6 To what extent were the <b>recommendations provided by the MTE</b> addressed in the second phase of the project?			
<b>3. Efficiency Recommendations provided by the Mid Term Evaluation (3.5)</b>	To what extent were the recommendations provided by the MTE addressed in the	<b>1) Project Implementation Team (PCU)</b> The project implementation team needs to be more responsive to country-based implementation teams' requests. It is suggested for instance that a brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in the responsiveness of PCU to requests from countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents and reports</li> <li>- FAO, project staff and project partners</li> </ul>	



	second phase of the project?	project update should be sent electronically to all once a month. Communication tools such as skype should also be used to increase communications between the PCU and participating countries.		- Government officials	
		<b>2) PCU and PSC</b> A greater focus on sustainability and upscaling project achievements during the last period of this project is necessary. The assumption that upscaling SLM practices can be achieved through mainstreaming SLM approaches into sectoral policies is valid but the mainstreaming strategy formulated in the project document is not convincing. Discussions with participating countries on exit strategies are needed to identify what the project could support to improve the likelihood of project achievements to be sustained over the long term.	- Existence of an exit strategy in each participating country		
		<b>3) PCU and PSC</b> More PSC meetings (2-3?) are recommended during the last year of the project, focusing on the project exit.	- Number of PSC meetings during the last year		
		<b>4) PCU</b> Increase the financial transparency of project disbursements and the reliability of information to produce timely and	- Increase in the financial transparency and changes in the quality of financial reports		

		accurate financial reports per project outcome.			
		<b>5) PCU</b> Strengthen the monitoring and reporting on gender disaggregated data and information. Gender disaggregated reporting on related outputs in the indicator tracking table should be made mandatory. Recording the participation of men and women land users in project activities at the land use level should be encouraged so as to get a better understanding of the impact of the project at the local level. Countries that have just started implementing their project should consult with the Gender Focal Points in the FAO country offices in order to promote greater participation by men and women land users.	- Change in the quantity and quality of gender disaggregated reporting		
		<b>6) PCU</b> Add and monitor the risk "weak coordination and networking hampering the exchange of knowledge and experiences among the Parties" to the project risks log; including the formulation of mitigation actions as needed. Adding this risk log and	- Was weak coordination and networking added to the project risk log		

		monitoring it will allow the project implementation team to quicker act upon any deterioration of these critical functions of the project.			
		<b>7) PCU</b> Focus the global and regional project support on countries with the most needs, including Tunisia, Bosnia, Morocco, Thailand, China, Turkey, Philippines, Nigeria, Lesotho and Bangladesh.	- Amount of global and regional support given to listed countries with the most needs		
		<b>8) FAO and CDE/WOCAT</b> Conduct an independent assessment of the DS-SLM methodological framework, including the LADA tools, LADA local and the WOCAT knowledge platform. The current focus is more on land use and less on land users. There is a need to assess the implicit objective of this framework that by applying SLM best practices, land productivity and sustainability will increase, and by extension it is assumed that land users will benefit from this and sustain these practices.	- Was the independent assessment done?		
		<b>9) FAO and GEF</b> As an implementing agency, FAO needs to find a more efficient way to mobilize project financial resources to a project	- Changes in the fund mobilization systems		

		with a global reach; particularly when these resources are small grants. The result is that "transaction costs" are very high for a limited value added to the project.			
<b>4. Monitoring and evaluation</b>	To what extent the project monitoring and evaluation system supported timely decision making?	4.1 How effective was the functioning of the project results-based M&E system to follow up progress?	- Existence, quality and utility of the M&E system	- Project documents and reports - Project MTE - FAO, project staff and project partners - Government officials	- Documents analysis - Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partners and government officials
		4.2 How was the information from this system used to make timely decisions during project implementation?			
<b>5. Stakeholder engagement</b>	To what extent stakeholder engagement contributed to project implementation?	5.1 To what extent has the project engaged stakeholders – in particular farmers and herders, in pilot site management?	- Activities conducted to support cooperative arrangements and partnerships - Degree to which project activities have been taken over by local/national counterparts/organizations	- Project documents and reports - Project MTE - FAO, project staff and project partners - Government officials - Beneficiaries	- Documents analysis - Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partner, government officials and beneficiaries - Field visit
		5.2 To what extent the project developed new and enhanced existing partnerships?			
<b>6. Progress to impact</b>	To what extent and how is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in decision	6.1 How is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM in national planning, financing and policy frameworks?	- Activities conducted to support the development of new laws and policies - Evidence of SLM investments by investors, companies, communities, farmers	- Project documents and reports - MTE - FAO, project staff and project	- Documents analysis including national policies, strategies and programmes - Interviews with FAO and project staff,
		6.2 How is the project likely to contribute to the mainstreaming of SLM			

	making at national and sub-national levels?	in sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks? 6.3 Is there any evidence of SLM mainstreaming at the decision-making level that can be attributed to the project? 6.4 Are there any barriers or risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term results? 6.5 What is the likelihood of longer-term impacts of the project?	- Evidence of commitments by policy makers to mainstream SLM in national and sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks	partners - Government officials - National policies, strategies and programmes	project partners and government officials
<b>7. Gender</b>	To what extent the project considered gender in its implementation?	7.1 How the project contributed to the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups throughout its implementation? 7.2 How the project mainstreamed gender considerations in its implementation?	- Degree to which the project takes into account gender (and vulnerable groups) policies from each country - Gender disaggregated data in project documents	Project documents and reports - MTE - FAO, project staff and project partners - Government officials	- Documents analysis - Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partners and government officials
<b>8. Sustainability</b>	To what extent are steps being taken to ensure project sustainability?	8.1 To what extent has the project created ownership among counterparts and stakeholders? 8.2 What is the evidence that project counterparts and stakeholders will continue their activities after the project ends? 8.3 How sustainable are the results achieved at the environmental level?	- Evidence that particular partnerships will be sustained - Evidence of steps taken to address sustainability (environmental, social, institutional and financial) - Evidence of commitments	Project documents and reports - MTE - FAO, project staff and project partners - Government officials	- Documents analysis - Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partner, government officials and beneficiaries

		8.4 How sustainable are the results achieved at the institutional and financial level?	from partners and other stakeholders to financially support relevant actions after the project ends		
		8.5 How sustainable are the results achieved at the social level?			
<b>9. Lessons learnt</b>	What are the main lessons learnt from the project?	9.1 What lessons can be learned from the project, in terms of its design new approaches (e.g. introduction of the Decision Support Framework) and implementation that may be useful for future and similar FAO interventions particularly funded by the GEF or other donors in general?	- Existence, quality and utility of the M&E system, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share lessons learned and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents and reports</li> <li>- MTE</li> <li>- FAO, project staff, project partners, government officials</li> <li>- Government officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents analysis</li> <li>- Interviews with FAO and project staff, project partner, government officials and beneficiaries</li> </ul>
		9.2 What lessons can be learned from the project, in terms of up-scaling and sustainability that may be useful for future and similar FAO interventions particularly funded by the GEF or other donors in general?			

## Appendix 2: List of Documents Consulted

**DS-SLM Project**, DS-SLM Steering Committee Meeting (Rome, 27 April 2018) – Agenda  
**DS-SLM Project**, Expenditure Plan for the Project – 16 March 2018  
**DS-SLM Project**, Key Indicators to be Tracked by NPCUs  
**DS-SLM Project**, M&E data tools and templates  
**DS-SLM Project**, Minutes of the Project Task Force Meeting – 16 March 2018  
**DS-SLM Project**, Report of the Global Meeting of the Project, 24 - 27 April 2018, FAO, Rome, Italy  
**FAO**, 2010, Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development  
**FAO**, 2012, Environmental Impact Assessment – Guidelines for FAO Field Projects  
**FAO**, 2013, FAO Policy on Gender Equality – Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development  
**FAO**, 2014, Policy Engagement & Theory of Change – Monitoring and Analyzing Food and Agriculture Policies II (MAFAP II)  
**FAO**, 2015, Environmental and Social Management Guidelines  
**FAO**, 2015, Manual Chapter VII - Operational Modalities  
**FAO**, 2015, Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management, Project Document  
**FAO**, August 2016, FAOSTYLE  
**FAO** 2017, Landscapes for Life – Approaches to landscape management for sustainable food and agriculture.  
**FAO** 2018, Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism, FLRM (leaflet)  
**FAO** 2019, Course: Sustainable land management and land restoration. FAO e-learning Center: [www.fao.org/elearning](http://www.fao.org/elearning)  
**FAO**, LOAs: WOCAT, BIH and China  
**FAO**, Co-financing for GEF DS-SLM Project (GEF Project ID 4922)  
**FAO**, Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management, Project Document (project leaflet)  
**FAO**, Land Resources Planning (LPR) to address land degradation and promote Sustainable Land Management (SLM) (leaflet)  
**FAO**, FAO/Government Cooperative Programme (GCP) (sample)  
**FAO**, FAO Response to GEFSEC Comments  
**FAO**, Office Memorandum: GCP/GL0/337/GFF - Request for extension of project NTE date only  
**FAO**, Project financial summaries  
**FAO-CBL**, July 2017, Survey "Review and Evaluation of Participatory Land Use / Resource Planning Tools"  
**FAO-CBL**, Request for extension of Project NTE date only. Office Memorandum. 8 March 2019  
**FAO, GEF**, Letters of Confirmation of Co-financing (2014)  
**FAO, GEF**, FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review – 2016 Revised Template – Period covered 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016  
**FAO, GEF**, FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review – Period covered July 2016 to 30 June 2017  
**FAO, GEF**, FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review - 2018 – Revised Template - Period covered: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018

**FAO-GEF** project monitoring tool, Guide for Planning and Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of FAO – GEF Projects and Programmes, FAO GEF Coordination Unit, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Draft, Version 1.1, February 2019

**FAO, GEF**, Project Progress Report Format

**FAO, GEF, DS-SLM Project**, Countries Progress Reports: baselines, first semester 2016, second semester 2016, 2017

**FAO, GEF, DS-SLM Project**, Guidelines for Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

**FAO, GEF, DS-SLM Project**, Key Indicators to be tracked by countries

**FAO, GEF, DS-SLM Project**, 2017. Encuentro itinerante de manejo sostenible de la tierra Cuba. Informe DS-SLM América Latina y el Caribe. Actividad de Cooperación Sur-Sur.

**FAO, GEF, DS-SLM Project**, Project Task Force Meeting – 16 March 2018

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT, DS-SLM Project**, 2019, The Sustainable Land Management Mainstreaming Tool, author: Soledad Bastidas Fegan.

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT, DS-SLM Project**, 2019, Guidelines for the national assessment and mapping of land degradation and conservation, authors: Monica Petri, Riccardo Biancalani, Lehman Lindeque, Freddy Nachtergaele.

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT**, Country Proposals and Activities on Capacity Development (Workshop, May 2014)

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT**, Country Proposals on SLM Assessment (Workshop, May 2014)

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT**, Country Proposals on SLM Up-scaling and Mainstreaming (Workshop, May 2014)

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT**, Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling out Sustainable Land Management - DS - SLM

**FAO, GEF, WOCAT**, Global Meeting of the Project Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling-up of Sustainable Land Management (DS-SLM) in Rome, April 24-27, 2018: Agenda, Summaries of Achievements (per country), Country Contributions to the Meeting, Global Presentations, Country Project Reports

**FAO-OED**, October 2017, OED's Capacity Development Evaluation Framework and General Questions on project design

**FAO-OED**, OED Project Evaluation Manual, Planning and conducting project evaluations, August 2018

**FAO-OED**, Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project "Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management" GCP/GLO/337/GFF, November 2018.

**FAO, WOCAT**, Launch Workshop of the Global GEF/FAO project on Decision Support for Scaling up and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management (DS-SLM) - September 8 - 11, 2015 (country presentations and other documents used at the workshop)

**FAO, WOCAT**, May 2015, DS-SLM Technical Guidelines – Module 1: Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management into National Policy Instruments

**GEF**, 2014, GEF-6 Programming Directions

**GEF**, April 2, 2018, GEF-7 Replenishment – Programme Directions

**GEF**, Final Draft PIF (2011)

**GEF**, Final PIF (2012)

**GEF**, GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies

**GEF**, GEF Secretariat Review for F/MSPs (2 versions)

**GEF-IEO**, May 2017, Land Degradation Focal Area Study

**GEF**, July 2013, Investing in Land Stewardship

**GEF**, June 9, 2017, Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy

**GEF**, Land Degradation Neutrality at the GEF



- GEF**, November 2010, The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- GEF, PIF** (2012)
- GEF, PIF** (2012 - Resubmission)
- GEF, PPG document** (Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management)
- GEF**, Request for CEO Endorsement (2014)
- GEF**, Sustainable Land Management Financing in the GEF – A Primer for the Sixth GEF Replenishment Phase (GEF-6)
- GEF, UNEP, UNDP**, 2013, Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands – LADA Project – Methodology and Results. General coordinators: Freddy Nachtergaele and Riccardo Biancalani. Authors: Riccardo Biancalani, Freddy Nachtergaele, Monica Petri, Sally Bunning. Editor: Anne Woodfine.
- GEF, UNEP, UNDP**, 2013, Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands – LADA Project – Mapping Land Use Systems at Global and Regional Scales for Land Degradation Assessment Analysis, Version 1.1. General coordinators: Freddy Nachtergaele and Riccardo Biancalani. Authors: Freddy Nachtergaele, Monica Petri. Editor: Anne Woodfine.
- GEF, UNEP, UNDP** 2013, Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands, LADA Project. Questionnaire for Mapping Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management (QM), Version 2. General coordinators: Freddy Nachtergaele and Riccardo Biancalani. Authors: Hanspeter Liniger, Godert van Lynden, Freddy Nachtergaele, Gudrun Schwilch, Riccardo Biancalani. Editor: Anne Woodfine.
- GEF, UNEP, UNDP**, 2016, Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands – LADA Project – Manual for Local Level Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management, Part 1: Planning and methodological approach, analysis and reporting. General coordinators: Freddy Nachtergaele and Riccardo Biancalani. Authors: Sally Bunning, John McDonagh, Janie Rioux. Editor: Anne Woodfine.
- GEF, UNEP, UNDP**, 2016, Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands – LADA Project – Manual for Local Level Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management, Part 2: Field methodology and tools. General coordinators: Freddy Nachtergaele and Riccardo Biancalani. Authors: Sally Bunning, John McDonagh, Janie Rioux. Editor: Anne Woodfine.
- Liniger H, Bunning S, Harari N, Mekdaschi Studer R, Nachtergaele F**, Decision Support Framework for Mainstreaming and Scaling-up Sustainable Land Management.
- STAP**, Scientific and Technical Screening of the PIF
- TCI-GEF Coordination Unit**, 2017 PIR Process Guidance
- UNCCD**, Guidelines for Alignment of National Action Programmes – An Introduction
- UNCCD**, National Action Programmes Alignment and National Reporting
- UNCCD**, 10-year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)
- UNCCD, UNFCCC**, Integration of UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAP) with UNFCCC National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs)
- UNCCD, UNCCD** Third Scientific Conference (March 9-12, 2015)
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- WOCAT**, DS-SLM Knowledge Management Platform
- WOCAT**, Knowledge Management and Decision Support for Sustainable Land Management (project leaflet)

**WOCAT**, Decision 3/COP.8 – The 10-year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention

**WOCAT**, Decision Support Framework for SLM mainstreaming and scaling out

**WOCAT**, Project Document: Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management

**WOCAT**, Project Evaluation Manual Annexes – Annex 3B – Project Evaluation Report Outline for GEF Projects

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## **Colombia**

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## **Ecuador**

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### **Appendix 3: List of People Consulted**

#### ***Global Conference in Ankara, Turkey from 24 to 27 April 2019:***

Dr Md Ali Sohrab, National Project Coordinator, Bangladesh (provided written replies to evaluation questions)

Mr Md Islam Sadekul, Project Focal Point, Bangladesh

Dr Custovic Hamid, National Project Coordinator, entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (provided written replies to evaluation questions)

Dr Ljusa Melisa, Deputy National Project Coordinator, entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr Sun Tao, National Project Coordinator, China

Mr Wang Guosheng, National Project Deputy Coordinator, China (provided written replies to evaluation questions)

Mr Zhang Deping, Project Expert, China

Ms Moshoeshoe Matoka, National Project Coordinator, Lesotho (provided written replies to evaluation questions)

Mr Koetlisi Koetlisi, Project Focal Point, Lesotho

Mr Bensouiba Hamid, Project Expert, Morocco

Ms Ventigan Filipina, Project Focal Point, Philippines

Mr Pine Baldwin, Project Expert, Philippines

Mr Nongharnpitak Nuntapon, Project Focal Point, Thailand

Mr Pothinam Anuwat, Project Expert, Thailand

Ms Saadallah Jamila, Project Expert, Tunisia

Mr Gonzalez Hernan, GEF Coordination Unit, FAO

Ms de la Rosa Rosalund, FAO Consultant, Thailand

Mr Schlingloff Stefan, Project Manager, FAO

Ms Fetsi Theodora, FAO CBL

Ms Grandi Alessandra, FAO CBL

Ms Moz Christofolletti Maria, FAO OED

Mr Ahaduzzaman Sheikh FAO SEC



### **Face-to-face Interviews**

#### **Argentina**

Marcelo Wilson, Coordinador sitio piloto Cuenca Las Estacas

Cecilia Rubio, CONICET Miembro de la Comisión Directiva del ONDTyD

#### **Bosnia and Herzegovina, entity Republic of Srpska**

Mr Babic Mladen, National Project Coordinator

Mr Sipka Milan, Project Focal Point

#### **Colombia**

Ana María Rivero, Cancillería

Carolina Olivera, FAO Colombia Equipo de proyecto

Daniel Rozo, Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (MADR)

Deyanohora Cardenas, Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC)

Javier Otero, FAO Colombia Coordinador de proyecto

Luz Marina Arevalo, UPRA

Manuela Angel, FAO Asistente Representante

Marco Aurelio Bolaños, MADR

Reinaldo Sanchez, IDEAM

Sandra Ruiz, Consultora

#### **Ecuador**

Diego Guzman, SENAGUA

Eric Metzler, Ministerio de Agricultura (MAG)

Johanna Flores, FAO Ecuador

John Preissing, FAO Ecuador Representante

Juan Andrés Calles López, FAO Coordinador de proyecto

Karina Salinas, Ministerio del Ambiente (MAE)

Misael Yanez, Instituto Espacial Ecuatoriano (IEE)

Robert Andres Erreis Penarreta, MAE

Rosa González, MAE

Soledad Andrade, IEE

Verónica Loayza, MAG

## **Morocco**

Mr. Abdelhak Laiti, Assistant FAO Representative (Program)

Mr. Mohamed Endichi, Director of Fight Against Desertification and Protection of Nature, Department of Water, Forests and Fight Against Desertification (DLCDPN / HCEFLCD)

Mr. Youness Bouziani, Project Focal Point, DLCDPN / HCEFLCD

Mr Hajibi, DLCDPN / HCEFLCD

Mr Ouchna Rochdi, National Project Coordinator, Regional Directorate of Water, Forests and Fight Against Desertification of South-West (Agadir) (DREFLCD-SO)

Mr. Mokader Aissa, Service Chief DREFLCD-SO

Ms. Touani Nonna, Member of the Project Coordination Unit, DREFLCD-SO

Mr. Achour Ahmed, Studies, DREFLCD-SO

Mr. Choulli, Director, Regional Administration, Souss-Massa Region

Mr. Ouassas Mohamed, Regional Environmental Directorate, Souss-Massa Region

Ms. Kautar Aduass, Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Souss-Massa Region

Ms. Karima, Social Development Agency

Mr. Mohamed Oulammou, Director, Development of Environment Projects, National Agency for the Development of Oasis Zones and Argan Areas (ANDZOA)

Ms. Nadia Eddaif, GIS Expert, ANDZOA

Mr. Youssef Karra, Principal Engineer, National Institute of Agriculture Research (INRA)

Mr. Boubker Foughali, Provincial Director, Directorate of Water, Forests and Fight Against Desertification, Agadir (DPEFLCD-Ag)

Mr. Said Elmrabet, Forest Engineer, DPEFLCD-Ag

Mr. Ahejam, Network of Associations of Argan Cultivation in the Biosphere Reserve, RARBA

Mr. Mohamed Jer, Tirogza Rural Development Association

Mr. Ahmad Farouki, Tirogza Rural Development Association

Mr. Hebrih Abdessadek, Sector Chief of Forestry in Tamri

Asif Naitamar Banana Producers Cooperative, Bioproduction with certification

Mr. Omar Moqodoh, Association Igra for the Development and Environment

Mr. Mohamed Itohar, Association Igra for the Development and Environment

Mr. Mustafa Charifi, Resilliance Association

Mr. Hmed Ouchia

Mr. Mbarak El Qorchi

Mr. Salah Laaouichi, Sector Chief of Forestry in Amskroud

Mr. Mohamed Wahmane, President, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

Mr. Lmsen Zaza, Vice President, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

Mr. Omar Barra, Secretary General, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

Mr. Losayn Boutouga, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

Mr. Ahmed Boutanga, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

Mr. Bihi Farkas, Bismillam Association, Douar Sidi Boushab, Amskroud, Agadir

## **Panama**

Adoniram Sanches Peraci , FAO Coordinador Subregional para Mesoamérica

Catalina García, Productora cuenca Tonosi

David Morales, FAO SLM

Dimas Cedeño, Productor cuenca Parita

Edgar Bravo, Instituto Panameño Técnico Agropecuario de Tonosi

Eduard García, Proyecto Ecológico Azuero

Gladys Villareal, Ministerio de Ambiente (MinAmbiente)

Hipolita Mitre, Productora cuenca Parita

Ines Beernaerts, FAO SLM

Isaías Martínez, Fundación PANAMA (Consultor)

Joshua Jaramillo, MinAmbiente equipo de proyecto

Karima Lince, MinAmbiente Coordinadora de proyecto

Keisy De Gracia, Instituto Panameño Técnico Agropecuario de Tonosi

Kevin Wing, MinAmbiente equipo de proyecto

Luigi Franceschi, Fundación PANAMA (Consultor)

Ma. del Carmen Ruiz, FAO SLM

Sandra Vásquez, Proyecto Ecológico Azuero

Tamara Hernández, FAO Panamá

Valentín Saénz, Productor cuenca Tonosi

Yerania Sánchez, FAO SLM

Alcibiades Bustavino, MinAmbiente Director Regional

## **Thailand**

Ms. Jintaridth Bunjirtluk, National Project Coordinator, Thailand

## **Tunisia**

Ms Rafla Sahli Attia, National Project Coordinator, Tunisia

## **Turkey**

Ms Yavuz Özlem, National Project Coordinator, Turkey

Prof Gunay Erpul, FAO SEC, Ankara University

Mr Berber Fatih, NPC Expert

Mr Gem Engin, Communication Expert

## **Uzbekistan**

Mr Abdullaev Umid, National Project Coordinator

Ms Khasankhanova Gulchekhra, Project Focal Point

Manuyk Nadejda

## **Others**

Ms Bastidas Soledad, FAO CBL

Ms Harari Nicole, WOCAT

Ms Mekdaschi Rima, WOCAT

## **Skype Interviews**

María Laura Corso, SADS Coordinadora de proyecto, Argentina

Mariana Victoria Stamati, SADS, Argentina

Cristina Camardelli, Coordinadora sitio piloto Cacho Semiárido, Argentina

Alejandro Maggi, Coordinador de la Comisión de Buenas Practicas, Argentina

Flavio Galizzi, Bolsa de Cereales Provincia Entre Ríos, Argentina

Fernanda Rubio, Consultora para la estrategia de mainstreaming, Argentina

Mr Henry Mathieu, Project Contact Point at FAO Bangladesh

Eusebio Sanchez, FAO Colombia Equipo de proyecto, Colombia

Gabriel Chavez, FAO Colombia Coordinador portafolio GEF, Colombia

Luisa Vega, Consultora, Colombia

Maria Isabel Ochoa, FAO GEF Proyecto Conexión Biocaribe, Colombia

Martha Bolaños, Agrosavia (Corpoica), Colombia

Olga Lucía Ospina, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (MADS), Colombia

Jorge Rubio, Ex coordinador de proyecto, Ecuador

Pool Segarra, Consultor, Ecuador

Bernardo Aguilar, Fundación Neotropica (Consultor), Panama

Ruth Metzel, Proyecto Ecológico Azuero, Panama

Mr Contreras Sammy, National Project Coordinator, Philippines

Ms de la Rosa Rosalund, FAO Consultant, Thailand

Mr Maki Abdourahman, Project Contact Point at FAO Tunisia

Ms. Maude Veyret Picot, GEF Unit, FAO

Ms. Genevieve Braun, GEF Unit, FAO

Mr Stefan Schlingloff, Project Manager, CBD, FAO

Mr. Thomas Hammond, Lead Technical Officer, CBD, FAO

Mr. Eduardo Mansur, Budget Holder, CBD, FAO

Ms. Sally Bunning, FAO RLC

## Appendix 4: FAO - GEF Evaluation Criteria Rating Table and Rating Scheme

### FAO-GEF Evaluation Criteria Rating Table

Each criterion receives a rating derived from the evaluative assessment in the main document.

GEF - FAO criteria/sub criteria	Rating	Summary Comments
<b>E. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS</b>		
6. Overall quality of project outcomes		
6.1 Relevance		
6.2 Effectiveness		
6.3 Efficiency		
<b>F. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION RATING</b>		
7. Quality of project implementation		
8. Quality of project execution		
<b>G. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&amp;E) RATING</b>		
9. Overall quality of M&E		
9.1 M&E Design		
9.2 M&E Plan Implementation		
<b>H. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
10. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability		
10.1 Financial risk		
10.2 Socio-political risk		
10.3 Institutional risk		
10.4 Environmental risk		

### Rating Scheme

#### A. Overall Outcome ratings

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	"Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings."
Satisfactory (S)	"Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings."
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	"Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings."
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	"Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings."
Unsatisfactory (U)	"Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings."

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	"Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings."
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

## **B. Project Implementation ratings (Assess Implementation and Execution separately)**

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

## **C. Monitoring and Evaluation Design or Implementation Ratings (Overall M&E design, Assess Design and Implementation separately)**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe short comings in <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b> .



Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of <b>M&amp;E design or M&amp;E implementation</b>
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#### D. Sustainability

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

## Appendix 5: Project Expected Results and Planned Activities

The table below was compiled from the list of expected results and planned activities as anticipated in the project document. It will be used during the assignment by the Evaluation Team as a succinct summary of what is expected from this project. Progress made against these expected results and expected targets will be assessed during the evaluation and reported in the MTE report.

**Global Environmental Objective:** *Contribute to combating desertification land degradation and drought (DLDD) worldwide through scaling up sustainable land management best practices based on evidence based and informed decision making.*

**Project Development Objective:** *To increase the provision of ecosystem goods and services and enhance food security in countries and regions affected by DLDD through the promotion of SLM and integrated management and efficiency in the use of natural resources.*

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
<b>Outcome 1.1</b> – SLM best practices mainstreamed into national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programs	<b>Output 1.1.1:</b> Countries delivering reliable DLDD and SLM assessments and information on SLM best practices suitable for mainstreaming at national or sub-national levels	<b>GEF: \$2,485,788</b> <b>Co-financing: \$16,662,090</b>	In each country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land-use/ management systems (LUS/LMS) will be characterized and mapped at subnational and, to the extent possible, national levels taking into account administrative units and landscape components</li> <li>National training/assessment workshop (15) will be organized to build capacity of key sectors/stakeholders in the conduct of a participatory assessment and use of analytical tools and methods as well as selection of sites and SLM interventions</li> <li>A multidisciplinary team will be set up and trained in each priority/ demonstration area to conduct local field diagnostic and DPSIR analysis, to assess and document SLM best practices on the ground</li> <li>A mechanism will be put in place for facilitating uploading into national and global databases of the data on assessed SLM practices, using simplified QT, QA and selected modules</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<b>Output 1.1.2:</b> DLDD and SLM assessments findings mainstreamed into planning and investment processes at national and sub-national levels		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report for each country (15) summarizing the results of the assessment and analysis, with supporting communicative maps, statistics and photographs</li> <li>• National review/planning workshops will be organized to prepare an operational strategy and targeted action plan (national/subnational and local) for SLM upscaling and mainstreaming in each country</li> <li>• Development and dissemination of attractive and targeted communication and capacity development tools.</li> <li>• In country training of decision-makers and supporting staff involved in SLM mainstreaming and upscaling strategies will be provided</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 1.1.3:</b> Strengthened regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing for DLDD and SLM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of capacity building needs of national partner institutions and design of training modules and sessions</li> <li>• Development of training materials on assessment, data collection, mapping, analysis and decision support</li> <li>• Training will subsequently be conducted in the four regions on assessment, data collection, mapping and analysis for decision support</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 1.2</b> – Up-scaling of SLM best practices catalyzed in countries through targeted actions on the ground and strategic decision making from local to national level	<b>Output 1.2.1:</b> Strengthened delivery mechanisms for SLM demonstration, awareness raising and training	<b>GEF: \$2,466,581</b> <b>Co-financing: \$14,807,267</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A training needs assessment will be carried out of the SLM delivery capacities of various extension and technical bodies including a review of existing training processes and materials.</li> <li>• Compilation and updating of training material with competent national and/ or regional research and extension institutions on the design and adaptation of SLM technologies targeting extension agents and other service delivery mechanisms</li> <li>• Production and dissemination of training materials through extension, training and education services</li> <li>• Training of trainers/facilitators in national institutions</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<b>Output 1.2.2:</b> Implementation of SLM best practices leading to adoption and progressive up- scaling of cost effective and innovative SLM technologies covering a spectrum of LUS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local demonstration areas for testing and dissemination of SLM practices,</li> <li>Selection of SLM practices that will be implemented at demonstration areas</li> <li>DLDD and SLM impacts and adoption rates will be monitored at the demonstration areas together with bottlenecks/barriers to upscaling</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 1.2.3:</b> Strengthened country and regional capacity for DLDD and SLM scaling up delivered by FAO-WOCAT and through regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefs, case studies and available training materials will be collected, where possible with the help of National Lead Agencies covering: creation of enabling environment for SLM; monitoring and assessment of SLM; capacity development for the spread and wide adoption of SLM technologies; capacity development of service providers in effective scaling out approaches; and mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2.1 –</b> Knowledge management and decision- support system and tools used to support evidence-based strategy formulation at national level for promoting SLM, and contributing to global processes to address DLDD	<b>Output 2.1.1:</b> A federated FAO-WOCAT, online and open access DLDD and SLM decision-support platform established that links technical and scientific information and data, networks, country partners and 2-5 global/ (sub)regional partners and programs (FAO, UNCCD CST, IPCC, WOCAT partners, etc.)	<b>GEF: \$450,005</b> <b>Co-financing: \$6,217,991</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity development support and backstopping will be provided to countries on the use of the global platform that will facilitate knowledge sharing, learning and informed decision making on SLM</li> <li>Update and validation of global data sets, through FAOStats, GeoNetwork, GLADIS and Soilgrid, for regional and global analyses and modelling on land resources status and trends</li> <li>Exchange of knowledge and data between global land degradation and SLM components and between global and national platforms</li> <li>Links and collaboration will be established with other existing databases and platforms</li> <li>To inform upscaling of SLM at global level, SLM experiences will be summarized and synthesized into key messages and case studies for different LUS, countries, etc.</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<b>Output 2.1.2:</b> Guidelines for harmonized approaches and standardized methods and tools to assess land management systems in terms of DLDD and SLM available and supporting informed decision making for upscaling of SLM best practices		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Finalized guidelines for the conduct of a rapid and reasonably accurate identification and mapping of the status and the trends of the quality of land resources and of applied land management practices, their impacts and effects.</li><li>Following the implementation of the rapid national assessment countries will carry out more detailed subnational and local assessments during the course of the overall project.</li><li>A survey will be undertaken to monitor the uptake and use of methods, tools, and knowledge gained under the project and the overall usefulness of the knowledge management and decision support platform</li><li>To the extent possible the global database will be updated and simplified through co-funding; additional resources will be mobilized for developing an offline version for use by countries that have poor internet access in rural areas and templates will be improved</li></ul>
<b>Outcome 3.1 –</b> Project implementation based on adaptive results-based management	<b>Output 3.1.1:</b> Project web-based monitoring system established	<b>GEF: \$350,000</b> <b>Co-financing: \$210,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>M&amp;E and communication activities to ensure a systematic results-based monitoring and evaluation of project progress towards achieving project outputs and outcome targets as established in the Project Results Framework as well as promote the wider dissemination of project results</li></ul>
	<b>Output 3.1.2:</b> Midterm and final evaluation carried out		
	<b>Output 3.1.3:</b> Communication and dissemination of project results		
<b>Project Management</b>		<b>GEF: \$364,356</b>	<b>Co-financing: \$200,000</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>GEF: \$6,116,730 + Co-financing: \$38,097,348 = Total: \$44,214,078</b>	

Source: Project Document

## Appendix 6: FAO-GEF Co-financing Table

Name of the Co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized Co-financing by the end of July 2019 (according to the information received by the evaluation Team) (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind <sup>36</sup>	Cash	Total
Argentina	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	270,318		270,318	113,539		113,539
Bangladesh	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	610,000		610,000	40,099		40,099
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	990,000		990,000	1,319,951		1,319,951
China	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	700,000		700,000	200,000		200,000
Colombia	Nat. Gov.	In-kind/cash	224,000	336,000	560,000	669,304		669,304
Ecuador	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	300,000		300,000	345,483		345,483
Lesotho	Nat. Gov.	In-kind/cash	950,000		950,000	946,000		946,000
Morocco	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	950,000		950,000	29,000		29,000
Nigeria	Nat. Gov.	In-kind/cash	18,400,000		18,400,000			
Panama	Nat. Gov.	In-kind/cash	1,440,000	600,000	2,040,000	750,400		750,400

<sup>36</sup> All the project countries reported only In-kind co-financing, although at GEF-CEO endorsement / approval three countries had indicated cash contribution.

Name of the Co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized Co-financing by the end of July 2019 (according to the information received by the evaluation Team) (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind <sup>36</sup>	Cash	Total
Philippines	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	181,394		181,394	338,394		338,394
Thailand	Nat. Gov.	In-kind/cash	1,131,898	2,853,737	3,985,635	3,271,659		3,271,659
Tunisia	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	430,000		430,000	142,000		142,000
Turkey	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	200,000		200,000	200,000		200,000
Uzbekistan	Nat. Gov.	In-kind	150,000		150,000	193,120		193,120
WOCAT	Educ. & Research Inst.	In-kind/cash	1,500,000		1,500,000	1,500,000		1,500,000
FAO	GEF Agency	In-kind/cash	1,060,000	4,820,000	5,880,000	1,253,042	4,820,000	6,073,042
<b>Grand Total (in USD)</b>			<b>29,487,610</b>	<b>8,609,737</b>	<b>38,097,347</b>	<b>11,311,991</b>	<b>4,820,000</b>	<b>16,131,991</b>

## Appendix 7: List of Performance Indicators

Expected Results	Indicators	Targets
<b>Global Environmental Objective:</b> Contribute to combating desertification land degradation and drought (DLDD) worldwide through scaling up sustainable land management best practices based on evidence based and informed decision making.	1. Percentage increase in vegetative cover (and hence protection from erosion) 2. Number of ha of productive land by LUS with increased (agro) biodiversity at species and habitat levels 3. Percentage carbon sequestration (estimated through EX ACT or GCB tools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>xx% increase in vegetation cover:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10% cropland</li> <li>- 25% pasture land</li> <li>- x% forest land</li> </ul> </li> <li>xx ha of productive land by LUS with increased (agro) biodiversity at species and habitat level (#of species grown; proportion of annual to perennial species; area of forest/ grazing land under regeneration)</li> <li>xx% carbon sequestration increase by LUS</li> </ul>
<b>Project Development Objective:</b> To increase the provision of ecosystem goods and services and enhance food security in countries and regions affected by DLDD through the promotion of SLM and integrated management and efficiency in the use of natural resources.	4. Percentage increase in productivity in demonstration areas by Land Use System (LUS) 5. Percentage increase in population with improved access to water in demonstration areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 % increase in productivity by LUS</li> <li>10% of population with improved access to water in demonstration areas</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 1.1</b> – SLM best practices mainstreamed into national and/or sub-national agricultural and environmental plans and investment frameworks, policies and programs	6. Number of countries mainstreaming DLDD and SLM practices into relevant national policies, plans and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1.1.1:</b> Countries delivering reliable DLDD and SLM assessments and information on SLM best practices suitable for mainstreaming at national or sub-national levels	7. Number of countries delivering reliable assessments and having selected cost-effective and adapted SLM best practices for various LUS suitable for mainstreaming into policies and programmes 8. Number of persons in key institutions per country (gender disaggregated) using assessment and best practices tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15</li> <li>50/country at least 40 % women</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1.1.2:</b> DLDD and SLM assessments findings mainstreamed into planning and	9. Number of countries and policy/ planning processes in which DLDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least two policy/ planning processes in at least 12</li> </ul>



Expected Results	Indicators	Targets
investment processes at national and sub-national levels	and SLM assessment findings have been substantively integrated	countries (e.g. NAP-UNCCD and agriculture and/or SLM Strategy +)
<b>Output 1.1.3:</b> Strengthened regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing for DLDD and SLM	10. Number of South-South Cooperation events held and leading to concrete actions and recommendations (subject to co- funding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 1.2 – Up-scaling of SLM best practices catalyzed in countries through targeted actions on the ground and strategic decision making from local to national level</b>	11. Improved SLM technologies/best practices applied on xx ha 12. See also indicators and targets for biophysical changes and improved ecosystem services in the objective high level outcome table above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-scaling to at least 500,000 ha under SLM</li> <li>• 5 million ha SLM mainstreamed in plans for implementation during next 10 years after project end</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1.2.1:</b> Strengthened delivery mechanisms for SLM demonstration, awareness raising and training	13. Number of facilitators, extension workers and technical staff with acquired skills in SLM demonstration, awareness raising and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 900 (60 per each of 15 countries, at least 30% women)</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1.2.2:</b> Implementation of SLM best practices leading to adoption and progressive up-scaling of cost effective and innovative SLM technologies covering a spectrum of LUS	14. Number of landscape plans and sub-national Action Plans for up- scaling of SLM best practices in each LUS developed and implementation initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 30 landscape plans</li> <li>• At least 15 sub-national plans</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1.2.3:</b> Strengthened country and regional capacity for DLDD and SLM scaling up delivered by FAO-WOCAT and through regional and inter-regional capacity development and experience sharing processes	15. Number of capacity development events held with FAO-WOCAT expertise 16. Number of regional experience sharing events held with S-S cooperation 17. Numbers of persons trained and able to conduct DLDD and SLM assessments and document SLM best practices in competent institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 national and 15 sub-national</li> <li>• 4 regional experience sharing</li> <li>• 50 persons in all countries (additional to those already trained in the 3 LADA project countries)</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2.1 – Knowledge management and decision-support system and tools used to support evidence-based strategy formulation at national level for promoting SLM, and contributing to global processes to address DLDD</b>	18. Number of countries enabled to assess land area under SLM and the benefits generated 19. Number of countries able to report quantitatively and qualitatively on progress in addressing DLDD 20. Number of institutions in participating country using the federated knowledge platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15</li> <li>• 15</li> <li>• 45 institutions</li> </ul>

Expected Results	Indicators	Targets
<b>Output 2.1.1:</b> A federated FAO-WOCAT, online and open access DLDD and SLM decision-support platform established that links technical and scientific information and data, networks, country partners and 2-5 global/ (sub)regional partners and programs (FAO, UNCCD CST, IPCC, WOCAT partners, etc.)	21. Number of countries using the SLM best practices database for informed decision making (UNCCD, agriculture, INRM etc.) 22. Number of countries uploading datasets in the Global WOCAT databases on technologies, approaches and mapping 23. Number of countries reporting on SLM data and findings into scientific and technical decision- making processes 24. Number of decision making processes informed on DLDD trends and SLM results (FAO Governing bodies e.g. GSP-ITPS, UNCCD-CST and SPI, UNFCCC-IPCC and CBD- IPBES and COPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15</li> <li>• 15country datasets</li> <li>• 5</li> <li>• 3</li> </ul>
<b>Output 2.1.2:</b> Guidelines for harmonized approaches and standardized methods and tools to assess land management systems in terms of DLDD and SLM available and supporting informed decision making for upscaling of SLM best practices	25. Consolidated technical Guidelines with supporting case studies developed, validated and updated for wider uptake by countries for improved decision- making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final guidelines and case studies published</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 3.1 – Project implementation based on adaptive results-based management</b>	26. M&E system is in place to support adaptive results-based management and monitoring of SLM upscaling resulting from the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> </ul>
<b>Output 3.1.1:</b> Project web-based monitoring system established	27. Baseline and targets for global project indicators refined 28. Annual project implementation review (PIR) reports submitted to GEF Secretariat 29. Six monthly project progress reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 6</li> </ul>
<b>Output 3.1.2:</b> Midterm and final evaluation carried out	30. Mid-term and final evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation recommendations included in lessons learned</li> </ul>
<b>Output 3.1.3:</b> Communication and dissemination of project results	31. Global project website developed and regularly updated 32. Project newsletters and outreach materials developed and disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project website fully up to date with all project results</li> <li>• 4 project newsletters and/ or targeted briefs for DM bodies</li> </ul>

Source: Project Document and PIRs