CYNOSURE

DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF GOLD/SUPPLY CHAIN APPROACH TO ELIMINATING MERCURY IN GUYANA'S ASGM SECTOR: EL DORADO GOLD JEWELRY MADE IN GUYANA" CHILD PROJECT

RFP No. GEF-TE-GUYANA GOLD-012

SUBMITTED TO

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

18 September 2023

Acknowledgments

Cynosure International, Inc. *would like to thank all the individuals and institutions whose cooperation made this report possible. The terminal evaluation was supported by* ***Conservation International (CI)*** *and* ***Conservation International Guyana****. Our special thanks are due to CI-Guyana Project Director – Ms. Ingrid Sarabo; Technical Director – Mr. René Edwards; Snr. Coordinator, Project Development & Monitoring – Ms. Lisa Foster; Monitoring and Evaluation, GEF Project Agency – Mr. Rocky (Aki) Marcelino; Senior Manager, Project Oversight, CI-GEF Agency – Ms. Prapti Bhandary; Grants Manager CI-GEF – Ms. Shannon Wiecks; and Senior Director, Environmental and Social Framework – Mr. Ian Kissoon for their support and valuable insights at all stages of the evaluation.*

The Terminal Evaluation Team would also like to express their sincere gratitude to all the interviewed stakeholders who shared their invaluable knowledge, experiences, and challenges and offered their perspectives and advice.

Executive Summary

The project "A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project (henceforth, the Guyana Gold Project) was launched in May 2018 as a 48-month project initially set to conclude in May 2022. With CI-GEF as the Implementing Agency (IA), the project was executed by CI-Guyana as the lead Executing Agency (EA), with the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA) and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) as co-executing agencies. The Guyana Gold project was financed by a medium-sized GEF grant of USD 2.65 million, and with a total of USD 2,997,202 in co-financing from Conservation International (CI), WWF Guianas and the Government of Guyana. The overall objective of the project was to assist Guyana in transitioning to mercury-free Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) by 2025. The project aimed to achieve this objective by involving profit-motivated business enterprises to lead the shift towards developing a mercury-free ASGM supply chain and downstream branded jewelry. The project focused on demonstrating innovative approaches, tools, and partnerships with public and private sector actors to guide the switch to mercury-free mining and adopting environmentally friendly practices in the mining industry. Initially set to close in May 2022, the project received a 14-month no-cost extension, which set the end date for the project to June 2023.

The objective of the terminal evaluation was to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives. The evaluation aimed to promote accountability and transparency, facilitate synthesis of lessons, and contribute to the GEF Independent Evaluation Office's databases for aggregation and analysis. To that end, the scope of the current evaluation assessed the project implementation activities from its inception in May 2018 to its conclusion in June 2023. The TE from undertaken from May 2023 to September 2023, adopting a consultative and participatory approach and employing mixed methodologies by combining qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources. The TE was conducted based on an extensive desk review of relevant project documents, which was followed by 10 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives of with the IA, EA, co-executing agencies, 7 In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with public and private stakeholders, and 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with ASGM miners as part of the data collection process.

Overall, the Guyana Gold project was found to be ***Satisfactory*** in terms of relevance, as it addressed the environmental challenges of gold mining in Guyana, demonstrated strong alignment with institutional priorities at the global, national, and local levels. It was also in line with CI-Guyana and GEF's focal areas, contributed to ongoing projects, and supported international conventions and SDGs. It was in line with Guyana's national priorities, including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030. The project also aligned strongly with the focal areas of CI-Guyana and the GEF, contributing to ongoing projects, and supporting international conventions such as the

Minamata Convention on Mercury. The project effectively addressed the environmental challenges associated with gold mining in Guyana and promoted the adoption of mercury-free mining practices. It also engaged with stakeholders at different levels, including women miners, and created market linkages with a jeweler to test the value chain.

A review of the ***Project Design Assessment*** found that the project aimed to address the issue of mercury use in Guyana's ASGM sector by creating market incentives, promoting technology transfer, and raising awareness. The project design demonstrated a comprehensive approach, incorporating collaboration, market incentives, technology transfer, financial mechanisms, and policy development. However, several weaknesses in the design adversely affected implementation. These weaknesses included erroneous assumptions, overambitious targets, lack of technical expertise, misidentification of risks, absence of a technical expert for the demonstration sites, and limited involvement of key stakeholders in the design phase. The project design also lacked a dedicated monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

With regards to the project ***implementation and adaptive management***, the evaluation focused on the quality of supervision by CI-GEF, execution arrangements, financial management and co-financing, work planning, project-level monitoring systems, and reporting. The evaluation found that the ***quality of supervision provided by CI-GEF*** as the implementation agency was rated as ***satisfactory***. As CI-GEF effectively delivered on its mandate by reviewing progress reports, approving planning documents, and providing technical guidance to the project. The project faced initial challenges related to the constitution of the public-private collaboration and had to make adjustments to policies and regulations. However, CI-Guyana's adaptive approach allowed for internal orientation and trainings, enabling the team to refine their understanding of the policies. The project had a well-functioning team and demonstrated effective collaboration between multiple implementation partners. The evaluation also highlighted weaknesses in the project design that affected implementation, such as the lack of involvement of key stakeholders like the Guyana Gold Board. Overall, the project's ***execution arrangements*** were effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project, although there were challenges related to delays and limited government support and was rated ***Moderately Satisfactory***.

The project faced several delays in project implementation, primarily due to external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability in the Country. To account for these delays, the project was granted a 14-month no-cost extension until June 2023. This extension allowed the project to adjust its work plan and timelines to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. The project demonstrated effective project-level ***monitoring systems and reporting***. The project design included a comprehensive Project Results Framework and Monitoring Plan, which provided guidelines for monitoring and evaluating progress. However, the absence of a dedicated M&E staff posed a significant challenge in terms of tracking progress and conducting impact assessments. Nevertheless, the project produced regular progress reports, which were valuable for decision-making and documenting lessons learned and was found to be ***Satisfactory.***

In terms of financing and co-financing of the project, funded by a USD 2.65 million grant from the GEF, which was allocated across various project components. The highest allocation of funds, approximately 31%, was directed towards Component 2, which focused on establishing a financing mechanism for mercury-free technologies. The project also secured co-financing of USD 3.14 million from multiple co-financers, including CI, the Government of Guyana, and WWF Guianas. CI was the largest contributor of co-funding, providing 113% of the committed co-financing.

With regards to progress towards results, the Evaluation found that the project successfully introduced mercury-free technologies in Region 7 and conducted practical demonstrations that resulted in a positive response from miners under ***Component 1***. The evaluation found that practical demonstrations played a significant role in garnering a positive response from miners, including women miners. However, the evaluation also highlighted challenges in achieving the desired outcomes, such as the limited capacity to continue producing mercury-free gold and the absence of established markets for mercury-free gold. Despite these challenges, the project made progress in demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of mercury-free technologies, contributing to behavior change among miners. Overall, Component 1 made progress in mainstreaming appropriate mercury-free technologies in Guyana's ASGM sector, although there were limitations in achieving certain outcome targets.

Component 2 of the project focused on establishing a mechanism for financing capital investments in mercury-free technologies. The evaluation determined that progress in this component was limited. Private lending and financial institutions were unwilling to work with the ASGM sector without government-backed guarantees on the loans provided. Additionally, delays in submitting a report on marketing the El Dorado brand affected the progress. Despite the strong demand for financing, the project was unable to establish a financial mechanism under Outcome 2. The Evaluation also highlighted that the majority of miners were unaware of the potential benefits of using mercury-free methods, and the demand for mercury-free gold remained scarce. Overall, the project faced challenges in securing financing and creating incentives for the adoption of mercury-free technologies in the ASGM sector.

Component 3 of the project focused on establishing markets for branded mercury-free gold from Guyana. The objective was to develop a chain of custody process, verification mechanism for gold, and an El Dorado branding scheme. However, the evaluation found that the project made little progress under Outcome 3, as the establishment of markets for branded mercury-free gold heavily relied on the progress made in the previous components. The report highlights that progress on evidence-based change was directly linked to assessments and stakeholder consultations conducted under the earlier components. Limited progress in the first three components affected the overall success of Outcome 3. Therefore, the project faced challenges in achieving its intended outcomes for Component 3.

Under ***Component 4***, the project aimed to establish national level policies and incentives for mercury-free gold production. The expected outcome was the refinement/drafting of a national policy on responsible gold production and value added, along with requisite

laws/regulations to support a responsible gold commodity chain. However, the evaluation ascertained that there was little progress achieved in this component. No national policy, law, or regulation to support responsible gold production was put forward. The limited progress can be attributed to the lack of government support and the limited capacity of the project team to drive the development of such policies. Additionally, the progress on evidence-based change was directly linked to the assessments and stakeholder consultations conducted under the previous components of the project. Therefore, the limited progress in the first three components affected the overall success of Component 4.

Component 5 of the project focused on Monitoring and Evaluation. The main objective was to establish a monitoring and evaluation program for adaptive collaborative management to promote mercury-free mining practices. The Evaluation highlighted that the project faced challenges in fully institutionalizing the monitoring and evaluation framework, particularly due to travel and meeting restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, collaborative efforts were made to track the use of mercury in gold mining, and significant progress was achieved. The report does not provide specific details on the outcomes and targets of Component 5, but it emphasizes the importance of regular monitoring, reporting, and adaptations based on monitoring reports to ensure the project's effectiveness and manage risks.

Component 6 of the project focused on Communications and Knowledge Management. The objective of this component was to develop a strategic communication plan and materials targeting key stakeholders within the supply chain for awareness and policy advocacy. The project faced challenges due to COVID-19 travel and meeting restrictions, which hindered in-person education and awareness activities. However, the project proactively mitigated these challenges by utilizing digital media tools such as radio programs, WhatsApp, and the internet to ensure effective outreach. The project successfully created awareness among stakeholders about the environmental and health risks of mercury mining and promoted new mercury-free processing techniques and technologies. Overall, Component 6 made significant progress in achieving its outcome of developing a strategic communication plan and materials to raise awareness and advocate for responsible gold mining practices in Guyana.

In line with TE Guidelines, the following outcome ratings are provided for each outcome overall and along the dimensions of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Outcome	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Overall Rating
Outcome 1	Highly Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory
Outcome 2	Highly Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Outcome 3	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Outcome 4	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory

Outcome	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Overall Rating
Outcome 5	Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Outcome 6	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

The project demonstrated an overall ***Moderately Unlikely*** level of ***sustainability*** in various aspects. In terms of ***financial and institutional factors***, ongoing support from the international development sector and the Government of Guyana was identified as crucial for the sustainability of the project's outcomes. However, limited support from the government towards the oil and gas sector posed a challenge to the institutional sustainability of the project. In terms of ***socio-economic factors***, the project achieved significant buy-in from local miners, who actively participated in the demonstration sites and showed enthusiasm for adopting mercury-free technologies. The positive response from miners and the potential for wider adoption of these technologies indicate the project's potential for long-term sustainability. However, challenges such as the establishment of markets for branded mercury-free gold and the need for political will and stakeholder buy-in were identified as threats to sustainability. Overall, the project made progress in promoting sustainability in the gold mining sector in Guyana, but there is a need for continued efforts and support to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes.

In terms of the ***progress to impact***, the project aimed to eliminate mercury use in Guyana's ASGM sector through the demonstration of mercury-free technologies and the establishment of a sustainable supply chain for mercury-free gold jewelry. The evaluation found that the project made significant progress in demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of mercury-free technologies, particularly in Regions 7 and 8. Miners showed increased willingness to transition towards mercury-free technologies, and there was a better understanding of the health and environmental risks associated with mercury use. However, there were challenges in establishing markets for branded mercury-free gold, as the project faced resistance from miners and limited government support. The project also faced delays in establishing demonstration sites and did not achieve the desired outcomes in terms of mercury reduction and replacement. Overall, the project had a mixed impact on Guyana's gold mining sector, with limited progress in policy development and replication of mercury-free technologies. The full impact of the project's activities and behavior change among miners remains unclear due to the absence of an impact assessment.

The TE found that the project did not trigger any of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Standards under the ESS policy and complied with the other three ESMF policies as described in the table below.

Safeguard Policy	Rating	Justification
Indigenous Peoples	Satisfactory	The plan was designed to address the potential impacts of project activities on indigenous communities in Guyana, recognizing their cultural, social, and

Safeguard Policy	Rating	Justification
		environmental vulnerabilities. The project actively engaged with indigenous communities, following the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and ensuring their participation, protection of their rights, and equitable benefits. The project also involved the National Toshaos Council (NTC), representing elected Indigenous leaders, to ensure alignment with critical interests.
Stakeholder Engagement	Satisfactory	The project prepared a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan that involved stakeholder mapping, scoping, and input for implementation. The plan emphasized the importance of engaging stakeholders from various sectors, including the government, private sector, civil society, local villages, and indigenous and local peoples. The project actively conducted meetings, workshops, and consultations with stakeholders, ensuring their inclusion and participation throughout the implementation process. The plan also highlighted the importance of gender equity and mainstreaming indigenous peoples, further demonstrating the project's commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
Gender Mainstreaming Plan	Satisfactory	The project adopted a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming, addressing gender issues at multiple levels and throughout various project components. It emphasized the need for sensitization and capacity building on gender issues among stakeholders, as well as the collection of sex-disaggregated data and incorporation of gender indicators into monitoring and evaluation processes. The plan also recognized the specific challenges faced by women in the mining sector and aimed to provide equal opportunities for their participation and benefit from the project.
Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	Satisfactory	The Accountability and Grievance Mechanism plan of the project was found to be comprehensive. The plan outlined a framework for addressing unintended consequences and resolving concerns related to the project, offering multiple methods for

Safeguard Policy	Rating	Justification
		submitting complaints and setting specific timeframes for acknowledging and addressing grievances. The plan also emphasized the importance of timely responses and established a Grievance Mechanism Committee responsible for addressing complaints. Although no complaints were received through the plan during the project, the plan demonstrated a proactive approach to reducing project risks and ensuring effective communication and resolution of grievances.

Based on the above stated findings of the TE, recommendations are provided in the table below:

Recommendations for CI-GEF
Future projects must adopt lessons learned from other GEF GOLD Project countries. For example, in relation to financing, Colombia has reportedly developed a financial mechanism to aide small scale miners with the help of cooperatives. Similarly, to improve mining operations, Peru developed a gold tracing mechanism that encouraged more formal gold production, thereby enabling mercury-free gold mining. Whereas the project in Guyana has been able to successfully demonstrate the technology for mercury-free mining and has also generated substantial knowledge and learning materials on the subject.
The Terminal Evaluation found that all three key project stakeholders, including GEF (the funding agency), CI GEF (the implementing agency), and CI Guyana (the executing agency) lacked prior experience in mining sector, thereby resulting in a highly ambitious and unrealistic project design. It is therefore recommended that in the future GEF provides specialized technical support during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase for any program areas where key stakeholders lack such previous technical expertise.
In pilot projects of this nature, the allocation of human and financial resources to monitoring and impact assessment is essential. Therefore, future similar projects must include such resources in order to collect and document information that can facilitate future project design. It is important to mention that CI-GEF is now actively developing projects with dedicated M&E component as part of its efforts to mainstream the importance of M&E at every phase of the project.
Recommendations for CI-Guyana
This was the first ever initiative by CI Guyana to provide support to the mining sector and a lot remains to be done to develop the sector. It is recommended that building on the lessons learned and outcomes of this project, CI Guyana seeks funding for similar future initiatives. This can also help promote sustainability by reaching a greater number of miners through demonstrations.
It is also recommended that for future projects of similar nature, CI Guyana undertake a detailed situation assessment and scoping study to identify existing stakeholders, including financial institutions, mining equipment manufacturers, women miners, and other stakeholders already involved in the gold mining sector in Guyana. These stakeholders can

then be targeted and onboarded at the time of design for providing support throughout project implementation. This should particularly include strong support from mining organizations representing ASGM, manufacturers, and importers of machinery for mercury-free gold mining, and projects and institutions providing any financial support to the ASGM sector.
Small scale miners do not generally quantify their reserves. To formalize the mining operation and promote mercury-free mining, it is recommended that CI Guyana work with GGMC to train miners on quantifying the reserves based on internationally accepted standards.
Some of the miners interviewed from Region 8 found the jargon used in communication materials to be too technical in the explanation of the science of the project and was therefore not as persuasive to convince small scale miners who lack technical understanding. It is recommended that communication materials be revised to present a more simplified understanding of miners for mercury-free gold mining.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADoD	Addressing Drivers of Deforestation
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organization
CI	Conservation International
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CW	Chemical and Wastes
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GGB	Guyana Gold Board
GGDMA	Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners Association
GGMC	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
GLSC	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
GMP	Gender Mainstreaming Plan
GOLD	Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM Sector
GWMA	Guyana Women Miners Association
GWMO	Guyana Women Miners Organization
IA	Implementing Agency
IDI	In-depth interview
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
INDC	Guyana's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAP	National Action Plan
NBSAP	Guyana's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-government Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTC	National Toshaos Council
PAC	Protected Areas Commission
PAG	Project Advisory Group
PIR	Project Implementation Reports

PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBA	Rights Base Approach
RDC	Regional Democratic Council
RMI	Responsible Mining Initiative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound
TA	Technical Assistance
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WRM	Water Resources Management
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Annexes

1. Introduction

Guyana's Artisanal Small and Medium-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector has been in existence for more than one hundred years. The Guyana Mining Act (1989) gives the ASGM sector legal status, with the scale of mining (small, medium, or large) dependent on the size of the dredging equipment and technology used. The ASGM sector plays a central role in the Guyana's economy, accounting for 70 percent of the country's gold production and generates approximately 60 percent of Guyana's foreign exchange. The sector is counted as the main source of employment and revenue for hinterland communities and provides direct employment for over 18,000 persons.[1]

Gold in Guyana is produced primarily by hydraulic dredging and sluices, and mercury is used in the final stage of the gold extraction process (amalgamation). Mercury is used primarily by the ASGM sector; the large-scale miners use cyanide. Mining is the largest consumer of mercury and accounts for 94 percent of Hg emissions in the country (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2017). Between 2008 and 2010, an estimated 60,000 kg of mercury was imported annually.[2]

Miners often do not follow safety measures when working with mercury, and the waste is released into the environment since there are usually no containment structures for the generated waste. **The main barriers for shifting to mercury-free mining have been identified as a lack of knowledge on the harmful effects of mercury, the demonstration of and financing for mercury-free technologies, and market incentives for producing mercury-free gold**.

2. About the Project

This section provides the overall objectives of the *"GEF GOLD/ Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry: Made in Guyana" child project*[3]*,* as well as expected outputs, outcomes, and impact along with an overview of the implementation arrangements**.**

2.1. Project Background and Objectives

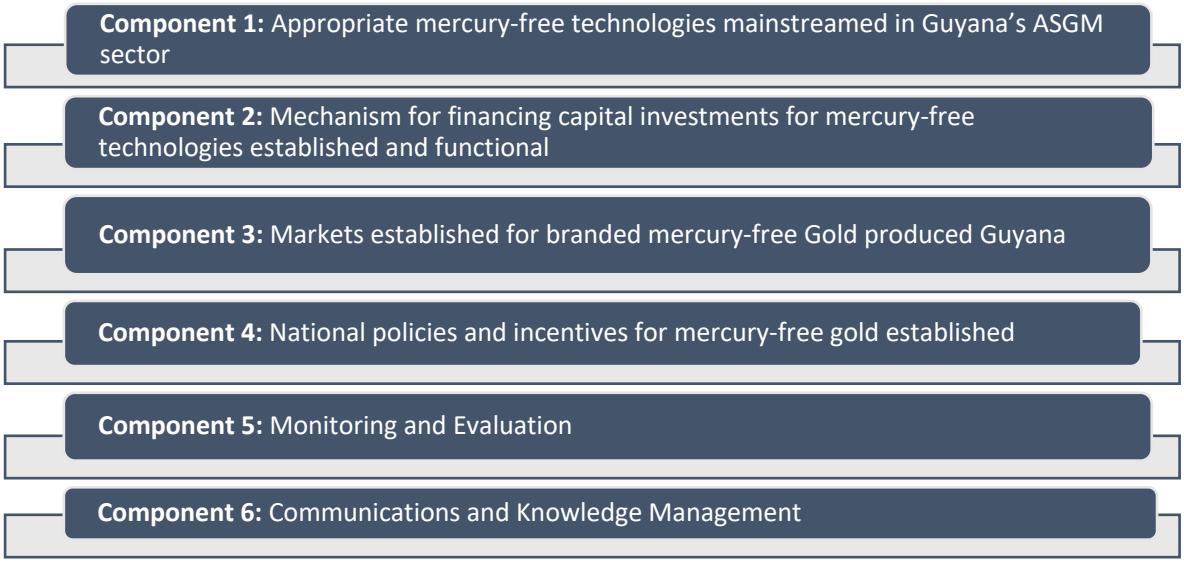
To address the barriers for shifting to mercury-free mining and to assist Guyana to fulfill commitments to the Minamata Convention dedicated to eradicating the use of Mercury in gold production in Guyana, the El Dorado Gold Jewelry project was launched in 2018. Initially, the project's duration was 48 months (May 4, 2018 – May 30, 2022). However, to account for the delays in project implementation due to COVID-19 and other factors and based on the Midterm Review (MTR) recommendations, the project was granted a no-cost extension for 19 months until 31st December 2023.

[1] Source: Project Document
[2] Ibid
[3] Here onwards in the TE Report, the project will be referred to as the 'El Dorado Gold Jewelry' Project.

Financed by a full-sized GEF grant of USD 2.65 million and USD 3.14 million in co-financing from CI, the Govt. of Guyana, and the WWF, this project was a child project of a larger project entitled, Global Opportunities for Long-term Development (GOLD) of the ASGM Sector GEF GOLD - "(GEF ID 9602).

The El Dorado Gold Jewelry project was designed to assist the Government of Guyana (GoG) with meeting its commitments to the Minamata Convention, by directly creating market incentives for private sector enterprises while focusing on technology transfer and awareness. It took a value chain approach, by working with profit-motivated business enterprises, to lead the shift in the development of a mercury-free ASGM supply chain and downstream the El Dorado Gold branded jewelry. The project demonstrated innovative approaches, tools, and partnerships with public and private sector actors to guide the switch to mercury-free mining and adopting environmentally friendly approaches to mining. The project was implemented through six strategically linked components corresponding to 6 Outcomes and 13 Outputs.

Figure 1:Project Components



2.2.Geographic Scope of the Project

The geographic scope of the project was Guyana with a focus on small and medium scale gold mines in three regions including: Region 1 - Barima-Waini; Region 7 – Cuyuni-Mazaruni; and Region 8 – Potaro-Siparuni.

3. About the Terminal Evaluation (TE)

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) for the "*A GEF GOLD/ Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry: Made in Guyana" child project* began in May 2023 and concluded in August 2023. This section provides details on the purpose of the Terminal Evaluation as well as its programmatic and geographic scope in line with the Terms of Reference.

3.1. Rationale and Purpose of the TE

In accordance with GEF policies and procedures, all full-sized GEF-funded projects are required to undergo an independent terminal review.

3.1.1. Objectives of the TE

The purpose of this Terminal Evaluation was to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives. The Evaluation was expected to (a) promote accountability and transparency; and (b) facilitate synthesis of lessons. Also, the TE provides feedback to allow the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to identify recurring issues across the GEF portfolio and contribute to GEF IEO databases for aggregation and analysis.

3.2. Scope of the TE

The programmatic scope of the terminal evaluation primarily encompassed the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as detailed in the project documents and results frameworks. In particular, the project implementation activities from its start in **May 2018 till June 2023** were reviewed. Furthermore, as outlined in the TORs, the scope of work for this evaluation covered the following aspects sketched in the table below:

Table 1: Programmatic Scope of the TE

Scope of Work
Assess the project based on the standardized terminal evaluation GEF Criteria, Questions, and Rating System: In order to establish objectively comparable performance, the review team assessed and rated the project under review on the following eight categories and rated them on a six-point scale from highly satisfactory (6) to highly unsatisfactory (1)[4]:
• **Project Design Assessment**
○ **Project design**
○ **Project results framework/log-frame/theory of change**
• **Assessment of Project Results**
○ **Relevance: Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities, and mandates of the Agencies? Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes?**
○ **Effectiveness: Were the project's actual outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes?**
○ **Efficiency: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compared to that of similar projects?**
• **Project Implementation Management:**
○ **Project management**
○ **Results-based work planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting**
○ **Financial management and co-finance**

[4] The rating system is established by GEF and based on the "Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations – Evaluation Document No. 3", 2008, GEF.

○ **Stakeholder engagement and communication**
• **Sustainability**
• **Progress to Impact**
• **Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation Systems**
• **Assessment of Implementation and Execution**
• **Assessment of Safeguards**
○ **Indigenous Peoples**
○ **Stakeholder Engagement**
○ **Gender Mainstreaming**
○ **Accountability and Grievance Mechanism**

3.3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The Terminal Evaluation was undertaken from May 2023 to August 2023. The TE Team adopted a consultative and participatory approach and employed mixed methodologies, combining qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary data sources. The TE was undertaken by Cynosure International, Inc.[5] , and the team included Ms. Umm e Zia as the International Team Leader, Mr. Peter Benny as the National Consultant for Guyana, and Mr. Faqir Hamim Masoom as the Evaluation Assistant.

The TE was designed to be undertaken based on a literature review, collection of primary data from a sample of stakeholders through KII (Key Informant Interviews), IDIs (In-depth interviews) and FGDs (Focus Group Discussions). The list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 01.

Based on the **desk review**, the programmatic and geographic scope of the evaluation activities as well as samples for interviews were determined. In addition, KII, IDI and FGD guide sheets were developed by the TE Team and utilized during interviews with various stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries, etc. The data collection tools pertaining to the various project participants are attached in Annex 02.

Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the Implementing Agency, Executing Agencies/Partners, Line Ministries/Directorates/Associations, Consultants, Owners and/or senior management of mining organizations involved in the implementation of the project. These interviews were conducted remotely using online communication software, including Zoom and MS Teams by the Team Lead and in person interviews were conducted by National Consultant for Guyana. **In-Depth Interviews** with a select sample of stakeholders were also conducted. Moreover, **Focus Group Discussions** were conducted with miners in region 07 and 08. In total, the TE Team conducted 10 KIIs, 07 IDIs and 02 FGDs with the various stakeholders. A detailed list of the interviews undertaken is provided in Annex 03.

[5] www.cynosure-intl.com

3.4. Key Challenges and Limitations

Data collection presented significant challenges due to the remote locations of the field visit sites and various accessibility constraints. These challenges were exacerbated by limited flight availability. Alternatively access by road and river crossing also takes a significant amount of time. Additionally, the consultant encountered difficulties in scheduling interviews with stakeholders as some respondents required multiple requests and follow-ups.

Furthermore, the National Consultant in Guyana faced obstacles in reaching miners for FGDs, as miners frequently moved and were located in remote areas. Transporting them to a central location proved costly. To address this issue, the national consultant conducted FGDs in region 8 remotely. Moreover, there was an additional challenge, as some stakeholders initially thought to be in Georgetown were actually situated in regions 7 and 8. Consequently, the national consultant had to conduct these interviews during field visits and remotely.

4. Findings

4.1. Project Justification (Design of the GEF Project)

This section provides an assessment of the project's justification through an analysis of its underlying explicit and implicit assumptions and theory of change (ToC), along with its relevance to the national priorities, GEF strategies, and CI institutional priorities.

4.1.1. Relevance

The TE team found that the Project was in line with the institutional priorities of CI and the GEF, as well as with global commitments and national priorities in Guyana.

This project was highly relevant at the **national level** in Guyana as it aligned with several key strategies and plans of the government. Guyana ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury in 2014 and the President of Guyana when addressing the Minamata Conference on Mercury 3 (COPs3) in year 2017 reinforced the country's commitment to eliminating the use of mercury by 2027.[6] Subsequently it developed a regulatory framework, strategy, and National Action Plan (NAP) dated October 2021 for the phasing out of mercury. The NAP aims to reduce mercury use by 55 percent in five years and eliminate its use in ten years. Furthermore, the project was consistent with Guyana's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which recognizes mercury use as a key issue in the mining sector and emphasizes the need for innovative technologies to address mercury-related issues. It was also in line with the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, and Aligned National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, all of which emphasize the importance of sustainable resource management, ecosystem integrity, and poverty reduction. Additionally, the project aimed to contribute to Guyana's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) under

[6] Source: Guyana elected as vice-president of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Conference on Mercury 3 (COPs3)

the UNFCCC, focusing on improving the efficiency of technologies and practices in the mining industry, including addressing inefficient mercury-based technology.

The project aligned strongly with the priorities and focal areas of CI-Guyana and the GEF, demonstrating its relevance at the **institutional level.** By addressing the environmental challenges associated with gold mining in Guyana, the project aligned with CI-Guyana's efforts to raise environmental awareness, strengthen climate and environmental policies, support conservation planning, and promote sustainable development. It also contributed to CI-Guyana's focus on building capacities, fostering partnerships with diverse stakeholders, and conserving Guyana's natural ecosystems and biodiversity. The project's objectives and activities were also found to be consistent with CI-Guyana's vision of pursuing the conservation of nature as the foundation of development and improving human well-being. Furthermore, the project objective to address the issue of mercury usage by promoting mercury-free technologies, adopting environmentally friendly mining practices, and enhancing policy frameworks contributed directly to the GEF's Chemical and Waste Focal Area, Chemical and Wastes (CW) Strategic Objective 2 and Program 4.

Moreover, the project demonstrated coherence at the institutional level with other recent and ongoing projects in Guyana. The Project also coordinated with other international development sector initiatives related to mercury-free mining in the same areas of Region 7. For example, the Project worked with the NORAD funded project "Addressing the drivers of deforestation in Guyana and Peru" which had a shared focus on promoting responsible gold mining practices and establishing a mercury free mining site in the indigenous village of Karrau. The GEF-funded project (UNDP), "Minamata Initial Assessment for Guyana," was also found to be relevant as it aligned with the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, addressing the harmful effects of mercury pollution. The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Guyana served as a natural partner, with a focus on reducing mercury use and exposure in the ASGM sector. Furthermore, the GEF/UNDP project, "Enhancing Biodiversity Protection through Strengthened Monitoring, Enforcement and Uptake of Environmental Regulations in Guyana's Gold Mining Sector," and the WWF project, "Support for the gradual phase-out of Mercury in the Guianas," highlighted the collaboration of various stakeholders to address the environmental impacts of gold mining.

At the **global level**, the project was particularly relevant to the objectives of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which aims to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. The project's goal of transitioning to mercury-free mining practices aligned with the convention's objective of reducing and eventually eliminating the use of mercury in ASGM. The project was also fully aligned with the UN conventions relevant to environmental protection, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). By aiming to promote sustainable mining practices and reducing mercury pollution, the project contributed to the objectives of these conventions. Additionally, the project was also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 6 (Clean

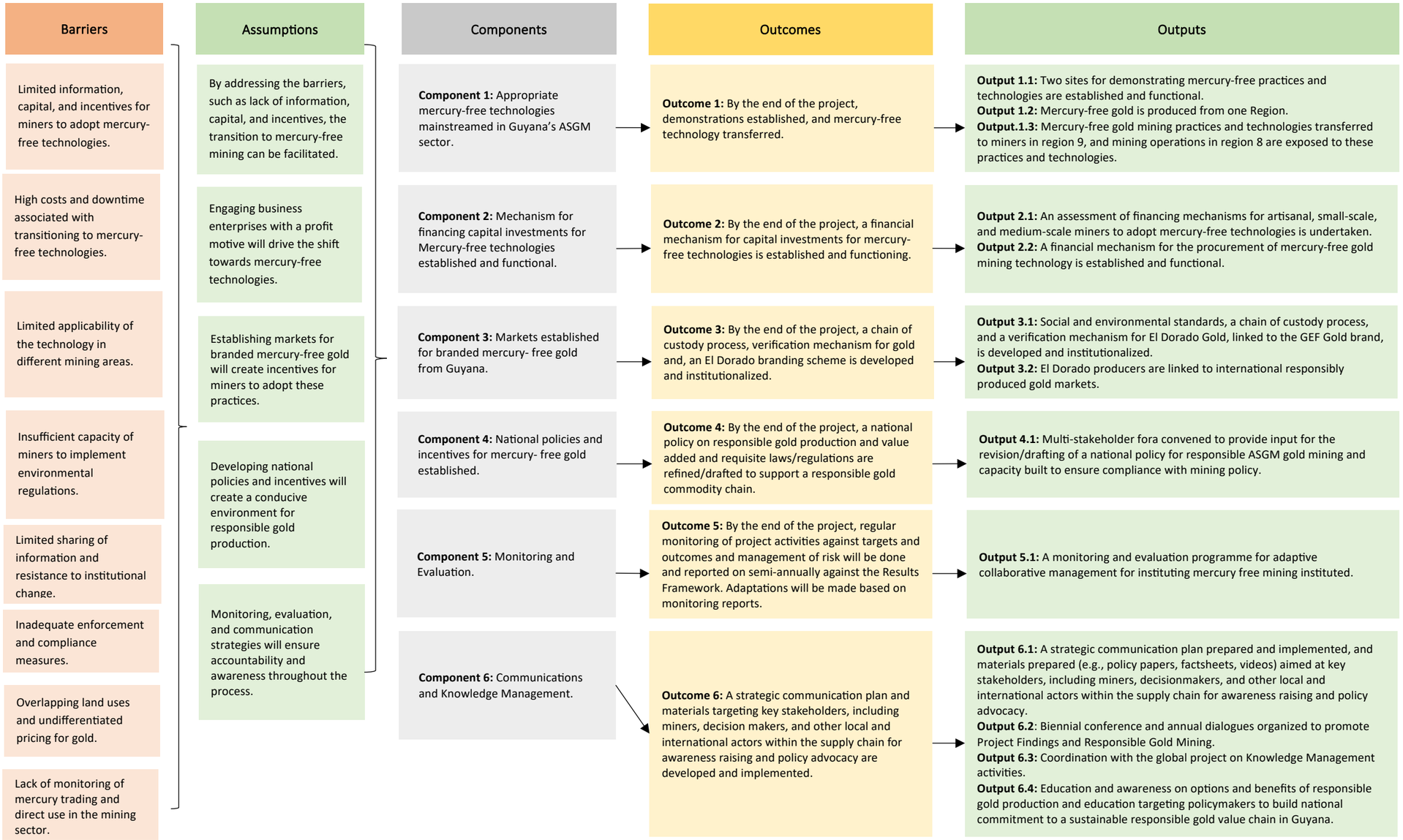
Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

In conclusion, the project was found to be ***Satisfactory***, as it addressed the environmental challenges of gold mining in Guyana, demonstrated strong alignment with institutional priorities at the global, national, and local levels. It was also in line with CI-Guyana and GEF's focal areas, contributes to ongoing projects, and supports international conventions and sustainable development goals.

4.1.2. Project Theory of Change

The project document did not provide an explicitly laid out Theory of Change (ToC). Hence the TE Team constructed a ToC based on the descriptions of the project objectives, outcomes, outputs, underlying barriers, and assumptions, based on the project documents, as depicted in the Figure 02 below.

Figure 2: Theory of Change



The **project's primary objective** was to assist Guyana with transitioning to mercury-free ASGM by 2025. The project planned to achieve this by directly involving business enterprises with a profit motive to lead the shift towards developing a mercury-free ASGM supply chain and downstream branded jewelry. The project was structured around **six key components**, each with specific outcomes and outputs that contributed to the overall objective.

Component 1 focused on mainstreaming appropriate mercury-free technologies in Guyana's ASGM sector. The expected outcome was the establishment of demonstrations and the transfer of mercury-free technology (Outcome 1). This was intended to be accomplished through the establishment of two sites for demonstrating mercury-free practices and technologies (Output 1.1), the production of mercury-free gold from one region (Output 1.2), and the transfer of mercury-free gold mining practices and technologies to miners in specific regions (Output 1.3).

Component 2 aimed to establish a financial mechanism for financing capital investments for Mercury-free technologies. The expected outcome was a functioning financial mechanism for capital investments for mercury-free technologies (Outcome 2). This was intended to be achieved through an assessment of financing mechanisms for ASGM miners to adopt mercury-free technologies (Output 2.1) and the establishment of a financial mechanism for the procurement of mercury-free gold mining technology (Output 2.2).

Component 3 was focused on establishing markets for branded mercury-free gold from Guyana. The expected outcome was the development and institutionalization of a chain of custody process, verification mechanism for gold, and an El Dorado branding scheme (Outcome 3). This was intended to be achieved through the development and institutionalization of social and environmental standards, a chain of custody process, and a verification mechanism for El Dorado Gold (Output 3.1) and linking El Dorado producers to international responsibly produced gold markets (Output 3.2).

Component 4 aimed to establish national policies and incentives for mercury-free gold. The expected outcome was the refinement/drafting of a national policy on responsible gold production and value added and requisite laws/regulations to support a responsible gold commodity chain (Outcome 4). This was intended to be achieved through multi-stakeholder fora convened to provide input for the revision/drafting of a national policy for responsible ASGM gold mining and capacity built to ensure compliance with mining policy (Output 4.1).

Component 5 was focused on Monitoring and Evaluation. The expected outcome was regular monitoring of project activities against targets and outcomes and management of risk, with semi-annual reporting against the Results Framework and adaptations based on monitoring reports (Outcome 5). This was intended to be achieved through a monitoring and evaluation programme for adaptive collaborative management for instituting mercury-free mining (Output 5.1).

Component 6 was focused on Communications and Knowledge Management. The expected outcome was the development and implementation of a strategic communication plan and

materials targeting key stakeholders, including miners, decision makers, and other local and international actors within the supply chain for awareness raising and policy advocacy (Outcome 6). This was intended to be achieved through a strategic communication plan prepared and implemented, and materials prepared (e.g., policy papers, factsheets, videos) aimed at key stakeholders (Output 6.1), biennial conference and annual dialogues organized to promote Project Findings and Responsible Gold Mining (Output 6.2), coordination with the global project on Knowledge Management activities (Output 6.3), and education and awareness on options and benefits of responsible gold production and education targeting policymakers to build national commitment to a sustainable responsible gold value chain in Guyana (Output 6.4).

This project's ToC was based on the assumption that by addressing barriers such as lack of information, capital, and incentives, the transition to mercury-free mining could be facilitated. It also assumed that engaging business enterprises with a profit motive would drive the shift towards mercury-free technologies, and that establishing markets for branded mercury-free gold would create incentives for miners to adopt these practices. Furthermore, it assumed that monitoring, evaluation, and communication strategies would ensure accountability and awareness throughout the process, and that developing national policies and incentives would create a conducive environment for responsible gold production.

The project's causal analysis was based on the evidence that these barriers and assumptions were the key factors limiting the transition to mercury-free mining. By addressing these factors, the project aimed to convert to mercury-free mining by 2025 by directly involving business enterprises with a profit motive for leading the shift in the development of a mercury-free ASGM supply chain and downstream El Dorado brand jewelry.

4.2. Project Strategy

This section presents a review and analysis of the project's strategy, particularly the project design and its results framework.

4.2.1. Project Design Assessment

The project "A GEF GOLD/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry – Made in Guyana" is a child project of the "Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM Sector - GEF GOLD" programme, led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and CI. The primary objective of the GEF GOLD programme is to collaborate with governments, miners, and stakeholders to promote the adoption of cleaner and more sustainable practices in the ASGM sector. The GEF GOLD program was initiated in 2016 with a budget of USD 135,174,956 across Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Peru, and the Philippines.

Aligned with the GEF GOLD project's goals, the "El Dorado Gold Jewelry" project was launched with the aim to transition Guyana to mercury free mining. It was built upon on the NORAD-funded, CI Guyana-implemented Project "Responsible Mining Initiative (RMI)". This NORAD project mainly attempted to engage the gold mining sector to increase adoption of improved practices, in order to reduce pressure on forests. However, as the previous NORAD-funded project did not address the issue of mercury use in mining, the GEF-funded El Dorado Gold Jewelry project aimed to specifically tackle the elimination of mercury in the ASGM sector.

The Evaluation determined that the project design demonstrated a comprehensive approach with a focus on collaboration, market incentives, technology transfer, financial mechanisms, and policy development. Nevertheless, it also revealed several weaknesses in the project design which adversely affected implementation, as detailed in the effectiveness and efficiency sections of this report.

Another key challenge encountered was the unsuccessful collaboration with a consultant responsible for developing the Project Document and safeguard plans. The subsequent departure of the consultant placed a burden on the inexperienced CI Guyana team, lacking expertise in the mining sector as it was the first time CI and CI Guyana had worked on the issue of mercury reduction and elimination in gold mining. This lack of expertise had a negative impact on the overall project design, leading to erroneous assumptions and overambitious targets.

The project's initial design rested upon several key assumptions: that it could establish an efficient financial mechanism, produce mercury-free gold from the demonstration sites, and generate demand for mercury-free gold. However, none of these assumptions materialized as expected. For example, during project implementation, the negligible amount of mercury free gold produced under the project could not be translated as a demand driven market for mercury free gold in Guyana. Moreover, the evaluation found that market forces did not favour mercury free gold as the price of gold mined with mercury was the same, especially noting that mining mercury free gold is significantly more costly and relies on advanced mining equipment.

Additionally, the project design team's lack of technical expertise resulted in the misidentification of risks associated with project implementation, categorizing them as medium instead of high.

Another critical weakness in the project design was the absence of a technical expert knowledgeable about gold mining for the demonstration sites (Outcome 1). Although the project collaborated with relevant mining associations and commissions, the support received was insufficient to address the complexity of the project. Similarly, the design of Outcome 2, which aimed to establish a financial mechanism for capital investments in mercury-free technologies, did not adequately consider the well-known challenges associated with obtaining support from financial institutions due to the nature of small-scale mining operations. Furthermore, at the inception of the project, an assessment of the market

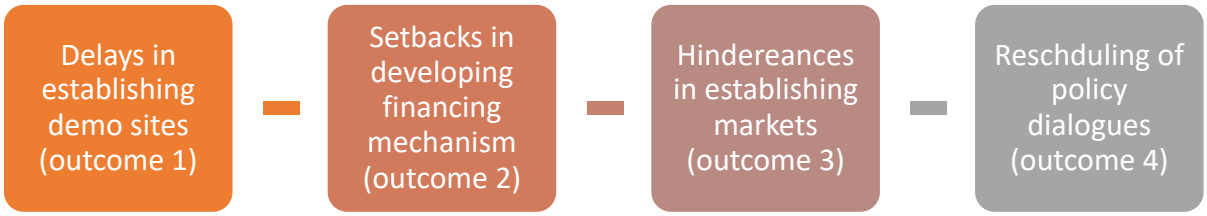
demand for mercury-free gold was not conducted, which subsequently impacted both the project's design and implementation, particularly with regard to Outcome 3.

The weaknesses in the project design were further exacerbated by the absence of a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) person and associated budget. Moreover, while the project document mentions monitoring and evaluation, it did not provide a plan for how these activities were to be conducted. Without a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan specifying the frequency, methods, and responsible parties for conducting evaluations, the framework lacked the necessary mechanisms to effectively track progress and ensure accountability throughout the project implementation.

Furthermore, the project did not involve some of the key stakeholders in the design phase, such as the Guyana Gold Board (GGB), which operates downstream of gold production in Guyana. Given their direct interaction with gold miners and their knowledge of gold production records, this entity could have played a more significant role in identifying miners during the project's design. Although Guyana Women Miners Organization (GWMO) was part of the PSC, they informed the Evaluation that they did not contribute to the project design, thereby, limiting the potential of the project design to target women miners in the country.

Critically, while outcomes and outputs in the project document were highly interlinked and found to be built upon the progress made in each preceding phase, this sequential approach also presented the inherent risk to project implementation timeliness and effectiveness. As detailed in the section on Effectiveness, in the case where activities under a component were delayed or ineffective, it caused delays in implementation of the remaining corresponding components. For instance, the significant delays in implementation of Outcome 1 – demonstration sites; and the setbacks encountered in achieving Outcome 2, pertaining to the financing mechanism resulted in a shortfall of gold production, hindered the establishment of any viable market for Outcome 3. Similarly, the policy dialogues under Outcome 4 were rescheduled to synchronize with the development of the financing mechanism (Outcome 2). The rationale behind this scheduling adjustment was to ensure that new policies and regulations related to mercury-free technologies aligned seamlessly with the incentive system. Hence, outcome 2 having failed had a spillover effect on Outcome 4. Furthermore, the integration of policies and regulations was meant to complement the financing and incentive structure, as well as the chain of custody and verification mechanism. Outcome 4's policy objectives were linked to the assessments outlined in components 2 and 3 of the project. These components also experienced setbacks due to the challenges faced in Outcome 2. Consequently, the failure in one component had a cascading effect on multiple interconnected components.

Figure 3: Cascading effects of Outcome Failure



Similarly, the project Component 4, which focused on the development of policies to incentivize mercury-free gold production, was highly ambitious. Policy development is a complex and time-consuming process that requires not only drafting but also stakeholder consensus and buy-in. Furthermore, alignment with other project outcomes was considered essential to maximize the overall impact and long-term sustainability of the project. Moreover, as the project specifically targeted ASGM miners, bringing ASGM miners under the purview of the policy would require extensive outreach and engagement efforts to ensure their understanding and compliance.

In conclusion, the project was launched to address the specific issue of mercury use in Guyana's ASGM sector. The project design demonstrated a comprehensive approach with a focus on collaboration, market incentives, technology transfer, financial mechanisms, and policy development. However, the project design also suffered from significant shortcomings, primarily including unrealistic targets, lack of technical expertise, allocation of appropriate technical human resources, and inadequate consideration of financial challenges. The sequential nature of linkages between outputs also meant that delays in progress of a given outcome would result in non-accomplishment of subsequent outcomes. Additionally, the lack of involvement of key stakeholders in the project design and the absence of a dedicated M&E person also resulted in challenges.

4.2.2. Project Results Framework

An in-depth review and analysis of the project's results framework indicated that the framework provided in the project document provided guidelines to effectively monitor and evaluate progress. The project results framework was found to be well-structured, with clear objectives, expected outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines, and targets. Furthermore, it clearly identified linkages between components, outputs, and activities, arranged in a sequential design.

In particular, the results framework presented a set of measurable indicators such as the number of tons of mercury reduced and the number of regions where mercury-free technologies are implemented (Indicator 1.1.1, Indicator 1.1). Similarly, the end-of-project targets set at the output level were found to be realistic and achievable. For example, one centralized processing facility improved and tested (Target 1.3.3) and a target of developing one long-term financing mechanism for mercury-free technology (Target 2.2.1). However, the targets were found to be not always clearly quantified. For instance, regarding the target for outcome 1, "Mercury-free technologies have replaced the use of mercury in at least one

region of Guyana," it is unclear whether the project aimed to completely eliminate mercury use in one entire region or solely within designated demonstration sites. Additionally, in certain cases, the targets were focused on progress rather than impact. For example, the target set for outcome 6 “Twenty (20) strategic plans and awareness materials targeted at policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, and other key stakeholders on responsible gold mining in Guyana” while the project acknowledges that there is a need for the development of 20 materials, it does not specify the number of stakeholders these materials are intended to reach.

Furthermore, the results framework did not provide sufficient baseline data for each indicator, making it challenging to accurately measure progress and determine the project's impact. For instance, the indicator 2.1.1 states the need for "one long-term financing mechanism for mercury-free technology established and functional." However, the framework did not provide any baseline data on the current availability or accessibility of financing mechanisms for mercury-free technology. Moreover, while the framework promoted knowledge management and communication activities to share responsible gold production practices, it lacked consideration of gender dimensions, and did not explicitly incorporate gender considerations or indicators.

Overall, the project results framework was found to be comprehensive, covering various aspects like mercury-free technologies, financing, policies, etc., to achieve its objective.

4.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

This section provides a detailed assessment of the processes and structures involved in project implementation and adaptive management. Specific aspects analyzed included: Quality of supervision by CI-GEF Agency, Execution Arrangements, Financial Management and Co-Financing, Work Planning, Project-level Monitoring Systems, and Reporting.

4.3.1 Quality of Supervision by CI-GEF

The CI-GEF Agency served as the project's Implementing Agency (IA) and was in charge of overall project assurance. Among the major responsibilities assigned to CI-GEF were making financing available to CI Guyana on behalf of GEF for the Guyana Gold project, ensuring that financial standards were followed, and supervising processes related to project development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The Evaluation Team determined that CI-GEF delivered on its mandate through the review of progress reports, approval of planning documents, as well as technical guidance to the project, when required. Moreover, CI-GEF released GEF funds in a timely manner to the project to cover expected quarterly expenditures in accordance with the approved workplans. Similarly, the CI-GEF Project Agency provided guidance and feedback to CI Guyana to ensure that all CI-GEF policies and procedures, financial regulations, and Social and Environmental Safeguards, etc. were followed during the project’s implementation.

The CI-GEF agency also played a crucial role in providing comprehensive assurance, backstopping, and oversight for the M&E activities throughout the project's implementation. Although the executing agency, CI-Guyana, held the primary responsibility for ensuring timely execution of M&E activities, the CI-GEF Agency actively participated in monitoring efforts at various stages of the project. Such as at the inception stage, where CI-GEF coordinated the project's inception workshop with the executing agency. On the other hand, interview with CI-Guyana revealed that it received limited support from CI-GEF in addressing the challenges encountered during the project's design.

In summary, the evaluation determined that CI-GEF delivered its responsibilities by providing financial support, management, and oversight for the project, guaranteeing adherence to policies and procedures, and actively participating in monitoring efforts. However, CI-Guyana received limited support in addressing project design challenges. In conclusion, the evaluation found the quality of supervision provided by CI-GEF as the Implementation Agency to be ***Satisfactory***.

4.3.2 Execution Arrangements

The project was carried out through a public-private collaboration between CI-Guyana, which functioned as the lead executing agency, and the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA) as well as the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), the latter two having served as co-executing agencies. Other major stakeholders involved in the project included the wider Government of Guyana (GoG), civil society groups, and indigenous leaders. The National Toshaos Council (NTC), which represents elected Indigenous leaders from across Guyana, ensured that the project was aligned with the critical interests of indigenous people. Similarly, the project involved the Guyana Women Miners Organisation (GWMO) in the PSC. Also, the Project hired an independent consultant in 2020 to better understand the gender dynamics in the ASGM sector and prioritize gender analyses for addressing mercury.

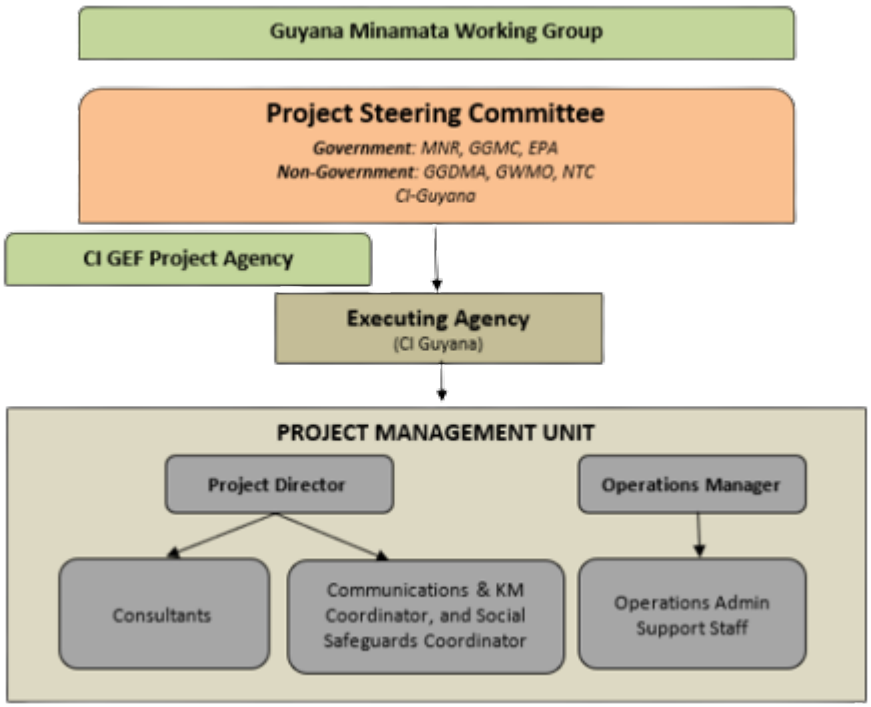
The execution arrangement was characterized by a three-tiered structure and was found to be well-structured and well managed despite facing some initial challenges. The Minamata Working Group, led by the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources, provided guidance and oversight at the highest level, which is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of all mercury phasing-out projects. It should be noted that the Minamata Working Group was inactive for several years. Its reactivation in 2023 was significantly influenced by a commitment made in the Responsible Mining Conference.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) operated at the second level and provided oversight, advice, and grievance resolution services to the executing agencies and Project Management Unit (PMU). The PSC comprised members from both governmental bodies, such as Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), GGMC, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and non-governmental agencies, including CI-Guyana, GGDMA, GWMO, and the National Toshaos

Council (NTC). At the third level was the CI-Guyana, the executing agency, which was responsible for the overall implementation of the project and overseeing the PMU.

The PMU was responsible for delivering the project as per the technical and administrative requirements and was comprised of the Project Director, Operations Manager, and supporting staff. The Project Director's responsibility for project component implementation and reporting, along with the Operations Manager's efficient financial oversight and adherence to procurement guidelines, ensured smooth project execution. Figure 03 below presents the project organizational implementation structure.

Figure 4: Project Organizational Implementation Structure



However, the TE also learned that the project faced challenges in the initial phase of implementation, particularly related to the constitution of the PMU team and the recruitment of staff members and the transition of the Executive Director position during the initial stages of the project. Unlike previous projects, CI-Guyana adopted a standalone project team for this project. Repeated recruitment efforts were required to constitute the project team, leading to an initial period of learning and adjustment to the policies and regulations of both CI and GEF. Nevertheless, CI-Guyana's adaptive approach allowed for internal orientation and trainings, enabling the team to refine their understanding of the policies. Furthermore, the project initially lacked a technical expert with knowledge of gold mining. The absence of a technical expert posed challenges in comprehending the specific requirements of the mining sector. Nevertheless, in 2019 the project managed to bring in a permanent technical expert,

who enabled significant project progress through engaging with miners and generating interest in the technology demonstration sites.

Similarly, the project faced challenges due to the absence of dedicated M&E personnel, as elaborated in the section on Monitoring. Moreover, although being granted a one-year extension, the project encountered challenges when the safeguards coordinator left in May 2022, coinciding with the end of her contract As a result of the foundation set the team was able to continue the safeguards responsibilities of the project over the closing months of project implementation.

In summary, the project had a well-functioning team and also demonstrated effective collaboration between multiple implementation partners. However, it faced challenges related to the absence of a technical expert in the initial phases and a lack of dedicated M&E staff throughout the project. Therefore, the project's execution arrangements were found to be ***Moderately Satisfactory*** by the evaluation team.

4.3.3 Work Planning

In line with the design of the project, CI-Guyana as the project Executing Agency was responsible for developing annual workplans in collaboration and coordination with co-executing agencies (GGMC and GGDMA) and obtaining approvals on the workplan from the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the CI-GEF Project Agency. The Evaluation found that the CI-Guyana project team regularly met every quarter as stipulated in the project design. Similarly, the PSC also met regularly on a semi-annual basis between March 2019 and December 2022 to approve the workplan review and approve the project's annual budget and work plans, discuss implementation issues, identify solutions, and increase coordination and communication between key project partners.

However, the project faced a series of challenges that significantly affected the timeliness of implementation. The project ventured into uncharted territories, both geographically and in terms of stakeholders. While the project team and CI-GEF had prior experience working in Guyana, they lacked direct experience with the ASGM sector. This required familiarizing themselves with new technical issues and regulations, visiting gold mines, and building new relationships, etc.; processes that took longer than anticipated at the time of design. Also, the project team faced a learning curve due to their limited prior experience in the ASGM sector, which resulted in delays in implementation.

These delays were further exacerbated by external factors, such as challenges in finding concessionaires willing and able to satisfy the criteria for demonstration sites. The remote nature of the demonstration sites also caused challenges in transporting equipment to the sites, especially during the rainy season which led to some delays in transporting equipment. However, the Evaluation found that despite the challenges highlighted above, the project team was able to utilise the period of COVID related travel restrictions to plan well in advance, for setting up of sites. Moreover, transportation and deployment of equipment as well as site setup were all completed in keeping with the post COVID-19 schedule. In particular, the

Karrau site was established in record time as a result of the experience garnered by the team at the two previous sites and the significant support provided by the village. Furthermore, COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions prevented the project from continuing the activities due to restrictions in international and national travel. In particular COVID-19 led to the decision to cancel all plans for demonstrations in region 1 and delay the start of activities in regions 7 & 8. As a result, the selection process for region 7 and 8 was rescheduled for next year. Moreover, political instability in the country in 2020 led to a reduction in field activities aimed at avoiding interference with national and regional elections. To account for these delays and based on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the project was granted a 14-month, no-cost extension.

4.3.4 Project-Level Monitoring Systems & Reporting

The project design provided a Project Results Framework that listed the project level indicators and collated indicators at the outcome and output-level. In addition, at the inception stage CI-Guyana formulated a comprehensive Project Results Monitoring Plan encompassing essential components such as objective, outcome, and output indicators, along with corresponding metrics for data collection. The plan also incorporated a methodology for both data collection and analysis. Additionally, the frequency of data collection was also established, and responsible parties assigned. Moreover, indicative resources necessary for the successful completion of the plan were also outlined.

As the project's Executing Agency, CI-Guyana was responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as planning and organizing the project inception workshop and report, quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting, and documentation of lessons learned.

Despite the project's efforts to design a monitoring plan based on the expected reporting requirements, a significant challenge arose due to the absence of a dedicated M&E person within CI-Guyana. With the responsibility to report on both local and global level indicators, having someone dedicated to collecting and properly reporting the necessary data was essential. Interview with the Project Team highlighted that due to the extensive demands of monitoring results, the existing CI-Guyana team found data collection to be impossible, while the budget constraints prevented the agency from hiring a specialized M&E person.

This absence of an M&E staff was also critical because one of the project goals was to gather lessons learned and evidence from various child projects in order to support the decision-making process for the global GEF GOLD project. This shortcoming was especially significant when considering the necessity of conducting an impact assessment study, which would be crucial to the long-term success of the GEF GOLD project.

Nevertheless, despite the absence of a dedicated M&E expert, the TE determined that CI-Guyana consistently provided comprehensive quarterly financial and technical reports, annual financial reports, annual workplans, and annual project implementation reports (PIRs) as

required by the project document. The quarterly reports were particularly valuable to the project management team for making planning decisions, and also aided the TE understanding the project's history, while the annual project implementation reports contained detailed documentation on the lessons learned throughout the project's implementation. Additionally, the project was found to have diligently documented, monitored, and tracked progress on various indicators, including GEF core indicators, the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM), Gender Mainstreaming Plan, Indigenous Peoples Plan, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Moreover, the Project followed the PIRs format and reported details of stakeholder participation, including reporting gender disaggregated data in the Safeguards section. It should be noted that the format did not require reporting by Component at the PIR level. In summary, although the project design included a comprehensive Project Results Framework and Monitoring Plan and the project also produced regular progress reports, the absence of a dedicated M&E staff posed a significant challenge. In particular, track the number of miners reached during demonstrations or conduct an impact assessment to determine the uptake of its outcomes. Consequently, the project level monitoring systems and reporting were found to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.3.5 Finance and Co-Finance

The Project was funded by a USD 2.65 million GEF grant. This financial support was distributed across various project components, with the highest allocation of 31% directed to Component 2, as shown in Figure 04. Component 1 followed with 18%, Component 6 with 15%, Component 4 with 13%, Component 3 with 13%, and Component 5 with 6%.[7]

As of June 30, 2023, the project utilized a significant portion of its GEF-allocated budget, with a total expenditure of USD 2,607,016, accounting for 98% of the USD 2.65 million allocation. Delving into the component-wise expenditure, based on the original Project Document budget, Component 1 stands out with the highest (252%) utilization of its allocated funds. In contrast, Component 2 has expended 24% of its allocation, and Outcome 3 has utilized 79% of its funds. In comparison to other components, Component 4, Component 5, and Component 6 have seen relatively lower expenditure rates, with only 18%, 104%, and 147% of their allocations spent, respectively. Lastly, out of the USD 121,381 allocated for project management costs, 78% has been disbursed. The table below outlines the GEF Fund amounts allocated and expended across components as of June 30, 2023.

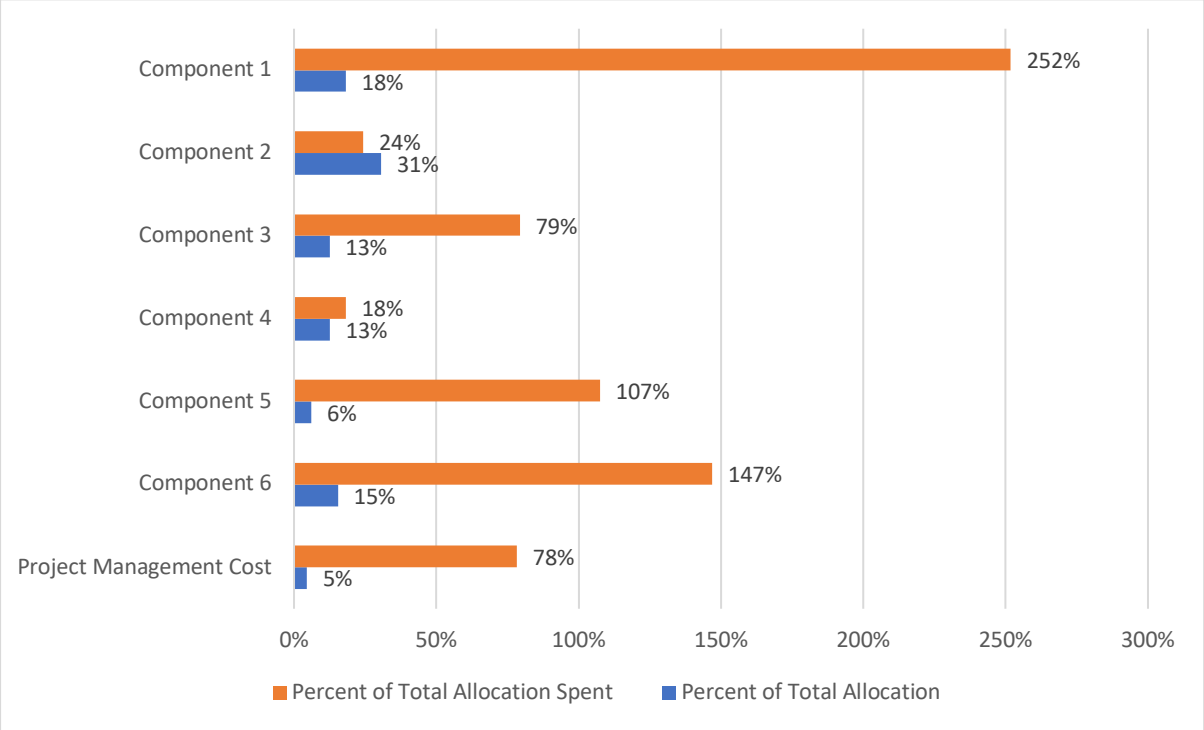
Table 2: Component-wise Allocation and Expenditure

Components	Donor Fund Allocation (USD)	Expenditure (USD)
Component 1: Mercury-free technologies in Guyana's ASGM sector.	483,563	1,217,492

[7] Data awaited from CI-GEF Finance Person on reallocation of funds. Once we receive this information, we will integrate the findings into the next draft.

Components	Donor Fund Allocation (USD)	Expenditure (USD)
Component 2: Financing mechanism for mercury-free technologies established and operational	811,288	197,001
Component 3: Establishment of mercury-free gold market	331,944	263,284
Component 4: Mercury-free gold policies and incentives established	334,826	60,929
Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation	160,130	172,030
Component 6: Communications and Knowledge Management	409,162	601,223
Project Management Cost	121,381	95,057
Total	**2,652,294**	**2,607,016**

Figure 5: Percentage of Allocation and Expenditure



The project's financing faced several challenges during its implementation. One significant hurdle was staffing, as funding for technical personnel came from project funds, leading to multiple budget rearrangements. Similarly, the underestimation of travel costs for the demonstrations posed significant challenges. Furthermore, the project underestimated the costs of operating equipment which was further exacerbated by inflation in the country. Nevertheless, the flexibility of CI-GEF in relation to project costs and the GGMC in-kind loan for demo sites allowed for flexibility in funding usage, freeing up resources that were eventually utilized to cover the unexpected travel expenses.

In addition, the project document also identified co-financing of USD 3,136,600 from multiple partners. Over the course of implementation, the project reported three co-financing partners with a total cumulative co-financing of USD 2,997,202 (96% of the committed co-financing). As the following table outlines, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation through Conservation International (USD 2,254,829) is the largest contributor of co-funding to the project at 113%, followed by the WWF Guianas (USD 522,383) at 80% and 219,990 (45%) from the government of Guyana.[8]

Table 3: Co-Financing Proposed and Materialized Across Different Sources

Name of Co-Financier	Amount (USD)	Percent of Total	Amount Materialized (USD)	Percentage of Allocated Amount Materialized
Conservation International	2,000,000	64%	2,254,829	113%
WWF Guianas	649,600	21%	522,383	80%
Government of Guyana	487,000	16%	219,990	45%
Total	3,136,600	100%	2,997,202	96%

4.3.6 Stakeholder Engagement

Since it was the first of its kind project for CI-Guyana, reaching out to new stakeholders beyond existing networks proved to be a substantial challenge. Nevertheless, the TE found that the project successfully engaged a wide range of stakeholders including public and private sectors, along with CSOs, CBOs and international development organizations from the commencement of the project by collaborating with key partners. These included Guyana Gold and Mining Commission (GGMC), Guyana Gold and Diamonds Association (GGDMA), Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), WWF Guianas, National Toshaos Council (NTC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other independent miners.

Furthermore, the Guyana project maintained consistent communication with its parent project, the GEF GOLD project. Regular monthly meetings were held with the GEF GOLD, where insights and experiences were exchanged among child projects, enhancing the implementation of individual projects. Moreover, this project participated in quarterly Project Advisory Group (PAG) meetings. Comprising experts from the investment community, refiners, jewelers, donor governments, NGO, representatives of the GEF and implementing and executing agencies of GEF GOLD, these meetings provided guidance to the child projects, focusing on specific areas of concern selected for discussion by the group.

In the public sector, engagement efforts were strategically directed towards stakeholder groups with a direct influence over Guyana's natural resources and environment. These entities included not only those directly involved in decision-making for natural resources in Guyana but also those whose actions have influence over the environment. These included

[8] Data obtained from CI-GEF Finance Lead on utilization of funds for co-financing.

the MNR, EPA, Guyana Gold Board (GGB), GGMC, Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), Protected Areas Commission (PAC), Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) and Guyana Women Miners Association (GWMA). Similarly, at the provincial and local government level the project engaged stakeholders that were responsible for planning, development, and implementation at the community levels. These included the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) which is the supreme Local Government Organ in each region with the responsibility for the overall management and administration of the Region and the coordination of the activities of all Local Democratic Organs within its boundaries. Concurrently, the project also engaged the NTC at the provincial level, which comprises elected Indigenous leaders across Guyana's ten regions.

Whereas, in the private sector, the project engaged stakeholders whose operations were regulated by the EPA, in terms of environmental management as well as those possessing valuable comparative advantages in generating new data and insights to enhance environmental protection and inform decision-making. In the private sector the project engaged academia and research institutions, NGOs, ASGMGM miners, Jewelers. These included GGDMA, Guyana Women Miners Organisation (GWMO), DeAbreu Creations, Topaz, , WWF-Guianas, University of Guyana, and the center for the study of Biological Diversity. Furthermore, the project recruited multiple consultants, such as the Emissions Reduction Consultant from Mercer University, Devsol Consulting, TDi Sustainability, an engineering consultant overseeing demonstration sites, a consultant specializing in social and gender considerations, and a communications consultant.

Stakeholders interviewed expressed satisfaction and a positive impact of their engagement with the project's activities. For instance, the EPA highlighted how the project's tools provided valuable insights into alternative approaches for managing mercury. This new knowledge enhanced their ability to efficiently manage mercury usage within the gold mining sector. While most stakeholders interviewed expressed satisfaction with their collaboration with CI-Guyana, the GWMO pointed to the need for improvement when it comes to sharing of critical information, such as reports, statistics, and criteria for selecting participating miners. Stakeholders interviewed also noted benefits from the project activities, with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reporting an improved understanding of the project and its technology transfer potential.

It is also to be noted that the project intended that the Safeguards Coordinator would work closely with the designated safeguards officers under the WWF and UNDP Mercury Reduction Projects. However, this collaboration never materialized as no officers were appointed because of the significant delays in the startup of the two projects.

4.4. Progress Towards Results

This section provides an outcome-wise and output-level analysis of the project's progress towards achieving results. In accordance with the TE guidelines, outcome ratings are also

provided while taking into account the project's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency and achievements against its expected targets.

4.4.1. Component 1- Appropriate Mercury-Free Technologies Mainstreamed in Guyana's ASGM Sector

Under Component 1, the project aimed to mainstream mercury free technologies in Guyana's Artisanal Small- and Medium-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector. Component 1 was comprised of one outcome that related to establishing demonstration sites and transfer of mercury free technologies **(Outcome 1.1)**. Outcome 1.1 further included three outputs: **Output 1.1** - Two sites for demonstrating mercury-free practices and technologies are established and functional; **Output 1.2** - Mercury-free gold is produced from one Region; and Output 1.3 - Mercury-free gold mining practices and technologies transferred to miners in Region 9, and mining operations in Region 8 are exposed to these practices and technologies. The table below provides the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome and reports against the progress towards results.

Table 4: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 1

Outcome 1: By the end of the project, demonstrations established, and mercury-free technology transferred				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Outcome Indicator 1.1: Number of regions in Guyana where mercury-free technology has replaced the use of mercury in the ASGM sector	No mercury free technology in use in the ASGM sector in the country	Mercury-free technologies have replaced the use of mercury in at least one region of Guyana	Mercury Free technologies have been introduced in region 7 (Puruni and Karrau)) and Region 8 (Mahdia) through successful operation of demonstration sites. However, the Evaluation found that the technologies introduced were pilot projects and did not replace the use of mercury in gold mining in any region.	Satisfactory
Outcome Indicator 1.2: Number of tons of Mercury reduced	35.92 metric tons of mercury being used (based on a mercury flow approach estimate)	Reduction in mercury use of about 15 metric tons	Against a target of 15 metric tons, a reduction of 0.6 tons of mercury reduction was reported, thereby achieving approximately 4% of target.	Unsatisfactory

Overall, the Evaluation determined that when compared to the rest of the outcomes, the project delivered Outcome 1 with the greatest level of success. Accordingly, under Outcome 1, the project established and operated demonstration sites at existing mines where they

introduced mercury-free technology and focused on educating miners on the use of mercury capture systems through field demonstrations.

In particular, the Project was found to adopt a systematic approach to achieving the results under this outcome by building strategic partnerships with miners, indigenous communities, and government mining authorities, including the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) and Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA). Moreover, the Project identified possible concessions/mining sites suitable for project collaboration using a systematic approach. This included: i) Engagement of technical teams to conduct rapid environmental assessments and prospecting as preliminary steps towards confirming suitability of the technology to Regions 7 and 8 concessions; and ii) development of Sustainable Landscape Framework and Sustainable Villages Framework, both of which were produced through a consultative process. This collaborative and fact-based approach helped to promote a strong buy in among key stakeholders as well as identify the most appropriate mining sites for setting up the demonstrations, thereby proving to be crucial in the overall success of the demonstration activities.

It should be noted that initially the Project Document focused on Regions 8 and 9 for the demonstration sites. However, as informed by the PMU, because of significant disagreements among miners and communities in Region 9, at the time of project commencement, CI-Guyana was advised by the Government of Guyana against attempting to conduct project activities in that Region. Therefore, implementation and demonstrations eventually focused on Regions 7 and 8. The TE learned that initially, two demonstration sites were established by the project, one each at Puruni and Madhia, respectively. Following the reportedly positive outcomes at the initial two sites, the Project responded to demand and peaked interest from miners, including the Amerindian Village, Karrau, and proceeded to set up another site in Karrau Region 7 in the first quarter of 2023.

The project team was responsible for establishing the sites in collaboration with GGMC. Moreover, CI-Guyana's Technical Officer was responsible for training of miners at the sites in the use of the new technologies and adoption of new practices; data collection and analysis. Whereas representatives of GGDMA were among those present at several demonstrations at the mining sites.

The demonstration sites were set up for one year. This strategic approach contributed to the overall success of the demonstration sites as it ensured that the newly introduced mercury-free technologies would not only produce mercury-free gold but also result in higher yields, with an expected 90% efficiency rate of capture. Interviews with GGDMA highlighted increased recovery rates from mined gold going up from 30% through mercury-based mining to 95% using the project-introduced technology. FGD respondents from Region 8 corroborated this information by reporting gold recovery in the 90th percentile. GGDMA also reported that in some instances waste from the existing mine was processed again using the mercury-free technology and miners could see first-hand gold being recovered from the waste material.

In fact, some interviewed key informants noted that the high recovery rate was the big selling point to the miners and not the mercury reduction. Moreover, FGD respondents also noted that the demonstrations allowed the mining community to gain knowledge in the use of mercury free technology and utilize methods that were both economic and environmentally friendly.

Furthermore, according to key informant interviews, while some previous development projects have promoted the use of mercury-free technologies, this project was unique as it actually demonstrated those technologies in the field and also engaged with ASGM sector stakeholders directly through these demonstrations. Therefore, the Evaluation determined that practical demonstrations were also a major factor in the positive response by miners.

The Project also engaged women miners in the demonstration activities, as FGD respondents in Region 7 reported the participation of women miners especially in Lower Mazaruni area, most being member of the Guyana Women Miners Organisation (GWMO).

The TE also found that support from the GGMC through provision of the main and more expensive pieces of equipment for the demonstration sites helped in covering the gap in the project allocated budget to the demonstration activity, thereby enabling the project to effectively pilot at all three sites. In particular, GGMC provided equipment worth USD 87,941 (including equipment worth USD 45,155 for Region 7[9] and worth USD 42,786 for Region 8[10]) to the Project free of cost, resulting in cost savings for the project and also allowing CI-Guyana immediate access to key equipment for the Region 7 and Region 8 demonstration sites. In addition to the equipment provided by GGMC, CI Guyana purchased machinery required to run the demonstration site in Region 7 for USD 23,000, including: Generator (1), Stone Crusher (1), Gravel Pumps (1). Following the close of the Project, CI Guyana donated the equipment purchased to GGMC so that it can be used in similar demonstration sites for future projects.

The Evaluation found that the Project also faced an array of challenges and delays in establishing the demonstration sites. Key challenges included the time required for identification of sites and bringing miners onboard, and difficult physical access to mining sites. Another challenge was reported by GGB, highlighting that while the new technology eliminates use of mercury it does not eliminate other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and there are other impurities that still need to be removed.

However, CI Guyana was found to have worked proactively to mitigate the challenges and ensure a relatively high degree of success. For example, the project had not anticipated an extensive prospecting and consultation process starting from the ground up, through which demonstration sites were finally selected. The process of site identification kept the project team engaged for the first year of implementation, thereby causing implementation delays. In the second year, further delays were experienced due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions which hindered the project from travelling to the field for prospecting and establishing the

[9] For Region 7, GGMC provided equipment included Gold Kacha (2), Gold Konka (1), Gold Masta (1), Gemeni Shaking Table (1), and RG30 Trommel (1)

[10] For Region 8, GGMC provided equipment included: Gold Konka (1), Gold Kacha (2), Gemeni Shaking table (1), RG30 Trommel (1), GOLD Masta (1)

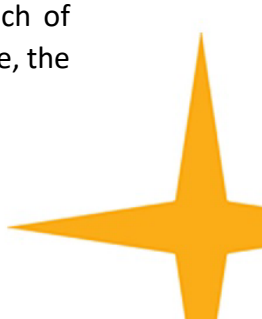
demonstration sites. Several stakeholders also faced challenges in reaching the proposed project sites and effectively engaging with miners in very hard-to-reach locations. For instance, GGDMA reported that once the sites were identified there were challenges in transporting the equipment, especially in the rainy season, thereby causing further delays. Similarly, interviews with CI Guyana and EPA also reflected on the difficult terrain and noted that access to mining sites was a major challenge in establishing the demonstration sites.

Furthermore, despite strong communication engagement with miners, the Project initially could not get the miners to readily sign up for the demonstration sites. However, this situation changed during the second year of implementation when the Technical Officer joined, whose active engagement, with beneficiaries resulted in a peaked interest from miners and indigenous groups. To respond to this added interest, the project introduced an additional demonstration site in Region 8. However, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented project implementation, therefore the additional demonstration site was initiated only towards the end of the project. Although the number has not been reported by the project, however, according to GGMC representatives, approximately 150-200 stakeholders were involved in the demonstrations. Based on key informant interviews, the Evaluation estimates that the project reached 4-5% of miners, which is a substantial achievement considering the time limitations and limited funding the Project faced.

Although the Evaluation acknowledges the comparative success of the demonstration sites under Outcome 1, the Project was unable to achieve either of the two outcome indicator targets, including i) replacement with mercury-free technology in at least one region in Guyana; and ii) reduction of 15 tons of mercury. Against the first target, based on extensive interviews held with stakeholders, the Evaluation determined that the demonstrations merely acted as pilot sites with limited capacity to continue processing ore for mercury-free gold mining beyond the project end. Furthermore, major reported challenges by interviewed stakeholders for uptake of mercury-free mining that the broader ASGM sector continues to face include: the availability of machinery and equipment, access to finance, technical knowhow, and attitudinal change.

Therefore, it cannot be said that mercury-free technologies introduced under the project have replaced the use of mercury. In fact, let alone replacement of mercury in the region, the project was not able to replace mercury even on the sites where it demonstrated. This observation is also reflected in the progress reported against the second outcome indicator target, where against 15 metric tons of mercury the project reported a modest 0.6 tons of mercury reduction (i.e., approximately 4% of the target). This was further highlighted in interviews with Guyana Gold Board (GGB), who noted that they received a very minimal amount of approximately 31 grams of mercury-free gold for further processing.

In summary, the demonstrations successfully allowed miners to develop a strong understanding of how to operate the new mercury-free technologies and were largely convincing for adopting the introduced mercury-free techniques, especially increased recovery rates from mined gold. However, implementation delays resulted in outreach of demonstration activities to only a small number of miners and other stakeholders. Hence, the project was unable to meet either of its outcome level targets.



Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 1 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 5: Outcome 1 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Moderately Satisfactory

4.4.2. Component 2: Mechanism for Financing Capital Investments for Mercury-Free Technologies Established and Functional

Component 2 pertained to establishing and functioning a mechanism for financing capital investments for mercury-free technologies. Component 2 was comprised of one outcome and two outputs, including: Output 2.1 - An assessment of financing mechanisms for artisanal, small-scale, and medium-scale miners to adopt mercury-free technologies is undertaken; and Output 2.2 - A financial mechanism for the procurement of mercury-free gold mining technology is established and functional. The table below provides the Outcome-level indicators associated with Outcome 2 and reports against the progress towards results.

Table 6: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 2

Outcome 2.1: By the end of the project, a financial mechanism for capital investments for mercury-free technologies is established and functioning.				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Outcome indicator 2.1: Number of financial mechanisms established and operational to facilitate the transition of mercury free technologies in ASGM.	Zero (0) long term financing mechanisms for mercury-free technology established.	A financial mechanism to facilitate the transition of mercury-free technologies will be established and operational	No financial mechanism to facilitate the transition of mercury-free technologies was established	Unsatisfactory
Outcome Indicator 2.2: Amount of finance approved by financing mechanism(s) to miners		250,000 USD approved through financial mechanism(s) to miners.	In the absence of a financing mechanism, no amount of financing was approved to miners	Unsatisfactory
Outcome Indicator 2.3: Number of miners successfully accessing financing for mercury-free mining equipment		30 miners successfully accessing finance for mercury-free	In the absence of a financing mechanism, no miners were able to	Unsatisfactory

		mining equipment	access financing	

The TE found that the Project worked towards developing a 'best fit' financing mechanism by hiring a consultant, developing reports, and conducting information gathering events such as round table discussions that provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their input. In 2021, the said consultant produced a Global Baseline Assessment that provided a snapshot of global artisanal and small-scale mining (ASGM) financing mechanisms and a National Baseline Assessment that provided an overview of the ASGM landscape in Guyana as well as available financing mechanisms and approaches. Similarly, round table discussions were held on topics such as: "To Build the capacity of stakeholders to participate in a collaborative design of the 'best fit' financing mechanism for Guyana's ASGM industry" and "To enable the Consultant to present the Model Design Report and receive comments from stakeholders, for consideration when finalizing the report." The Consultant's Final Report delivered several robust recommendations for suitable financing mechanisms including: 1) Lending through geological information as collateral; 2) Launching a Support Fund; 3) Establishment of Mining Development Bank; and 4) New Green Loans (equipment-focused). The Report also made recommendations on the necessary policy changes and enabling legal environment that should be considered for the mechanisms to function.

However, despite these efforts, no financing mechanism was formalized by the project end. The biggest challenge to establishing a financing mechanism was that commercial lenders and financial institutions, which the Project engaged through various consultative meetings, were ultimately unwilling to provide loans to ASGM sector in the absence of any loan pay-back guarantees from small scale miners who are considered high risk, as they are often working independently, in informal settings and in highly remote hard-to-reach areas. Another challenge highlighted by interviewed key informants was that most bank loans are prospect-based and therefore reliant on the quantity of gold, a requirement that small miners often face difficulty in meeting. In addition, miners were also reluctant to formalize their operations through a financing mechanism, as their income would then be subject to greater taxes.

Moreover, the Evaluation found a lack of interest from the government in supporting private-sector commercial lenders and financial institutions. For example, providing guarantees on loans to miners and/or initiating other policies such as tax waivers.

This proved to be a big challenge faced by the Project as access to financing has been highlighted as a major barrier for the ASGM sector to pursue mercury free technologies. The finding was also confirmed in evaluation discussions and interviews with different project beneficiary groups. For instance, FGD respondents in Region 8 noted that the project should have involved a bank since the cost for the equipment was out of the reach for small scale miners. Similarly, an interview with the National Toshaos Council (NTC) highlighted that miners from the community reported difficulties in setting up mercury technology without any access to financing. Whereas the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) in Region 7 noted that sustained financing is the main challenge for most projects and therefore can hamper the transition to mercury free mining approach.

Overall, the TE determined that a feasibility for the establishment of such a financial mechanism should have been conducted during the project design phase. This would have allowed the project to develop a more practical approach that would also be in line with the limited exposure that CI Guyana had to gold mining. For instance, such an approach may have included technical and financial collaboration with and linking artisanal and small-scale miners to existing modes of financing, e.g., that available through the USAID project, etc.

In summary, despite the strong demand for financing, the Project was unable to establish a financial mechanism under Outcome 2. This was primarily because private lending and financial institutions were unwilling to work with the ASGM sector without any government backed guarantees on the loans provided. Whereas the project was unable to garner any support from the government for the development of any such schemes.

Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 2 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 7: Outcome 2 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Unsatisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Unsatisfactory

4.4.3. Component 3: Markets Established for Branded Mercury-Free Gold from Guyana

Under Component 3, the project aimed to establish markets for branded mercury-free gold from Guyana. Component 3 included one Outcome that focused on establishing a chain of custody process, verification mechanism for gold, and an El Dorado branding scheme **(Outcome 3.1)**. Outcome 3.1 was linked to two outputs, including: **Output 3.1** - Social and environmental standards, a chain of custody process, and a verification mechanism for El Dorado Gold, linked to the GEF Gold brand, is developed, and institutionalized; and **Output 3.2** - El Dorado producers are linked to international responsibly produced gold markets**.** The table below provides the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome and reports against the progress towards results.

Table 8: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 3

Outcome 3.: By the end of the project, a chain of custody process, verification mechanism for gold and an El Dorado Gold branding scheme is developed and institutionalized				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Outcome indicator 3.1: Number of chain of custody processes, verification mechanisms for	Zero (0) chain of custody process verification mechanism and an El Dorado Green Gold Branding Scheme	The branding of El Dorado Gold has been shown to result in	In the absence of markets established for mercury free gold,	Unsatisfactory

gold, and El Dorado branding schemes developed and institutionalized		increased gold sales and revenues to artisanal and small-scale miners in Guyana.	there was no increase in gold sales reported	

Overall, the Project made little progress under Outcome 3, as establishing of markets for branded mercury-free gold was heavily reliant on the previous two outcomes.

Overall, the project undertook several activities with reference to the delivery of this outcome. For example, in 2021 a series of interactive sessions between the consulting firm and the project team were conducted to assess the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria which must be verifiably achieved as a requirement to brand El Dorado gold as responsibly produced. Through these activities, the project aimed to clearly determine the availability, characteristics and quantities of mercury-free gold that could be suitable for export. Similarly, CI Guyana engaged with DeAbreu Creations (Gold Shop) during the inception stage of the project, and this led to the stakeholder providing land for Project implementation where miners could operate. In addition, the project hired consultants to put forward a recommendation for establishment and implementation of an appropriate Chain of Custody process for mercury free gold produced in Guyana.

The TE also found that the Mercury Free Verification and Capacity Building Consultancy was undertaken in 2022, where Devsol Consulting undertook field visits to support development of a roadmap on mineral processing, responsible mining standards, chain of custody and EL Dorado Branding and Marketing within the Guyana ASGM sector. The report focused on stakeholder engagements, review of mineral processing process flowsheets, assessment of gold circuits and possible rehabilitation practices, mine standard baseline assessment, supply chain and mine practice risk assessment. Devsol Consulting also piloted the supply chain Region 8 and conducted trainings of miners and government agencies on planetGOLD standards.

The TE found that the main challenge in achieving targets pertaining to Outcome 3 was the insufficient production quantity of mercury-free gold through the project for this activity. This shortcoming is directly linked to implementation challenges under Outcomes 1 and 2. In particular, delays in implementation of Outcome 1 resulted in modest amounts of mercury-free gold to be processed in the demonstration sites (i.e., 0.6 tons); whereas, under Outcome 2, no financial mechanism was developed which would have otherwise helped miners to procure equipment for the production of mercury free gold. In addition, delays in submission of a report by the consultants hired by the project for submission of the Final Report on marketing the El Dorado brand, which was finally accepted in 2021, also affected the progress on this outcome.

Based on stakeholder interviews held, another challenge identified was that mercury-free gold does not attract a higher retail price as opposed to gold mined using mercury. Therefore, in absence of strong market demand favoring mercury-free gold, miners and other stakeholders were not inclined to invest heavily in new technologies without any possible market incentives, while the majority of miners are unaware of the potential of significantly higher recovery rates using mercury-free methods. In fact, although the project reported retail of mercury-free gold in select/niche gold shops, the demand for such mercury-free gold continues to be very scarce.

Furthermore, the Evaluation found that the verification process for mercury free gold required high technical expertise and additional financial resources, both of which small miners were found to be lacking.

Under this Outcome, the Project managed to create market linkages with only one jeweler, Topaz, as the latter reported to have a niche customer base that would be interested in purchasing mercury-free gold. This would allow the project to test the value chain at a pilot level. But engagement with international downstream companies could not be fully realized mainly due to the challenges detailed above.

In summary, the Project was unable to establish markets for branded mercury free gold due to the limited production of mercury free gold in the demonstration sites and absence of broad market demand for mercury free gold. Moreover, interviews with key stakeholders highlighted that in the absence of strong market linkages, the Project was not able to have any significant influence on the business practices and operations of the participating gold mining firms.

Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 3 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 9: Outcome 3 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Unsatisfactory
Effectiveness	Unsatisfactory
Efficiency	Unsatisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Unsatisfactory

4.4.4. Component 4: National Policies and Incentives for Mercury- Free Gold Established

Under Component 4, the project set out to establish national level policies and incentives for mercury-free gold. Component 4 included one outcome that related to developing a national policy and laws to support responsible gold production and gold commodity chain **(Outcome 4.1).** To undertake this, the Project planned to convene a multi-stakeholder fora to provide input for the revision/drafting of a national policy for responsible ASGM gold mining and build capacity to ensure compliance with mining policy. **(Output 4.1)**

Table 10: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 4

Outcome 4.1: By the end of the project, a national policy on responsible gold production and value added and requisite laws/regulations are refined/drafted to support a responsible gold commodity chain.				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Outcome indicator 4.1: Number of national polices and requisite laws/regulations in support of responsible gold production and value added in the gold commodity chain refined/drafted.	Zero (0) national policy on responsible gold production and value added along the gold commodity chain	At least one (1) national policy and attendant requisite laws/regulations in support of responsible gold production and value added in the gold commodity chain revised/drafted	No national policy was revised or drafted	Moderately Satisfactory

There was little progress achieved under Outcome 4, as no national policy, law, or regulation to support responsible gold production was put forward. The Evaluation found that major challenges in implementation of Outcome 4 were lack of government support and limited capacity of the Project team to drive change at the national policy level. Moreover, the design of this outcome was highly unrealistic to anticipate that policy change could be achieved during the limited project lifetime.

The Evaluation found that primary reasons for limited public support were lack of buy-in of government commitments by stakeholders as well as changing governmental priorities. Initially, the project design was driven by the GoG's commitment, as the President of Guyana when addressing the Minamata Conference on Mercury 3 (COPs3) in year 2017 reinforced the country's commitment to eliminating the use of mercury by 2027. However, as highlighted by interviewed by some stakeholders, since the government committed to this highly ambitious target without consulting the mining community whose incomes rely heavily on mercury mining, the idea never got active traction in practice. Later, a new government, which was elected in 2020, shifted its priorities from traditional gold mining towards more recently discovered oil and gas reserves in Guyana[11], which are projected to be comparatively more profitable and advantageous to the country's GDP.

Another key challenge identified was that progress on evidence-based change was directly linked to the assessments and stakeholder consultations conducted under the previous components of the project as the policies and regulation were envisioned to be aligned to the production of mercury free gold (Component 1); financing and incentive scheme (Component

[11] Source: Guyana scrambles to make the most of oil wealth

2); and the chain of custody and verification mechanism (Component 3). Therefore, limited progress in the first three components affected the overall success of Outcome 4.

Although, the project was unable to make any significant contribution towards its target of policy development, it did provide some technical support to the Government of Guyana - Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) on the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for ASGM sector for aspects supporting transition to mercury free mining practices. In particular, the Project contributed to all aspects of the NAP. The NAP was completed in October 2021, approved by GoG in 2022 and subsequently submitted to the Minamata Secretariat. At the time of the Evaluation, the NAP was in its implementation phase. Towards the end, the Project's Technical Officer participated in the baseline field work through data collection exercise at several mining sites and was also involved in discussions on the formula to be applied for calculating Guyana's Mercury Baseline. The Technical Officer also provided feedback on the draft plan. The Framework highlighted two main findings, including: i) draft guidelines, draft standards, draft Codes of Practice, as well as draft legislation were awaiting approval for prolonged periods; and ii) data collection and information sharing protocols for mercury trade are either not established or not functioning properly. The draft NAP was submitted and at the time of the Terminal Evaluation was awaiting government approval.

Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 4 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 11: Outcome 4 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Moderately Satisfactory

4.4.5. Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation

Component 5 is related to monitoring and evaluation and included a single outcome pertaining to national mercury monitoring mechanisms operational (Outcome 5).

Table 12: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 5

Outcome 5.1: By the end of the project, national capacity for the monitoring of the use of mercury in the gold mining established and strengthened.				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Outcome indicator 5.1: Number of national mercury monitoring mechanisms	Zero (0) M&E programme for instituting mercury-free goldmining.	Monitoring and evaluation of the use of mercury in gold mining is institutionalized within the	No monitoring and evaluation of the use of mercury in gold mining was institutionalized	Moderately Unsatisfactory

operational (2020-2023)		appropriate agencies		

Under Outcome 5, the Project was unable to institutionalize a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the use of mercury in gold mining among relevant agencies. Nevertheless, disparate initiatives were undertaken related to monitoring of mercury-free gold, including the development of a baseline during the NAP development (as elaborated under Outcome 5) and the M&E system developed for the demonstration sites.

The Project undertook preparatory work early in the implementation towards developing an M&E framework. For example, it assessed the M&E framework of the NORAD-funded 'Addressing Drivers of Deforestation (ADoD)' project. Similarly, the Project provided in-field support towards NAP development to determine the mercury use baseline for the ASGM sector, with the understanding that the baseline developed under NAP will inform the analysis of data gathered at the demonstration sites. In addition, CI Guyana pursued a collaborative approach towards establishing a multi-agency grouping to identify a system for tracking and monitoring the use of mercury in the ASGM sector. Representatives from Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) and the Guyana Gold Board (GGB) agreed to the approach and the Working Group held their first meeting in mid-2021.

However, the TE noted that the extensive consultative meetings among various stakeholders did not materialize in development of a functional M&E mechanism to track the use of mercury in gold mining. That being said, the nascent M&E system developed and applied at the demonstration sites showed that a 1:3 mercury to gold ratio was applied to estimate how much mercury was avoided at each site. Since an estimate of 120.39 grams of gold was produced each month at the Region 8 site, it was calculated that 722.34 grams of gold was produced at the end of this quarter, thus avoiding 2,167.02 grams of mercury at one site. Accordingly, it was estimated that the average number of miners in both Regions 7 & 8 being 2,000 producing an average 10,000 kg of gold were using 30,000 kg of mercury in each region.

Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 5 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 13: Outcome 5 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.4.6. Component 6: Communications and Knowledge Management

Component 6 related to communications and knowledge management and included a single Outcome pertaining to development of a strategic communication plan and materials targeting key stakeholders within the supply chain for awareness and policy advocacy

(Outcome 6.1). Component 6 further includes four outputs, including: **Output 6.1** - A strategic communication plan prepared and implemented, and materials prepared (e.g. policy papers, factsheets, videos) aimed at key stakeholders, including miners, decisionmakers, and other local and international actors within the supply chain for awareness raising and policy advocacy; **Output 6.2** - Biennial conference and annual dialogues organized to promote Project Findings and Responsible Gold Mining; **Output 6.3** - Coordination with the global project on Knowledge Management activities; and **Output 6.4** - Education and awareness on options and benefits of responsible gold production and education targeting policy-makers to build national commitment to a sustainable responsible gold value chain in Guyana.

Table 14: Progress on Indicators Under Outcome 6

Outcome 6.1: A strategic communication plan and materials targeting key stakeholders, including miners, decision makers, and other local and international actors within the supply chain for awareness raising and policy advocacy are developed and implemented				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Progress till TE**	**Progress Rating**
Indicator 6.1: Number of strategic communication plans and materials (e.g., policy papers, factsheets, videos, etc.) aimed at key stakeholders, including miners, decision-makers, and other actors within the supply chain for awareness raising and policy advocacy developed	Zero (0) education and awareness plans targeted at policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, and other key stakeholders on responsible gold mining in Guyana	Twenty (20) strategic plans and awareness materials targeted at policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, and other key stakeholders on responsible gold mining in Guyana	23 types of communication materials were developed. These included awareness materials aimed at a wide array of key stakeholders, including: policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, concessionaries, gold shop owners and others responsible for gold mining in Guyana.	Highly Satisfactory

The Project was found to have developed and disseminated strategic communication plans and materials under Outcome 6. Interview with institutional stakeholders as well as miners participating in the demonstrations highlighted that the Project worked to change traditional mindsets of miners who participated in demonstrations on mercury-free gold mining. In particular, the communication materials helped create awareness of the environmental and health risks of mercury mining and also promoted new mercury-free processing techniques and technologies.

Overall, under Outcome 6, against a target of 20 strategic plans and materials, CI Guyana developed 23 types of communication materials, thereby surpassing the end of project target. These included awareness materials aimed at a wide array of key stakeholders, including: policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, concessionaries, gold shop owners and others responsible for gold mining in Guyana. Moreover, 4 types of communication materials were produced. Of these, the most critical and useful communication material produced and disseminated included a field video demonstrating how to operate three pieces of equipment used in mercury free mining operations – Gold Kacha, Gold Cube and Blue Bowl, explaining the most effective way each can be used. Similarly, a tutorial video was developed demonstrating the use of small-scale prospecting equipment, including augur and flush drill. Also, a booklet was developed in collaboration with partner agencies, informing miners of the COVID-19 virus; its symptoms, and how to practically stay safe travelling to and from mining camps, as well as when working in the camps. Moreover, communication material was developed to raise awareness of the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. The Project also conducted video interviews of miners for the 'Women in Mining' series and a booklet 'Equipment for Responsible Mining'. Moreover, Guyana was the first of the child projects to develop a 360-degree mining tour, which was showcased on the planetGOLD website, with support from GEF. Relating to the communication material produced by the Project, MNR found the handbook easy to read and videos produced with GEF were of good quality. However, some of the miners interviewed from Region 8 found the jargon used to be too technical in the explanation of the science of the project and was therefore not as persuasive to convince miners.

Strong implementation of the communication component was also contributed to from a collaborative approach where CI Guyana regularly communicated with GEF Gold Global through calls, email exchanges and virtual monthly meetings. These exchanges allowed communication representatives across PlanetGOLD child projects to share ideas and discuss the methods used in their respective country to engage various stakeholders. Similarly, website training was conducted, following which Communications Coordinators were trained to edit their respective planetGOLD Country page.

Under this component, the Project did face challenges especially due to COVID-19 travel and meeting restrictions which hindered in-person education and awareness activities. However, the Project worked proactively to mitigate this by ensuring effective outreach through digital media tools such as radio programs, WhatsApp, internet, and others.

In summary, Outcome 6 was successful in creating awareness among miners, indigenous communities, and other stakeholders on the benefits of mercury-free gold mining. Contributing to this behavior change was particularly challenging as these communities have been mining gold for over a century.

Based on the above assessment, the TE team gave the following performance ratings for Outcome 6 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

Table 15: Outcome 6 Rating

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Highly Satisfactory

4.5.Sustainability

This section examines the overall potential of and risks to sustainability of the project's outcomes. The TE assessed implications on sustainability in terms of financial and institutional factors and socio-economic factors. Accordingly, the Evaluation rated the sustainability of the project outcomes on a four-point scale based on an assessment of the likelihood and magnitude of the risks to sustainability based on the results of the project.

4.5.1 Financial and Institutional Factors

Interview with key stakeholders revealed that there is a potential for an increase in demand for mercury-free gold over the next five years as this has been the trend in the past decade. This positive trend was reportedly attributed mostly to the previous and ongoing efforts from the international development sector. In addition to this CI-GEF/CI-Guyana project, some key projects referenced in this regard have been implemented by the WWF, French Alliance for Responsible Mining, UNDP, and NORAD, etc. Hence, ongoing efforts from the international development sector will be critical for the sustainability of the projects' outcomes towards wider adoption of mercury-free gold mining in Guyana. At the time of this TE, CI-Guyana was reportedly in discussions with some potential donors for new projects to build on the outcomes of this GEF project. Hence, there is a possibility of continuation of initiatives.

Furthermore, considering the pilot-nature of this project, ongoing support from the Government of Guyana will be crucial for the sustainability of project activities, as by design, GEF expects the country governments to carry forward the initiatives under the Planet GOLD program. However, sustainability of the project's outcomes in terms of institutional factors was severely hampered by the limited support received from the Government of Guyana. For example, interviews with representatives from project implementing agencies reflected that private sector commercial lenders were unwilling to engage with small miners in the absence of Government offered support through loan guarantees and pursing other policies such as tax waivers to miners using mercury-free technologies. Moreover, considering the shift in priorities towards the oil and gas sector, the TE found that there is limited likelihood of active and/or substantial policy support for mercury-free gold mining in the country over the short to medium-term.

4.5.2 Socio-Economic Factors

The project's sustainability in terms of socio-economic factors is evident based on the significant enthusiasm and buy-in from the local miners who participated in the demonstrations site, as detailed in the section on Effectiveness. Success of the demonstration

sites reinforced sustainability as it allowed miners to develop a strong understanding of how to operate the new mercury-free technologies and were largely convinced on the reasons for adopting the new techniques, especially after witnessing firsthand the increased recovery rates from mined gold going up from 30% to 95%.

However, despite these positive factors, the Evaluation identified key challenges to continuation and scaling up of mercury-free technologies in gold mining in Guyana. Firstly, the project only reached 4% to 5% of miners in Regions 7 and 8 through its demonstration and awareness raising activities. After the project closure, these services will cease to exist.

Secondly, equipment for mercury-free gold mining is not readily available as its not produced locally and therefore has to be imported from countries such as South Africa and Brazil, at exorbitant prices. The lack of broad-based demand for this equipment at present also affects imports into the country.

Thirdly, the small-scale and artisanal miners lack the financial capital to acquire the equipment required for mercury-free mining. The biggest challenge is that commercial lenders and financial institutions in the country consider ASGM stakeholders to be high-risk and are unwilling to provide financing in the absence of loan guarantees. While the project was also not able to establish the planned financial mechanism for ASGM. Another major challenge is that mercury-free gold does not attract a higher market price as opposed to gold mined using mercury, thereby discouraging miners from investing in this technology, especially as most miners in the country are unaware of the potential of significantly higher recovery rates from this method.

Finally, the small-scale mining sector does not have the technical capacity to operate the equipment at their sites. For example, using advanced engineering approaches, the miners have to follow international standards in quantifying the level of reserves, which is required to operate a purpose-built plant capable of mining mercury-free gold. Evaluation interview with technical experts associated with the project also reflected that this is also a hurdle for access to finance, as most small-scale miners do not quantify their reserve ore in a scientific manner, which is required for bank loans in order to develop a feasibility. Nevertheless, the TE learned that the Guyana Geological Association are now planning to assist miners to undertake such quantifications in the future. Furthermore, mines need to produce sufficient feed to pass through the plant for it to be feasible, which can be difficult to achieve for small-scale mining operations.

In view of these challenges, the TE team concluded that despite being convincing due to the higher recovery rates, the replication and sustainability of technologies introduced by the project are likely to be ***Moderately Unlikely***.

4.6. Progress Towards Impact

The Project was designed to have a transformational impact on the overall gold mining sector by eliminating mercury. Impact was envisaged at multiple levels, including: i) transformation

in technology use at the miners' level; ii) generating financing sources to facilitate access to mercury-free mining technologies, iii) establishing market value chain of mercury-free gold; and iv) developing policies supporting elimination of mercury from gold mining in Guyana. The TE observed that the highest potential for impact was under Outcome 1 (demonstration of mercury-free technologies) and Outcome 6 (Communications and Knowledge Management). Whereas limited progress on the remaining Project outcomes, as detailed in the Effectiveness section, has constrained possible impact.

In areas of capacity building and influencing behavior change among the indigenous mining groups, the Project was found to have increased the willingness among miners to transition towards mercury-free technologies through the demonstration sites established in Regions 7 and 8. This was best reflected in the finding that despite initially facing strong resistance from miners, towards the end of the Project and in response to added interest from miners and indigenous groups, the Project established an additional demonstration site in Region 7. The demonstration sites had a major contribution to impact as miners could see firsthand the increased recovery rates from mined gold going up from 30% using mercury-based methods to 95% using mercury-free methods.

Developing strong buy-in among miners was a significant achievement of the project, considering that these communities have been actively mining gold for over a century using traditional approaches, including mining gold with mercury. Moreover, GGB informed the Evaluation that there are approximately 2,000 miners in each of Region 7 and Region 8, of which 150-200 miners were reached as part of the demonstrations. Based on that, by demonstrating to 150-200 miners, the project has reached 4-5% miners which for a short-term, limited-funding project is a substantial achievement having positive impact.

Similarly, interviewed miners reported having a better understanding of the health and environmental risks associated with the use of mercury. However, there have been no reports of replication of the mercury-free technology introduced by the project. In fact, in the absence of an impact assessment or any other follow up observation by the project, it is not possible to assess the full impact of the project's activities and the extent to which miners may have adjusted their operations.

Furthermore, a major missed opportunity for replacement of mercury-based mining among the ASGM sector was the project's inability to establish financing mechanisms which could support the sector to procure capital for mercury-free technologies. Lack of available financing was seen as a major chronic hurdle for small scale miners to pursue mercury-free gold mining beyond the project and closure of demonstration sites. Similarly, the small quantities produced under the project and challenges associated with limited/niche market demand for mercury-free gold resulted in lack of encouragement for miners to switch to mercury-free technologies.

Furthermore, in terms of impact on policy, the policy environment proved to be non-conducive to the development of any new policies. the impact of the NAP will depend on the

political will and stakeholder buy-in. For instance, government-led initiatives such as providing guarantees on private sector loans to small-scale miners or tax incentives for miners who adopt mercury-free technologies have the potential for strong impact.

4.7.Safeguards

The project's approved project monitoring plan committed to adhering to the CI-GEF project agency's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) which included nine safeguard plans: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Natural Habitats, Involuntary Resettlement, Indigenous Peoples, Pest Management, Physical and Cultural Resources, Stakeholder Engagement, Gender mainstreaming, and Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms. Of these, the Guyana Gold project triggered four, namely the: a) Indigenous Peoples; b) Stakeholder Engagement; c) Gender mainstreaming; and d) Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms. This section reviews the safeguard plans and documentation and analyses the effectiveness of implementing management measures related to these safeguards. Based on the assessment, the Evaluation found that the project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.7.1. Indigenous Peoples

The project's geographic scope included lands or territories traditionally owned, customarily used, or inhabited by indigenous peoples. To safeguard their interests, the project considered indigenous communities during the design phase and developed a safeguard plan accordingly. The Indigenous Peoples safeguard plan outlined in the project document provided a comprehensive framework for addressing the potential impacts of project activities on indigenous communities in Guyana. The plan also recognized the cultural, social, and environmental vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples and aimed to ensure their participation, protection of their rights, and equitable benefits from the project. Additionally, within the project's governance framework, the National Toshaos Council (NTC), composed of elected Indigenous leaders from Guyana's ten regions, plays a pivotal role at the PSC level.

Conversely, the safeguard plan also exhibited some weaknesses as it lacked specific actions and strategies to address the identified challenges. While the plan stated the need for informational meetings, education workshops, and baseline surveys, it did not provide details on how these activities were to be carried out. Similarly, although the plan acknowledged the impact of mining on the subsistence-based economy of indigenous societies, it did not propose any measures to address this issue, as there was limited focus on economic development and poverty alleviation.

During the project implementation the project followed Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and CI's Rights Base Approach (RBA). In this regard, brochures outlining the elements of FPIC in relation to the project were created for circulation among partners and communities to ensure that the rights of the Indigenous Peoples in proximity to project activities were respected. Desk review of the PIRs also revealed that communication between

the Project and Indigenous Villages followed FPIC principles which contributed to excellent working relationships. Furthermore, the project exhibited its commitment to inclusivity by involving indigenous miners in demonstrations held within regions 7 and 8. Additionally, the Indigenous community of Karrau, although not initially included as a demonstration site, expressed interest in becoming a demo site, as part of the project Village Improvement Plan for indigenous communities. As a result, the lessons learnt and demonstration equipment from region 7 demo site were brought to Karrau.

Furthermore, the project's Indigenous People's Safeguard plan was accompanied by two indicators: i) "Percentage of indigenous/local communities where FPIC have been followed and documented"; and ii) "The percentage of communities where project benefit sharing has been agreed upon through the appropriate community governance mechanisms and documented". However, no end of project targets were set for these indicators to measure their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the project was effective in interactions with Indigenous Peoples as all interactions followed FPIC requirements.

Based on the above assessment, the Evaluation found that the project's engagement of indigenous peoples to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.7.2. Stakeholder Engagement

The project prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) at the time of design which involved undertaking a stakeholder mapping identifying various stakeholders involved in the project and their role, interest, impact, and influence. The SEP also detailed the importance of engaging stakeholders from various sectors of Guyanese society, including the government, private sector, civil society, local villages, and indigenous and local peoples. The SEP outlined a four-stage process for stakeholder engagement, starting with scoping and research activities to develop a fact base on the issue being addressed. It then progressed to wider engagement and collaboration with a core set of stakeholders to identify high-priority issues and design evidence-based solutions. The plan also included a validation stage to refine and strengthen the proposed solutions, followed by public engagement to gather wider support and input for implementation.

The Evaluation determined the SEP to have a comprehensive approach to stakeholder inclusion. This approach enhanced the effectiveness of the project, as it allowed for a more holistic understanding of the issues and solutions. Additionally, the plan emphasized the importance of gender equity and mainstreaming indigenous peoples, which demonstrated inclusivity and social justice. Conversely, while the SEP acknowledged the need for representation from key stakeholders, it did not provide specific details on how this representation will be ensured.

The project engaged Stakeholders through various dissemination materials. Among these were community outreach, education, and awareness sessions. For the demonstration sites the project disseminated a field video that demonstrated three low-priced pieces of equipment used for the mercury-free gold processing. Similarly, a booklet titled 'Equipment

for Responsible Mining' that showcased equipment suitable for mercury-free gold production, was produced and widely disseminated among miners. Furthermore, the project used the medium of radio in region 7 and 8, through which team members were interviewed to inform community level stakeholders on project status and upcoming project activities. Moreover, a booklet was developed in collaboration with partner agencies, informing miners of the COVID-19 virus: its symptoms and how to practically stay safe travelling to and from mining camps as well as when working in the camps.

In terms of monitoring, the SEP listed three indicators that sought to measure the level of stakeholder engagement process throughout implementation. These included: i) Number of government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholder groups that have been involved in the project implementation phase on an annual basis; ii) Number of engagements (e.g., meeting, workshops, consultations) with stakeholders during the project implementation phase; and c) Number persons (sex disaggregated) that have been involved in project implementation phase. The project was able to reach out to a total of 120 government agencies, CSOs, private sector, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders and engage 886 persons including 527 men and 359 women from these organizations were engaged in different activities. This included organization of 16 meetings, workshops, consultations) with stakeholders during the project implementation.

Based on the above assessment, the Evaluation found that the project's engagement of stakeholders to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.7.3. Gender Mainstreaming Plan

The project document included a Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) developed in accordance with the CI-GEF Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). The GMP aimed to integrate gender considerations into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the GEF-GOLD Project, as well as the broader El Dorado Gold-Responsible Mining in Guyana Initiative. The plan set three main goals: i) providing equal opportunities for men and women to benefit from and contribute to the project; ii) mitigating potential adverse effects on both genders; and iii) ensuring respect for the dignity and human rights of men and women involved. It also outlined specific actions to mainstream gender into project governance, integrate gender considerations into project components, and implement gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

The Evaluation found that the GMP adopted a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming, addressing gender issues at multiple levels and throughout various project components. It recognized the need for sensitization and capacity building on gender issues among project stakeholders, including the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and grantees. Additionally, it also emphasized the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data and incorporating gender indicators into monitoring and evaluation processes. Furthermore, the plan acknowledged the specific challenges faced by women in the mining sector and aimed to provide equal opportunities for their participation and benefit from the project.

Conversely, while the GMP mentioned the need for a gender analysis based on existing literature and primary data, it did not provide detailed information on the findings of this analysis. Similarly, while the plan acknowledged the importance of engaging indigenous and marginalized women, it did not provide specific strategies or actions to ensure their participation. Finally, while the gender analysis in the project document detailed prostitution and human trafficking, this was not included in the GMP.

During the PPG phase, appropriate representation of men and women as well as organizations representing women and men within the sector in stakeholder engagement activities was sought. However, the absence of a baseline assessment during its design phase prevented the project to accurately pinpoint women-led mining operations and subsequently tailor activities to address their needs. Nevertheless, a qualitative study on Social and Gender Assessment was conducted in 2020 to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding ASGM value chain. Moreover, it sought to assess the challenges and opportunities encountered by women within the ASGM subsector. The study went a step further by examining the existing gender-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) in the context of mercury-dependent ASGM activities. However, the scope of the assessment was constrained by both budgetary limitations and time constraints. Despite these limitations, the assessment did provide some insights. Moreover, in order to promote gender balance and inclusivity, the project made efforts to enhance the participation of women in project activities. This commitment was reflected in the sex-disaggregated data from workshops and meetings and the fact that approximately 40 percent of participants in the demonstration sessions were women. In addition to mainstreaming women engagement, the project demonstrated gender inclusivity by involving the Guyana Women Miners Organization (GWMO), an NGO dedicated to improving the conditions of women in all sectors mining in Guyana, at both the project steering committee, and the technical levels.

Furthermore, the project demonstrated its dedication to gender inclusivity by creating an environment conducive to the participation of women. Demonstration sites were equipped with private and well-kept toilet facilities and safe transportation options to encourage and accommodate women's involvement. Additionally, the communications consultancy associated with the project adopted a gender-sensitive approach to ensure an equitable distribution of audience testing for messages and underscored the significance of existing materials that shed light on the challenges faced by women miners.

In terms of monitoring, the project listed three indicators; however, due to the absence of baseline data, no targets were set for measuring the effectiveness of indicators. These indicators included i) Number of men and women that participated in project activities (e.g., meetings, workshops, consultations); ii) Number of men and women that received benefits (e.g. employment, income generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project; iii) Number of strategies, plans (e.g. management plans and land use plans) and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations (this indicator applies to relevant projects).

Against the indicator 1, the project successfully involved a total of 1,022 individuals, with nearly 44 percent of the participants being women. Moving on to indicator 2, a total of 431 individuals took part in various project activities, and approximately 53 percent of these beneficiaries were women. Lastly, in terms of Indicator 3, gender considerations were integrated into four of the project's strategies, plans, and policies.

Based on the above assessment, the Evaluation found that the project's efforts at mainstreaming gender to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.7.4. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism

The Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) Plan outlined in the ProDoc provided a framework for addressing unintended consequences and resolving concerns related to the project. The plan aimed to reduce project risks and offer an effective process for expressing and resolving grievances. It also stipulated the establishment of a Grievance Mechanism Committee responsible for addressing complaints and escalating unresolved issues to higher levels of authority. The Evaluation found the AGM plan to be comprehensive in addressing grievances. It provided multiple methods for submitting complaints, including face-to-face meetings, written complaints, telephone conversations, and email. Additionally, the plan emphasized the importance of timely responses and set specific timeframes for acknowledging and addressing grievances.

The project developed an Operations Manual, as an in-house guide for implementing the mechanism. To complement this manual, a consultant was hired to develop an AGM database to aid record-keeping and tracking of grievances made in relation to the project, with an online interface for the submission of grievances and the capacity to track progress towards resolution in a manner that secures confidential information. Additionally, a toolkit comprising a brochure and posters to detail the mechanism was designed, printed, and circulated among key partners. Furthermore, an e-version of the grievance submission form was developed and placed on the CI-Guyana website to ensure that its availability is widespread. Moreover, several innovative means of communicating the purpose of the AGM and how it functions were placed, including a radio advertisement for broadcast in the identified communities.

The project document listed two indicators a) Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism; and Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved. However, no end of project targets were provided to measure the effectiveness of these indicators. Furthermore, throughout the project no complaints were received through the AGM, despite there being several options for submitting complaints and consistent communication about the mechanism. The absence of any complaints was also triangulated with the FGDs undertaken with miners where no major or minor concerns or grievances were reported.

Based on the above assessment, the Evaluation found that the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism to be ***Satisfactory.***

4.8. Knowledge Management

As stipulated in the CI-GEF TE criteria, the evaluators are also expected to provide an assessment of whether the Knowledge Management Plan as included in the ProDoc was implemented. The Evaluation Team found that the project had dedicated and funded a Component (Component 6) for communications and knowledge management. The TE found that the project developed and disseminated strategic communication plans and materials. The Project worked to change the traditional mindsets of miners who participated in demonstrations on mercury-free gold mining. In particular, the communication materials helped create awareness of the environmental and health risks of mercury mining and also promoted new mercury-free processing techniques and technologies. The project aimed to develop 20 strategic plans and materials targeted at policy makers, mining and indigenous communities, and other key stakeholders on responsible gold mining in Guyana.

Overall, the project developed a total of 23 knowledge products. In FY19, the project began by producing communication material to raise awareness of the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. The project developed and disseminated twelve types of awareness materials, including fact sheets, videos, radio ads, posters, brochures, and a blog in FY 2020. Additionally, the project hired a Communications Consultant to prepare the Communications Strategy for the remaining life of the project. Despite encountering challenges due to travel restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in FY21, the project effectively utilized various media channels such as radio programs, WhatsApp, and online platforms to engage with stakeholders. Furthermore, new knowledge products were created and shared, including a safeguards booklet and a field video demonstrating mercury-free mining operations. The project also collaborated with partner agencies to produce a booklet informing miners about the COVID-19 virus. In FY22, the project generated four types of communication materials. These materials included a tutorial video on small-scale prospecting equipment, interviews with miners for the "Women in Mining" series, and a booklet highlighting key equipment for responsible mining. Moving into FY23, at the time of the evaluation, the project produced nine additional pieces of communication material. These included a video documenting the process of producing mercury-free gold, a booklet on equipment for responsible mining, supplementary videos for the "Women in Mining" series, posters illustrating the dangers of mercury, and three blog posts. Furthermore, the project successfully hosted the Eldorado Gold Responsible Mining Conference, attracting various stakeholders and resulting in significant commitments from government representatives.

In summary, the Knowledge Management Plan outlined in the Project Document was effectively implemented throughout the project's duration, demonstrating a dedicated commitment to communication and knowledge dissemination. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project adapted and leveraged various media channels to engage with stakeholders and create valuable knowledge products, ultimately contributing to raising awareness about responsible gold mining in Guyana.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the TE found the project to be **highly relevant and aligned** with various institutional priorities and commitments at the global, national, and local levels. The project effectively addressed the environmental challenges associated with gold mining in Guyana and contributed to the achievement of key government strategies and plans. It was also found to be in line with Guyana's national priorities, such as phasing out mercury use and promoting sustainable resource management. Additionally, the project demonstrated coherence with other ongoing projects in the region. At the institutional level, the project strongly aligned with the priorities and focal areas of CI-Guyana and the GEF. The project's objectives and activities were also consistent with CI-Guyana's vision of conserving nature as the foundation of development and improving human well-being. Furthermore, the project directly contributed to the GEF's Chemical and Waste Focal Area, aiming to promote environmentally friendly practices in the mining industry. On a global scale, the project aligned with international conventions and agreements, such as the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The **quality of supervision** provided by the CI-GEF Agency, serving as the project's Implementing Agency, was found to be satisfactory as they effectively delivered on their responsibilities, providing financial support, management, and oversight for the project while ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, actively participating in monitoring efforts, and providing guidance and feedback to ensure compliance with regulations and safeguards. Regarding the **execution arrangements** of the project, which involved a public-private collaboration between CI-Guyana, the GGDMA, and the GGMC, was found to be well-structured and well-managed, despite initial challenges in team formation and recruitment. The project team demonstrated adaptability and successfully engaged with stakeholders, benefiting from collaborations with various government agencies, civil society groups, and indigenous leaders to ensure alignment with critical interests and gender analysis. **Work planning** was carried out in collaboration with co-executing agencies and the PSC, involving regular meetings to review and approve work plans, discuss implementation issues, and increase coordination and communication between key project partners. However, the project faced challenges related to the unfamiliarity of the project team with the ASGM sector, resulting in delays in implementation, exacerbated by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability. The project also demonstrated effective project-level **monitoring and evaluation** activities, with comprehensive documentation of progress, lessons learned, and adherence to indicators and plans, despite challenges related to the absence of a dedicated M&E person within CI-Guyana for data collection and reporting. Furthermore, the **project's financing** faced challenges related to staffing, underestimation of costs, and budget rearrangements; however, the flexibility of CI-GEF and co-financing from multiple partners allowed for adjustments and utilization of resources. The project engaged a wide range of **stakeholders** from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, and

international development organizations, enhancing implementation through collaborations with other initiatives and consistent communication with the parent project, GEF GOLD. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with their engagement, although some challenges were reported, such as changes in leadership and information sharing.

In terms of results, under **outcome 1**, the project was successful in establishing and operating demonstration sites at existing mines, introducing mercury-free technology, and educating miners on the use of mercury capture systems through field demonstrations. The project was particularly convincing in encouraging the adoption of the introduced mercury-free techniques, notably leading to increased recovery rates from mined gold. Additionally, the project built partnerships with miners, indigenous communities, and government mining authorities. However, the project did not completely replace the use of mercury in gold mining in any of the regions. Moreover, delays in implementation limited the outreach of demonstration activities to only a small number of miners and other stakeholders, consequently rendering the project unable to meet either of its outcome-level targets. Under **outcome 2**, the project aimed to establish a financial mechanism for investments in mercury-free technologies. However, despite strong demand for financing, the project was unable to establish such a mechanism primarily because private lending and financial institutions were unwilling to work with the ASGM sector without any government-backed guarantees on the loans provided. The project also failed to garner any support from the government for the development of such schemes. **Outcome 3**, which pertains to the development of mercury free gold value chain, aimed to establish markets for branded mercury-free gold through the development of a chain of custody processes, verification mechanisms, and an El Dorado branding scheme. However, it made little progress in achieving this outcome due to limited production of mercury-free gold in the demonstration sites and the absence of market demand. The project was not able to have any significant influence on the business practices and operations of the participating gold mining firms in the gold mining commodity chain. Under **outcome 4**, the project aimed to develop a national policy on responsible gold production and value-added, along with requisite laws and regulations. However, no national policy, law, or regulation was put forward to support responsible gold production. The Evaluation found that the lack of government support was the prime reason for the limited progress. Under **outcome 5**, the project aimed to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the use of mercury in gold mining. While the project faced challenges in fully institutionalizing such a framework, it made significant progress through collaborative efforts and demonstrated the prevention of considerable mercury use at specific sites. However, broader implementation of a functional M&E mechanism across regions remained a challenge. Finally, **under outcome 6**, the project successfully developed and disseminated a strategic communication plan and materials respectively to raise awareness among key stakeholders about responsible gold mining. The project raised awareness of the environmental and health risks of mercury mining and promoted mercury-free processing techniques and technologies. However, contributing to this behavior change was particularly challenging, as these communities have been mining gold for over a century.

The project had a mixed **impact** on Guyana's overall gold mining sector. While it made significant progress in demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of mercury-free technologies, it faced challenges in achieving its outcome-level targets and broader impact. The project successfully increased miners' willingness to transition to mercury-free technologies by establishing demonstration sites in Regions 7 and 8. Miners had the opportunity to witness firsthand the improved recovery rates and reduced health and environmental risks associated with mercury-free methods. However, regarding the replication and adoption of mercury-free technology beyond the demonstration sites, the absence of an impact assessment or follow-up observations limited our understanding of the extent to which miners adjusted their operations. Furthermore, the project's inability to establish financing mechanisms and address the limited market demand for mercury-free gold hindered the replacement of mercury-based mining in the sector. Regarding its policy impact, the project faced an environment that was not conducive to the development of new policies. Although the NAP for the ASGM sector received support from the project, which resulted in NAP's approval and its subsequent impact depends on political will and stakeholder buy-in.

In terms of **sustainability**, the project made significant progress in promoting sustainability in the gold mining sector in Guyana. The project successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of mercury-free technologies, with local miners showing enthusiasm and buy-in. The increased recovery rates and the positive response from miners indicate the potential for wider adoption of these technologies. However, there were several challenges that need to be addressed for the sustainability of the project outcomes. Financial and institutional factors pose risks, as ongoing support from the international development sector and the Government of Guyana is crucial. Limited government support and the shift in priorities towards the oil and gas sector may hinder the policy support needed for mercury-free gold mining. Socio-economic factors also present challenges, such as reaching a larger percentage of miners, the lack of availability and affordability of equipment, and the financial constraints faced by small-scale miners. Additionally, the technical capacity of miners and the need for scientific quantification of reserves pose further obstacles.

6. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

6.1. Lessons Learned

The project's design and implementation yielded the following lessons to inform future programming:

1. Achieving a **high recovery rate was the big selling point to the miners** (and not the mercury reduction). The project was also able to provide awareness on health and environmental risks of the use of mercury in gold mining. Although a relatively limited proportion of miners in the country were engaged by the project, miners exposed to the demonstrations were largely convinced on the reasons for adopting the new techniques, especially after witnessing firsthand the increased recovery rates in the 90th percentile. However, several barriers identified at the time of project to mercury-

free gold mining remain unresolved at the project end, including access to finance, local availability of technology, policy support, and value chains.

2. The Project **collaborated with public sector stakeholders** with direct influence over Guyana's natural resources and environment, including: MNR, EPA, Guyana Gold Board (GGB), GGMC, and Guyana Women Miners Organization (GWMO). This combined with the project's knowledge management and dissemination activities resulted in buy-in among several stakeholders. However, **the absence of policy support continues to contribute to the use of mercury-free mining in Guyana**. For instance, due to the lack of any government-led loan pay-back guarantees, commercial lenders and financial institutions were unwilling to provide loans to ASGM sector, as the latter pose a high credit risk due to often working independently, in informal settings, and in highly remote and hard-to-reach areas.
3. The **lack of market incentives for mercury-free gold** is a major hindrance in the way of developing this value chain.
4. To enable transition to **mercury-free mining will require focused ongoing efforts in the medium to long term**, including focus on demonstration, knowledge and awareness raising, and access to technology.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the in-depth assessment of the project, the TE Team presents the following recommendation directed at key stakeholders, including the CI-GEF and CI-Guyana.

6.2.1. Recommendations for CI-GEF

1. Future projects must adopt lessons learned from other GEF GOLD Project countries. For example, in relation to financing, Colombia has reportedly developed a financial mechanism to aide small scale miners with the help of cooperatives. Similarly, to improve mining operations, Peru developed a gold tracing mechanism that encouraged more formal gold production, thereby enabling mercury-free gold mining. Whereas the project in Guyana has been able to successfully demonstrate the technology for mercury-free mining and has also generated substantial knowledge and learning materials on the subject.
2. The Terminal Evaluation found that all three key project stakeholders, CI GEF (the implementing agency), and CI Guyana (the executing agency) lacked prior experience in mining sector, thereby resulting in a highly ambitious and unrealistic project design. It is therefore recommended that in the future GEF provides specialized technical support during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase for any program areas where key stakeholders lack such previous technical expertise.
3. In pilot projects of this nature, the allocation of human and financial resources to monitoring and impact assessment is essential. Therefore, future similar projects must include such resources in order to collect and document information that can facilitate future project design. It is important to mention that CI-GEF is now actively developing

projects with dedicated M&E component as part of its efforts to mainstream the importance of M&E at every phase of the project.

6.2.2. Recommendations for CI-Guyana

1. This was the second initiative by CI Guyana to provide support to the mining sector and a lot remains to be done to develop the sector. It is recommended that building on the lessons learned and outcomes of this project, CI Guyana seeks funding for similar future initiatives. This can also help promote sustainability by reaching a greater number of miners through demonstrations.
2. It is also recommended that for future projects of similar nature, CI Guyana undertake a detailed situation assessment and scoping study to identify existing stakeholders, including financial institutions, mining equipment manufacturers, women miners, and other stakeholders already involved in the gold mining sector in Guyana. These stakeholders can then be targeted and onboarded at the time of design for providing support throughout project implementation. This should particularly include strong support from mining organizations representing ASGM, manufacturers, and importers of machinery for mercury-free gold mining, and projects and institutions providing any financial support to the ASGM sector.
3. Small scale miners do not generally quantify their reserves. To formalize the mining operation and promote mercury-free mining, it is recommended that CI Guyana work with GGMC to train miners on quantifying the reserves based on internationally accepted standards.
4. Some of the miners interviewed from Region 8 found the jargon used in communication materials to be too technical in the explanation of the science of the project and was therefore not as persuasive to convince small scale miners who lack technical understanding. It is recommended that communication materials be revised to present a more simplified understanding of miners for mercury-free gold mining.

Annex 1: List of Documents Reviewed

S. No.	Name of Document(s)
1	Terms Of Reference for the TE
2	CI-GEF Project Document
3	PIRs (FY19 to FY23)
4	Quarterly Technical Reports (FY19 – FY23)
5	Quarterly Financial Reports (FY19 – FY23)
6	CEO Endorsement
7	Midterm Review
8	Accountability and Grievance Mechanism Plan
9	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
10	Gender Mainstreaming Plan
11	Indigenous Peoples Plan
12	Project Results Framework
13	Organizational Structure
14	GGMC Loan Agreements

Annex 2: Data Collection Tools

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Project Management Unit (PMU)	
Name of the Respondent	
Designation	
Contact Details	
Location	
Date of KII	
Starting Time of KII	
Finishing Time of KII	

PROJECT DESIGN

1. How does the current project fit into the priorities of the CI Guyana?
2. What was the timeline and process of project design? E.g., consultations, baseline studies, meetings, etc.
3. Were any of the key management staff from the Project Team currently working on the project involved in the project design? If yes, who? And what was the role of these staff members?
4. What challenges, if any, were faced during the design phase? E.g., limited baseline information, lack of stakeholder consensus, etc.
5. Based on your experience of implementing this project, what have been the major positive elements of the project design? E.g., flexibility, approach to financial management, partnership, and inclusion of particular activities that are easy to implement and/or highly welcomed by beneficiaries, SMART log frame, etc. Please elaborate.
6. And what have been the major elements of design, if any, that resulted in implementation challenges? E.g., ambitious targets, ambiguity in activities, reliance on external partners, etc. Please explain.
7. What, if any, were the changes in project design that were implemented in light of the recommendations from the MTR of the project?
    a. To what extent were these changes implemented?
    b. What has been the effect on overall project management, operations, and design as a result of implementing these changes?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

8. What is the role of the CI Guyana as the executing agency of this project?
9. What is the composition of the PMU? What are the functions of the various teams within the PMU in terms of the current project?
10. What is the functional relationship between the PMU and the Project Steering Committee?

11. How were the Project's implementation activities and tasks divided between the CI Guyana and other executing agencies, namely: a) Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA), and b) Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC)?
12. Overall, to what extent have the project's execution arrangements been effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project?
13. Have there been changes in the management structure over the course of the project's implementation? If so, what were the reasons for the changes and to what extent did they mitigate the challenges faced as a result of the management structure?
14. What are the major management challenges faced by the PMU in delivering its responsibilities? E.g., stakeholder capacity, internal capacity, COVID-19, etc. How were/can some of these challenges mitigated? Please provide details.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

15. What were the major activities undertaken and decisions made during the Inception phase?
16. Was a review of project logical framework undertaken at any time during the project? If yes, what were these changes? And what were the reasons for making these changes to the design?
17. Were these changes formally integrated into the project logical framework or project design? If yes, when?
18. What was the process of seeking approval for these amendments to the original design?
19. What changes to the project's implementation approaches were made in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?
20. Similarly, what changes to the project's implementation approaches were made in light of the political unrest in Guyana?
21. To what extent were these changes effective in mitigating challenges faced?

EFFECTIVENESS

22. What challenges and opportunities has the PMU faced in project implementation? Please provide an overview of each project outcome and output.
23. Which project targets have been achieved and overachieved so far? What were the supporting factors responsible for meeting or exceeding these targets?
24. What are the major implementation challenges faced by the project with respect to accomplishing targets for Components 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6?
25. Which project outputs/activities were/are delayed? And what were /are the reasons for these delays?
26. How did these delays affect the progress of other project outputs and what is the effect on the overall project?
27. What mitigation measures were undertaken to bring these activities back on track? To what extent were these measures effective?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

28. What are the major monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of the PMU?
29. Are any challenges faced when using the project's logical framework for monitoring progress? E.g., ambitious, or non-SMART indicators, long list of activities to be monitored, etc.?
30. What is the monitoring activity undertaken by each of the key project stakeholders, including CI Guyana, and executing partners, etc., e.g., monitoring visits, reports, etc.
31. How/Where is the M&E data collected, stored, and analyzed?
32. What have been major challenges with collecting and reporting M&E data by each stakeholder? How has this affected progress reporting? E.g., delay in submission of reports, etc.
33. What special efforts were made to collect gender-segregated data, stakeholder data, and E&S impact data?
34. How has the M&E been helpful in timely indication of critical gaps in implementation? Please provide examples.
35. Were any of the key project planning decisions based on M&E data? If yes, please provide examples.

STAFFING

36. How many staff is working at the PMU? And what are the roles and responsibilities of these staff members?
37. Has this staff been sufficient for managing the project? If not, why not?
38. What measures were taken to bolster staffing capacity? E.g., hiring of short-term experts
39. Have there been any major changes in staffing during the period of implementation? E.g., staff turnover, or addition/elimination of positions, etc.
40. What were some of the staffing challenges faced by the project? E.g., limited availability of expert staff, difficulty engaging field staff, high turnover, etc.
41. Did the project face any challenges in engaging good quality experts to provide TA? If yes, what are the key challenges and how can these be mitigated?

FINANCE

GEF Fund

42. Has the project faced any problems with financing? E.g., late approvals, difficult reporting processes, unrealistic budgeting at design or AWP stage, etc.?
43. Has the project faced any problems with financing availability? E.g., late approvals, difficult reporting processes, unrealistic budgeting at design or AWP stage, etc.?
44. How have these issues affected the project's performance? And what measures have been taken thus far to resolve some of these issues?

Co-Financing

45. Who are the main contributors to co-finance?
46. How is the project's co-financing tracked?
47. What can be done to improve the tracking of project's co-financing?

48. What measures can be taken to enhance/increase the co-financing levels currently being provided?

TIMELINESS

49. What planned activities have faced major delays? And what were the causes of these delays? E.g., COVID-19, political unrest, capacity of stakeholders, seasonality, lengthy procurement and/or approval processes, etc.
50. How did these delays affect the project implementation? And what measures were taken to overcome the factors causing delays?
51. On what basis was the decision to grant the project a 14-month no cost extension made? Was it successful in achieving its intended goal(s)?

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

52. What are the main coordination mechanisms/arrangements utilized by the PMU to manage and engage with executing partners and other stakeholder organizations?
53. What has worked well in terms of effective collaboration with different types of stakeholders across different regions?
54. What have been the major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with different types of stakeholders across different regions?

IMPACT

55. In your opinion, which project activities have had the highest potential for impact? Why?
56. Also, which project activities do you think have had the lowest potential for impact? Why?
57. How could the potential impact of these activities have been further enhanced?

SUSTAINABILITY AND RISKS

58. Of the activities implemented thus far, which are the most sustainable? Why?
59. What steps or measures did the project take to increase the sustainability of results achieved under the project?
60. What are the actual or potential threats to the sustainability of the implemented or planned activities by the project?
61. What are your recommendations for improving the likelihood of sustainability of project current or planned outputs and outcomes?

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

Gender

62. What measures have been taken to ensure inclusion/mainstreaming of women's concerns in the project activities?
63. What have been the major challenges and opportunities regarding gender integration into project activities?
64. How are these being dealt with to ensure the achievement of project outcomes?

Stakeholder Engagement

65. Who are the major types of stakeholders of the project?

66. What are the different ways in which various stakeholder types, including key partners, external partners, academia, and public sector stakeholders, etc., have been engaged in the project activities?
67. What steps has the project undertaken to ensure that its various deliverables were delivered through effective stakeholder engagement?
68. How were stakeholders selected for participation in /benefiting from capacity building activities?
69. How did the project ensure that stakeholders have been selected according to the established criteria?
70. What have been the major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with each type of partner and stakeholders? E.g., extensive variety of partners, limited capacity, etc.
71. What measures are taken to ensure that women and historically marginalized groups are actively involved in the project's activities?

Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms (AGM)

72. How does the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) work? What have been the observed shortcomings of the system?
73. What measures have been taken to improve the system?

Knowledge Management and Dissemination

74. What mechanisms and tools does the project have in place to organize and store knowledge gathered and generated during the course of project implementation? E.g., knowledge management strategy, development, and maintenance of project website, etc.
75. What methods of dissemination is the project using to share this information with beneficiaries and various stakeholders, e.g., participating organizations, researchers, policy, and planning departments, etc.
76. How have knowledge management and dissemination activities undertaken by the project been effective? Please provide examples.
77. How can the knowledge management and dissemination activities of the project be improved?

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

78. Based on your experience, what are the major lessons learned from:
    a. Project design;
    b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
    c. Monitoring and Evaluation;
    d. Adaptive management;
    e. Sustainability; and
    f. Impact
79. What are your overall recommendations for the improvement of the following for similar future programmes:
    a. Project design;

b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
c. Monitoring and Evaluation;
d. Adaptive management;
e. Sustainability; and
f. Impact

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Executing Agencies	
Name of the Respondent	
Designation	
Name of Organization	
Contact Details	
Location	
Date of KII	
Starting Time of KII	
Finishing Time of KII	

BACKGROUND

1. How did the current project fit into the priorities of your organization?
2. What was your organization's level of involvement in the design of the project?
3. When and how was your organization engaged to participate in the implementation activities under the this project?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

4. What is the role of your organization in the this project?
5. What is the composition of your organization? What are the functions of the various teams within your organization in terms of the current project?
6. What is the functional relationship between your organization and: a) PMU; and b) the Project Steering Committee?
7. How were the project implementation activities and tasks divided between the your organization and other partners, namely: a) CI Guyana; b) Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA), and c) Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC)?
8. Overall, to what extent have the project's execution arrangements been effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project?
9. Have there been changes in the management structure over the course of the project's implementation? If so, what were the reasons for the changes and to what extent did they mitigate the challenges faced as a result of the management structure?
10. What are the major management challenges faced by your organization, if any, in delivering its responsibilities? E.g. stakeholder capacity, internal capacity, COVID-19, etc. How were/can some of these challenges mitigated? Please provide details.
11. What challenges, if any, did your organization face in terms of the disbursements of funding to your team? What impacts, if any, did these challenges have on the overall progress towards results as well as the management of the project?

EFFECTIVENESS

12. Please provide an overview of the project activities that your organization led and/or contributed to.
13. What challenges and opportunities has your organization faced in the implementation of these activities? Please provide an overview of each project outcome and output, as applicable.
14. Which targets for activities implemented by your organization have been achieved and overachieved so far? What were the supporting factors responsible for meeting or exceeding these targets?
15. Which project outputs/activities were/are delayed? And what were /are the reasons for these delays?
16. How do these delays affect the progress of other project outputs and what is the effect on overall project?
17. What mitigation measures were undertaken to bring these activities back on track? To what extent were these measures effective?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

18. What are the major monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of your organization?
19. How/Where is the M&E data collected, stored, and analyzed?
20. What have been major challenges with collecting and reporting M&E data by each stakeholder? How has this affected progress reporting? E.g. delay in submission of reports, etc.
21. What special efforts are being made to collect gender-segregated data, stakeholder data, and E&S impact data?
22. How has the M&E been helpful in timely indication of critical gaps in implementation? Please provide examples.

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

23. To what extent was the coordination between the different executing partners and your organization effective?
24. What has worked well in terms of effective collaboration with different types of stakeholders across different regions of the world?
25. What have been the major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with different types of stakeholders across different regions?
26. What measures were instituted to foster effective collaboration and coordination between multiple executing teams? To what extent were these measures effective?

IMPACT

27. In your opinion, which project activities have had the highest potential for impact? Why?
28. Also, which project activities do you think have had the lowest potential for impact? Why?
29. How can the potential impact of these activities be enhanced?

SUSTAINABILITY AND RISKS

30. Of the activities implemented thus far, which are the most sustainable? Why?

31. What steps or measures did the project take to increase the sustainability of results achieved under the project?
32. What are the actual or potential threats to the sustainability of the implemented or planned activities by the project?
33. What are your recommendations for improving the likelihood of sustainability of project current or planned outputs and outcomes?

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Based on your experience, what are the major lessons learned from:
    a. Project design;
    b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
    c. Monitoring and Evaluation;
    d. Adaptive management;
    e. Sustainability; and
    f. Impact
35. What are your overall recommendations for the improvement of the following, for similar future programmes:
    a. Project design;
    b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
    c. Monitoring and Evaluation;
    d. Adaptive management;
    e. Sustainability; and
    f. Impact

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Donor	
Name of the Respondent	
Designation	
Contact Details	
Location	
Date of KII	
Starting Time of KII	
Finishing Time of KII	

1. What are the development priorities of your organization in Guyana? And who are your key project implementing partners?
2. How does the current project fit into these development priorities?
3. Was your organization involved in the design of the current project? If so, please elaborate on the role your organization played.
4. What challenges, if any, has your organization faced with regards to the design of the current project? And how were these challenges overcome?
5. What factors influenced your decision to partner with CI on the current project?
6. As a donor, do you find the reporting and communications coming from the PMU to be fit for purpose for your understanding of the progress of the project?
7. What are some of the lessons learned and recommendations for improved implementation of similar future projects from your perspective?
8. Based on your experience, to what extent do you think the current project has potential to be replicated in other countries?
9. What is your overall perception regarding the long-term sustainability of the outcomes and outputs achieved under the current project?

IN DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) SHEET

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Government Representatives	
Name of the Respondent	
Designation	
Name of Government Agency	
Contact Details	
Location	
Date of KII	
Starting Time of IDI	
Finishing Time of IDI	

BACKGROUND

1. What is the mandate of your organization?
2. What is the primary role of your organization/agency in the planning and monitoring of eliminating mercury and other toxic chemicals in the mining of gold in your country?
3. What are some of the other key agencies which are involved in this role?
4. What are the current priorities of your government regarding the complete elimination of mercury and other toxic chemicals in gold mining?
5. What are the major challenges to the development of policy aimed at achieving elimination of the use of toxic chemicals in gold mining? E.g., Govt. priority, community buy-in, funding support, etc.

PROJECT DESIGN

6. How was your organization/department approached by the project?
7. What factors influenced your decision to partner and collaborate with this project?
8. Has your organization been involved in the design and/or implementation of this project? If yes, please provide details, e.g., design process, different stakeholders.
9. If not, in your opinion, how did this lack of involvement affect your role with regards to project implementation?
10. To what extent is the current project aligned with the national and/or regional policy priorities of your government?
11. What gaps and limitations, if any, need to be filled to better align or improve the effectiveness of the project in the context of your country and/or region?

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

12. What role, if any, is played by your department in the implementation of the current project? E.g., participation in the Steering Committee, policy support, provision of co-financing, etc.
13. What challenges have you faced with implementation of the project, if any? E.g., funding transfers, access to field, lengthy approval processes, etc.
14. What measures were taken to overcome these challenges?
15. To what extent has your department/ministry been successful in developing and integrating any policies, programs, or plans addressing the elimination of mercury use in gold mining within the context of your national policy framework?
16. To what extent are the tools developed by the project user-friendly, accessible, easy to understand, and useful to your organization in supporting national and subnational planning and monitoring towards the elimination of mercury use in gold mining?
17. What capacity building activities implemented by the project have your department/organization been involved in?
18. What have been the major opportunities and benefits for your organization/department as a result of your participation in the project?
19. How effective has the collaboration and coordination with the CI Guyana and the executing partner organizations been over the course of implementation?
20. What measures were instituted to ensure effective collaboration and coordination with the partner organizations?
21. What challenges, if any, did your organization/department face in collaborating with partners?
22. How did your organization/department ensure that a wide and representative group of participants were capacitated under the training implemented by the current project?

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

23. What have been some of the other major activities related to elimination of mercury and other toxic chemicals in gold mining being implemented in your country over the past three years?
24. What have been the main opportunities and challenges faced by these projects?
25. What are your recommendations for the development of future projects supporting the planning and monitoring of priorities in your country/region?
26. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represents the least satisfactory and 5 indicates the highest level of satisfaction), how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the project? Please elaborate.

IN DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) SHEET

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Private Sector Partner	
Name of the Respondent	
Designation	
Contact Details	
Location	
Date of IDI	
Starting Time of IDI	
Finishing Time of IDI	

BACKGROUND

1. Since when has your organization been engaged with the CI Guyana on this project?
2. What was the primary role of your organization/agency in implementing project activities?
3. How was this project relevant to the mandate of your organization? Please elaborate.
4. What other projects has your organization implemented with CI Guyana in the past?
5. Are there any the other agencies/partners who were involved in the implementation of these activities?
6. If yes, what other organizations were involved and what was their role?

DESIGN

7. Was your organization involved in the design of the project activities? If yes, please provide details, e.g., design process, stakeholders identification etc.
8. If yes, have you faced any challenges in designing the project activities? Please elaborate.
9. If not, how has the lack of involvement from your organization in the design of the project activities affected your overall experience?

IMPLEMENTATION

10. What specific steps were taken by you to ensure a mercury-free supply chain in Guyana's ASGM sector?
11. What challenges did you face during the transition to a mercury-free mining approach? How were these challenges overcome?
12. How had the project influenced the business practices and operations of the participating gold mining firms? Can you provide examples of the changes implemented?
13. What support or incentives have been provided by the project to facilitate adoption of environmentally friendly mining practices? How has this support impacted on your operations and profitability?

14. How has the project contributed to the overall goals and commitments of the Minamata Convention? In what ways has it helped the Government of Guyana meet its obligations under the convention?
15. How has the project affected the market demand for El Dorado Gold jewelry? Have there been any notable changes in consumer preferences or increased sales as a result of the project?
16. Can you share any success stories or testimonials from the project, regarding the benefits they have experienced as a result of participating in the project?
17. What are the measurable environmental impacts of the project so far? Can you share any data or statis regarding reduced mercury usage and emissions?
18. Will these activities continue even after the project closes/funding ends?
19. What are the long-term sustainability plans for the mercury-free ASGM supply chain and the El Dorado Gold brand? How will the project ensure continued adherence to environmentally friendly practices beyond its duration?

COLLABORATION WITH CI GUYANA

20. Has your agency/organization received any support/assistance from CI Guyana for implementation of the project activities?
21. If yes, what, and how does this support/assistance help in effective implementation of project activities?
22. What challenges have you faced in your relationship with the CI Guyana? E.g., delayed fund transfers, limited technical support, difficult monitoring, and reporting processes, etc.
23. Does your organization partner with any other organizations similar to this project? If yes, what have been the comparative challenges and opportunities of partnering with CI Guyana?
24. Compared to other projects, to what extent has CI Guyana and the project's approach been effective in eliminating use of mercury in mining?
25. What strategies or tools have been employed to strengthen partnerships between public and private sector actors? How have these collaborations contributed to the success of the project?

COVID-19

26. What challenges has your organization faced due to COVID-19 with regard to implementation the project activities? E.g., suspension of operations, delays, limited outreach to communities, etc.
27. How have some of these challenges been mitigated? E.g., modification of implementation modalities?
28. Also, under the project, has your organization undertaken additional activities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, please elaborate.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

29. What are your recommendations for the improvement for the remainder of the project?

30. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represents the least satisfactory and 5 indicates the highest level of satisfaction), how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the project? Please elaborate.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE

"A GEF Gold/Supply Chain Approach to Eliminating Mercury in Guyana's ASGM Sector: El Dorado Gold Jewelry Made in Guyana" Child Project

Community Members/Beneficiaries	
Name of Region	
Name of Village	
Average number of households in the community	
Distance of Project Site from nearest road	
Major sources of livelihood	
Date of FGD	
Starting Time of FGD	
Finishing Time of FGD	

Sr. No.	Name	National ID	Contact	Signature/ Thumb Impression
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

BACKGROUND

1. What activities have been implemented / are being implemented by the [beneficiary organization] project in your community? E.g., assessment, awareness campaigns, training, NRM / WRM activities, etc.
2. When did the project initiate these activities?
3. What is the number of households participating in this activity from your community? And how many men and women are participating in this activity?
4. What and how was the process of initially engaging your community? Please elaborate. E.g., communication through local government bodies, etc.
5. Why did your community agree to participate in the project activities? Please elaborate the reasons.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

6. What have been the advantages or are the potential advantages to your community for participating in the project activities?
7. Are there any particular advantages to women and girls from participation in the project activities? If yes, please elaborate.
8. Through the implementation of these activities, has the project helped establish linkages of your community with other stakeholders for ongoing collaboration? E.g., government departments, NGOs, other communities, etc. If yes, please elaborate who the linkages were developed and what are the potential advantages of these?
9. What have been the challenges faced by your community while participating in the project activities? E.g., the locations were selected without consultation with the community, the activities require a lot of time, are difficult to understand, or cannot be implemented in reality, etc.
10. Did women in the community face any particular challenges in addition to the above issues elaborated? If yes, what were these?
11. Did you report these problems to the project? If yes, what was the response from the project?

12. What are the future activities, if any, that your community will be undertaking with the project?
13. What potential benefits do you think will your community derive from these activities?

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

14. Has your community received any awareness materials from the project? E.g., newsletters, videos, flyers, etc.?
15. If yes, how are these useful to you? Please elaborate?
16. And what problems do you face with using these products? E.g., cannot read, they are not easy to understand, the messages in them are difficult to implement, etc.
17. Do you have any recommendations for the project to improve the implementation approach or nature of activities? If yes, please elaborate.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT WORK

18. Are there any other development projects being implemented in your community? If yes, who is implementing these projects? E.g., government agency, NGO, etc.
19. And what are the main activities being implemented by the project? Please elaborate.
20. Since when has the project been implemented in your community?
21. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represents the least satisfactory and 5 indicates the highest level of satisfaction), how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the project? Please elaborate.

Annex 3: List of People Interviewed

S. No.	Name of Respondent	Organization	Date of Interview
1	Mr. Rene Edwards	CI-Guyana	18-07-2023
2	Ms. Ingrid Sarabo	CI-Guyana	18-07-2023
3	Ms. Lisa Foster	CI-Guyana	18-07-2023
4	Mr. William Woolford	Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners Association	20-07-2023
5	Mr. Avalon Jagnandan	Guyana Gold & Diamond Miners Association	20-07-2023
6	Ms. Mariscia Charles	GEF SGP and former MNR Focal Point	24-07-2023
7	Ms. Susan Keane	PlanetGOLD Program	27-07-2023
8	Ms. Eondrene Thompson	Guyana Gold Board	28-07-2023
9	Mr. Kemraj Parsram	Environmental Protection Agency	02-08-2023
10	Mr. Colis Primo	Environmental Protection Agency	02-08-2023
11	Ms. Prapti Bhandary	CI-GEF	03-08-2023
12	Ms. Shannon Wiecks	CI-GEF	04-08-2023
13	Mr. Bernard Alphonso	Miner	04-08-2023
14	Ms. Michelle Astwood	Ministry of Natural Resources	07-08-2023
15	Mr. Veetal Rajkumar	Ministry of Natural Resources	07-08-2023
16	Mr. Kenneth Williams	Regional Democratic Council	07-08-2023
17	Mr. Azad DeAbreu	DeAbreu Creations	08-08-2023
18	Mr. David Daniels	National Mining Association	10-08-2023
19	Ms. Han Gaskin-Granger	Topaz	15-08-2023
20	Ms. Urica Primus	Guyana Women Miner Organization	15-08-2023
21	Mr. Lloyd Bandoo	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	16-08-2023
22	Mr. Ian Kissoon	CI-GEF	17-08-2023
23	Mr. Peter Ramotar	Regional Democratic Council	17-08-2023
24	Mr. Shane Cornelius	National Toshaos Council	17-08-2023
25	Mr. Delvin Raghunath		21-08-2023
26	Mr. Trevor DeFreitas		21-08-2023
27	Mr. Raphael Daniels Daniel		21-08-2023
28	Ms. Maureen DaSilva Couchman		21-08-2023

www.cynosure-intl.com

info@cynosure-intl.com

+92 51 831 9116

Pakistan Office

Cynosure Consultants (Pvt.) Ltd.

House # 218, Broadway Street, Greens Avenue,

Islamabad, Pakistan. 44000

CYNOSURE

Canada Office

Cynosure International, Inc.
1180 rue du Sussex
Apt 1704
Montreal, Quebec, CA H3H 0B5