



Mid-Term Review

Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia

(Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)

Implementing Agency: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Executing Agency: UNEP Regional Office for Europe

28 September 2023

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Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Mid-Term Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project’s mid-point. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

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Biography of Consultant

Bret Ericson (PhD, MSc) is a New York-based consultant contracted by the UNEP GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit for the purpose of conducting the MTR. Dr. Ericson has previously worked with the World Health Organization, PAN-UK and the Institute for Environmental Protection (Monterrey, Mexico). He was employed by the NGO Pure Earth from 2008–2019, where he directed projects on risk mitigation at hazardous waste sites, including those in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. He has an MSc in Urbanization and Development from the London School of Economics and a PhD in Environmental Sciences from Macquarie University. Dr. Ericson is an adjunct assistant professor of Environmental Health at New York University and the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	4
TABLES AND FIGURES	4
PROJECT SUMMARY	5
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
II. PROJECT OVERVIEW.....	8
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	8
PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK.....	9
EXTERNAL CHALLENGES	10
FINANCIAL TABLES.....	12
STAKEHOLDERS	13
III. REVIEW METHODS.....	14
IV. THEORY OF CHANGE	16
V. REVIEW FINDINGS	19
SUMMARY.....	19
A..... STRATEGIC RELEVANCE	19
ALIGNMENT TO THE UNEP MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY (MTS), PROGRAMME OF WORK (POW) AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	19

ALIGNMENT WITH GEF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	20
RELEVANCE TO REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES	20
COMPLEMENTARITY WITH EXISTING INTERVENTIONS/COHERENCE	20
B. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN	
.....	21
PROJECT DESIGN STRENGTHS	21
PROJECT DESIGN WEAKNESSES	22
ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY	22
C. EFFECTIVENESS	
.....	23
AVAILABILITY OF OUTPUTS	23
PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES	29
LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT	30
D. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	
.....	30
E. EFFICIENCY	
.....	31
F. MONITORING AND REPORTING	
.....	32
MONITORING DESIGN AND BUDGETING	32
PROJECT REPORTING	33
G. SUSTAINABILITY	
.....	34
SOCIO-POLITICAL SUSTAINABILITY	34
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	35
INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	35
H. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE	
.....	35
PREPARATION AND READINESS	35
QUALITY OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION	36
STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION	37
RESPONSIVENESS TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY	37
ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS	37
COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND DRIVEN-NESS	38
COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS	38
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38
A. CONCLUSIONS	
.....	38
STRATEGIC QUESTIONS	40
GEF PORTAL QUESTIONS	40
OVERALL PROJECT RATING	42
B. LESSONS LEARNED	
.....	42
C. RECOMMENDATIONS	
.....	43
CRITICAL	43
IMPORTANT	44
OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT	44
LIST OF ANNEXES	44
ANNEX A – RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS RECEIVED BUT NOT FULLY ACCEPTED BY THE REVIEW CONSULTANT	46
ANNEX B – MID TERM REVIEW TOR	48

ANNEX C – REVIEW ITINERARY	87
ANNEX D – EVALUATION FRAMEWORK.....	88
ANNEX E – LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	93
ANNEX F – BRIEF CV OF CONSULTANT	93
ANNEX G – SUMMARY OF CO-FINANCE INFORMATION	93
ANNEX H – COMMUNICATION OR OUTREACH TOOLS TO DISSEMINATE RESULTS	93
<u>ANNEX I- GEF PORTAL INPUTS.....</u>	<u>99</u>
<u>ANNEX J- GEF RISKS TO ACHIEVING PROJECT OUTCOMES.....</u>	<u>101</u>

Abbreviations

C&W – Chemicals and waste
CKT – Cement Kiln Technology
DDT – Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DE – Destruction Efficiency
DRE – Destruction Removal Efficiency
EA – Executing Agency
ESERN – Environmental Social and Economic Review Note
GEF – Global Environment Facility
IA – Implementing Agency
MTS – Medium Term Strategy
PCB – Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PMU – Project Management Unit
POPs – Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPG – Project Preparation Grant
PoW – Programme of Work
REA – Rapid Environmental Assessment
SCWO – Supercritical water oxidation
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
ToC – Theory of Change
ToR – Terms of Reference
UNCT – United Nations Country Team
UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Project Summary
Table 2. MTR key dates
Table 3. Project Design Quality Score
Table 4. Stakeholders and roles identified in the project design
Table 5. Suggested changes to ToC
Table 6. MTR key dates
Figure 1. Implementation Arrangements
Figure 2. Reconstructed Theory of Change
Figure 3. Cumulative expenditure by Component

Project Summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	Chemicals and Pollution Action	UNEP Division/Branch:	Economy Division/Chemicals and Health Branch
Expected Accomplishment(s):	3A, 3B and 3C	Programme of Work Output(s):	3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	Good health and well-being (SDG3) Clean and affordable energy (SDG7), Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG 12) Measures to combat climate change (SDG13)		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	N/A (This is a GEF - 6 Project). Core indicator targets identified during PIR. 9.1 – 5,000 tons of Cat I POPs wastes undergoing treatment 9.4 – 2 national hazardous waste management strategies approved 11 – 150,000 people benefitted		
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

FROM THE PROJECT'S PIR REPORT

Project Title:	Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan)
Executing Agency:	UNEP Regional Office for Europe
Project partners:	Swiss Fund for Mine Action FSD (Tajikistan), National Ozone Centre (Kyrgyzstan)
Geographical Scope:	Regional
Participating Countries:	Republic of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic

GEF project ID:	9421	IMIS number:	
Focal Area(s):	Chemicals and Waste	GEF OP #:	Stockholm Convention.
GEF Priority/Objective: Strategic	Chemicals and Waste-2 Programme 3 Reduce the prevalence of harmful chemicals and waste and support the implementation of clean alternative technologies/substances	GEF approval date*:	12-Feb-20
UNEP approval date:	2-Mar-20	Date of first disbursement:	14-Oct-20
Actual start date:	16-Sep-20	Planned duration:	60 months
Intended completion date:	30-Jun-25	Actual or Expected completion date:	TBD
Project Type:	FSP	GEF Allocation:	USD 15,120,000
PPG GEF cost:	USD 300,000	PPG co-financing:	N/A
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing:	USD 29,062,033	Total Cost:	USD 44,182,033
Mid-term Review (planned date):	Q2 2023	Terminal Evaluation/Review (planned date):	1-Jun-26
Mid-term Review (actual date):	Q2 2023	No. of revisions:	N/A
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	15 Nov 2022	Date of last Revision:	N/A
Disbursement as of 30 June 2023	USD 2,403,510	Date of planned financial closure:	30-Dec-2025
Date of planned completion:	30-Jun-25	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2023:	USD 700,087
Total co-financing realized as of 30 June 2023	USD 519,515	Actual expenditures entered as of 31 December [2022]:	USD 334,417.42

Table 1. Project Summary

I. Executive Summary

1. This is the Main Report for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the project ‘Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan)’ (GEF ID 9241), in line with the requirements of the UNEP Evaluation Office. The review was carried out by an external consultant over a 3-month period from May 2023 to August 2023 and involved a desk study of project documentation and interviews with 23 relevant stakeholders (para. 30-41). Results are presented following criteria provided by the Evaluation Office and are reported along a spectrum from Highly Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory.
2. The 60-month project under review is currently being executed in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and was approved by Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat on 12 February 2020, immediately prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is intended to be completed by 20 June 2025. The project will receive grant financing of USD 15,120,000 from the GEF and an anticipated USD 29,062,033 from other sources representing a total cost of USD 44,182,033. The overall objective of the project is to put ‘national and regional capacity for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous waste including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and other POPs in place in both countries in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.’
3. The project is structured around two Components. The first such Component addresses the disposal of POPs wastes while the second focuses on capacity building. The project is being implemented by the GEF Chemicals and Waste (C&W) Unit within the Chemicals and Health branch of UNEP’s Industry and Economy Division and internally executed by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe. The project has engaged two National Delivery Partners (Fondation Suisse de Déminage in Tajikistan and the Ozone Centre in Kyrgyzstan), individual technical consultants and two Non-Governmental Organizations (Peshsaf in Tajikistan and Ekois in Kyrgyzstan). In addition, the project has identified and engaged a range of stakeholders with different levels of interest in and power over the project (Table 2).
4. The project design is in line with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities (para. 48). It is also in line with GEF Strategic Priorities (para. 50) and regional priorities (para. 52–53). Finally, the project builds on and compliments previous work (para. 54–45). Thus with regard to Strategic Relevance, the project was found to be **Satisfactory**.
5. Significantly, the project design initially envisaged the use of an innovate technology (Super Critical Water Oxidation; SCWO) for the destruction of POPs wastes in both countries. Following a recommendation from the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), the project document also included a detailed evaluation of alternative disposal options (paras. 24, 75–76). The SCWO procurement was ultimately unsuccessful, owing to multiple challenges detailed in this report (para. 72-73). The project then pivoted toward alternative disposal options, including possible coprocessing in cement kilns, disposal in engineered landfills, or destruction using mobile incineration (para. 75–77). The project design was found to be **Satisfactory**.
6. The project has been substantially delayed due in part to a number of external challenges. These have included: the Covid-19 pandemic; the dissolution of the anticipated executing agency; and the termination of the procurement of the preferred destruction technology (para. 23–29). Concurrent geopolitical challenges compounded these delays (para. 73). At the same time 76 % of the project budget was initially allocated for the SCWO procurement and remains unutilised. Accordingly, only 5 % of the available budget has been expended at mid-term (Table 4).

7. Despite its low rate of expenditure (5 % of the project budget), the project has delivered ~66 % of the required Outputs at Mid-Term, including contributions to feasibility studies, site specific management plans, and reviews of relevant regulations (Table 7). These Outputs have in turn made modest contributions toward project Outcomes. There have been significant challenges related to the selection of a disposal method (para. 74–76). This is the most resource intensive aspect of the project (76 %) with the majority of expenditure planned after midterm. The rate of expenditure therefore will only substantially increase with the selection of a disposal method. Overall the project was found to be **Moderately Unsatisfactory** with regard to Effectiveness.
8. The financial management of the project has been **Highly Satisfactory** with regular reporting and good adherence to UNEP policies and procedures (Table 10). A capable Project Management Unit (PMU) with an adequate project management infrastructure is in place (para. 136–140), this has enabled the project to drastically improve execution beginning in 2022 (Figure 3). However, owing to the significant delays and procurement challenges the project will require at a least a 2-year extension. Thus, with regard to Efficiency, the project was found to be **Moderately Unsatisfactory**. The project has an adequate approach for the monitoring and reporting of execution, which was found to be **Satisfactory** (para. 113–123).
9. For the Evaluation Office the rating for the criterion of Sustainability reflects the *lowest* value of three sub-criteria: socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability. With regard to socio-political considerations, the project was rated as Moderately Unlikely, meaning that government involvement could be strengthened. Specifically, representation from both countries has been inconsistent over the life of the project with regular changes in national focal points and subsequent challenges to the project's shared vision. These challenges relate primarily to the selection of the disposal method (para. 125–129). By contrast, with regard to financial and institutional sustainability, the project was found to be Likely – primarily because of an adequate allocation of technical and financial resources during design stage for the disposal of the targeted wastes. As noted above, for the Evaluation Office, the overall rating for this criterion reflects the lowest of its sub-criteria. Thus the project was found to be **Moderately Unlikely** with regard to Sustainability. The Evaluation Office maintains a set of criteria under the heading Factors Affecting Performance that include overall project management as well as measurements of stakeholder engagement. Here the project was found to be **Moderately Satisfactory**. The Evaluation Office provides a Microsoft Excel-based template that weights these results to provide an overall project rating. In this case, the overall project rating is **Moderately Satisfactory**.
10. A number of lessons learned were identified as part of the review. One such lesson relates to the costs and benefits associated with internal execution. Benefits include similar ways of working that can improve efficiency and overall execution, such as shared software and reporting mechanisms. Costs include potentially overly onerous reporting mechanisms to which other agencies may not be subject as well as a lack of technical expertise in the thematic area. The decision to use internal execution was made following the dissolution of the preferred EA and resulted in the initial day-to-day management of the project being located outside of the region.
11. A second set of lessons learned relates to procurement. In this case the terminated procurement acted as a significant barrier to execution. Some of the specific issues with the procurement are more detailed in the relevant sections below (Lesson Learned #2; para 72–73). Additional lessons learned relate to consistent involvement of the government and the importance of defining clear terms of reference, negotiated in advance, with national delivery partners (Lessons Learned #3 and #4). Finally the reports completed by the CKT consultant identified some cement kilns in the region where co-processing of POPs wastes may have been technically feasible. However, further technical barriers were identified during peer-review resulting in inconclusive findings (para 75–76). In addition multiple

and significant social or political barriers were present. CKT may be a viable option in other similar projects in the region with limited disposal options but may not be applicable in this case.

12. Three distinct recommendations follow from the Mid-Term Review. These are described in more detail below and rank from Critical to Opportunity for Improvement. The most significant of these, **Critical**, relates to the reworking of the alternative scenario, results framework, work plan and budget to reflect the new orientation of the project. In short while the original project included a detailed evaluation of alternative disposal options as a technical annex (para. 70), the remaining project documentation was developed around the use of SCWO technology. As this procurement has now been terminated much of the project document is not immediately relevant to execution. Accordingly, this documentation should be updated and presented to the key project stakeholders in the short term.
13. An additional lesson learned, rated as **Important**, relates to the improved implementation arrangements for National Delivery Partners, and the NGOs Ekois and Peshsaf. Given the new orientation of the project, the active participation of these stakeholders in execution is essential to achieve its overall Objective. These stakeholders could be more legitimately engaged as partners with clearer scopes of work fostering an improved sense of ownership over its results. Finally one minor recommendation characterized as an **Opportunity for Improvement** relates to the organization of project documentation. A better file organization system would support the legibility of project results by individuals outside of the PMU.

II. Project Overview

14. This is the Main Report for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the project ‘Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan)’ (GEF ID 9241). In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the MTR is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyse whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR assesses project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determines the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and supporting their sustainability.
15. The 60-month project under review is currently being executed in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and was approved by Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat on 12 February 2020. It is intended to be completed by 20 June 2025. The project will receive grant financing of USD 15,120,000 from the GEF and an anticipated USD 29,062,033 from other sources representing a total cost of USD 44,182,033. The overall objective of the project is to put ‘[n]ational and regional capacity for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous waste including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and other POPs in place in both countries in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.’

Institutional Context

16. The project is being implemented by the GEF Chemicals and Waste (C&W) Unit (Implementing Agency; IA) within the Chemicals and Health branch of UNEP’s Industry and Economy Division. The IA is responsible for the overall supervision of the project and its monitoring and evaluation through progress reports. The IA oversees the Executing Agency (EA) and provides ongoing technical support. The EA is the UNEP Regional Office for Europe which reports to the UNEP Executive Office. The EA is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. The Project Document included a large procurement, the funds for which are managed directly by the IA. The EA then is responsible for the management of USD 3,625,000 (24 %) of GEF resources, while the IA manages the balance (USD 11,495,000).

17. The delivery of project Outputs relies on two National Delivery Partners (NDPs), Fondation Suisse de Déminage in Tajikistan and the Ozone Centre in Kyrgyzstan. Technical consultants and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), primarily Peshsaf in Tajikistan and Ekois in Kyrgyzstan, are then engaged by the NDPs to carry out individual activities. The project is overseen by a Project Steering Committee that meets annually and is comprised of IA, EA, and representatives of the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These relationships are summarized in the project implementation arrangements presented in the Project Document, below.

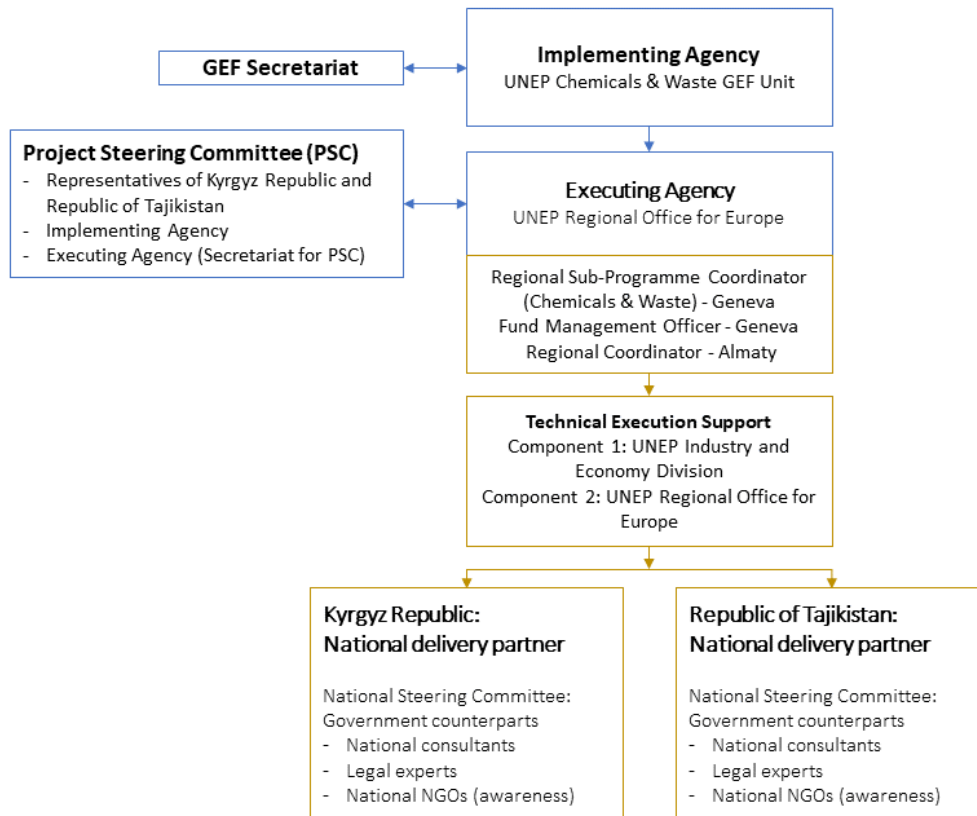


Figure 1. Implementation arrangements

18. As noted above the overall objective of the project is to put ‘[n]ational and regional capacity for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous waste including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and other POPs in place in both countries in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.’ The project aims to deliver this objective through work organized around three major components: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs; Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management; Monitoring and Evaluation. Each of these components is intended to achieve associated Outcomes through the delivery of Outputs. The basic project structure is presented below in the form of the project alternative scenario.

Project Results Framework

19. The project’s original alternative scenario submitted with the Project Document includes certain Outputs and language that are no longer relevant to its current direction. The reasons for this are described later in the report, most clearly in the Theory of Change section. As a preliminary, the original alternative scenario is presented below.

Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs

Outcome 1: Recipient governments manage DDT and other wastes at major high-risk sites in line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

- Output 1.1: Demonstration technology piloted and results used to confirm commissioning;
- Output 1.2: Site specific management plans disclosed and submitted to government for approval;
- Output 1.3: Non-thermal technology is scaled up and site installations complete;
- Output 1.4: Excavated POPs wastes are destroyed in an environmentally sound manner.

Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management

Outcome 2: Countries adopt policies and commit resources, technical skills and knowledge to manage hazardous waste in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

- Output 2.1: Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption;
- Output 2.2: Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring increased;
- Output 2.3: Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted;
- Output 2.4: Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started;
- Output 2.5: Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders.

Component 3: Monitoring & Evaluation

- Output 3.1: Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project execution;
- Output 3.2: Midterm and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders.

External Challenges

20. The project has encountered an unusually high number of critical external challenges. These began as early as the PIF stage and have continued through into the second year of project execution. Major challenges include the following:
- Geographic constraints;
 - The dissolution of the preferred Executing Agency at a key phase of project development;
 - The COVID-19 pandemic.
21. The Project Document sets out five distinct barriers that limit the countries' ability to manage POPs waste in a manner consistent with best practice. These include the heterogeneous waste mixtures in the polygons, geographic challenges, high capital costs for waste treatment facilities, a lack of local technical capacity and a low awareness of POPs' health risks. Among these, geographic constraints were clearly the most influential with regard to project design. Specifically, both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are members of the Eurasian Customs Union, which prohibits the transboundary movement of certain hazardous materials, including POPs wastes.¹ Moreover the Proximity Principle of Basel Convention implicated a preference for an in-situ, or at least proximal, disposal option. This set of conditions led the UNEP GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit in coordination with the GEF Secretariat to identify the innovative use of mobile Super Critical Water Oxidation (SCWO) as the project's preferred disposal approach. The use of SCWO has always been perceived by project stakeholders as presenting a high risk of failure. It was for this reason that the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel recommended the exploration of back up alternatives. When the SCWO procurement was ultimately terminated and the alternatives pursued, a substantial percentage of the project's timeframe had been expended.

¹ Eurasian Economic Commission, 'Single List of Goods Subject to Prohibitions or Restrictions on Import or Export by the Customs Union Member States within the EurAsEC When Trading with Third Countries and Provisions on Application of Restrictions' <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/act/trade/catr/nontariff/Pages/ediny_perechen.aspx> accessed 19 July 2023.

22. A second challenge relates to the effective dissolution of the preferred Executing Agency in late 2018. The first year of the development of the Project Document was conducted by the Switzerland branch of the Non Governmental Organization (NGO) Green Cross (herein GCS). A financial scandal in late 2018 led to dissolution of the NGO and its eventual reconstitution with different staff in 2019. Preceding the dissolution, the UNEP GEF C&W unit had transferred funds to GCS, only part of which it was able to recover.
23. Preceding its dissolution, GCS was one of the more active groups working on POPs issues in the region. Its former Program Director, Stephan Robinson, shifted to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) after leaving GCS and is currently the Project Manager for a related project in the region (GEF ID 5000). During the preliminary work on project development, GCS absorbed staff from a separate disillusioned NGO, the Dutch group Milleukontakt International. These staff, which included the current UNEP ROE Project Manager, Wouter Pronk, had significant previous experience on related projects in the region. Thus, GCS at this time had concentrated a substantial amount of institutional knowledge. Its failure then represented a critical technical and financial blow to the project's development. The UNEP GEF C&W salvaged the Project Document by completing it internally through the hiring of individual consultants. This work included a thorough response to the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel's (STAP) comments on the exploration of project alternatives. Of note a previous version of this GEF-7 project was initially proposed as part of the GEF-6 workplan, but was excluded specifically because it involved a Cement Kiln Technology (CKT) alternative. Since that time CKT has been much more widely employed in similar projects and is currently addressed in the relevant Basel guidance.²
24. The project was approved for Implementation on 13 February 2020 with UNEP ROE listed as the EA. Three primary factors lead to the formal selection of UNEP ROE as the EA in September 2020. One such factor was that as a UN Agency, UNEP ROE would be capable of importing the SCWO equipment from the US to Central Asia without incurring costly duties. A second was that organization's experience shepherding through legislative changes in the region. This was seen as a benefit related to Component 2. A third factor was that UNEP ROE had an office in the region (Almaty). Despite these advantages, the selection of UNEP ROE presented a number of challenges. These are further described below in the Project Management and Supervision subsection of the Factors Affecting Performance section.
25. A final critical external challenge was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared such by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. While all projects were affected by the pandemic, its effects on the present project were particularly acute in two major ways. The first was the concurrent start dates of the pandemic and the project, only 3 weeks apart. This was specifically challenging for this project because of its lack of EA challenges noted above, resulting in compounded delays and a lack of activity at a critical period in project execution. An EA was not contracted until 7 months after the project's approval, and inception meetings were not held until 16 months later in June 2021.
26. A second major way in which the pandemic affected project execution related to the procurement of the SCWO equipment. Costs associated with the procurement increased 2–3 fold from the budgeted amount. This increase was due in part to supply chain costs resulting from the pandemic. Because the SCWO procurement occupied nearly 70 % of the approved GEF budget, this increase simply could not be absorbed.

² Basel Convention, 'Technical Guidelines on the Environmentally Sound Incineration of Hazardous Wastes and Other Wastes as Covered by Disposal Operations D10 and R1' <<https://www.basel.int/TheConvention/ConferenceoftheParties/Meetings/COP15/tabid/8392/Default.aspx>> accessed 25 July 2023.

Financial Tables

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding³	% of secured funding
<i>All figures as USD</i>				
<i>Cash</i>				
Funds from the Environment Fund	0			
Funds from the Regular Budget	0			
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):	15,120,000	100 %	15,120,000	100 %
Global Environment Fund	15,120,000	100 %	15,120,000	100 %
<i>Sub-total: Cash contributions</i>	15,120,000	100 %	15,120,000	100 %
<i>In-kind</i>				
Environment Fund staff-post costs	0			
Regular Budget staff-post costs	0			
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)	0			
<i>Sub-total: In-kind contributions</i>				
<i>Co-financing*</i>				
Co-financing cash contribution	0			
Co-financing in-kind contribution	0	100 %	29,062,033	100 %
<i>Sub-total: Co-financing contributions</i>	29,062,033	100 %	29,062,033	100 %
Total	44,182,033	100 %	44,182,033	100 %

*Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts, but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.

Table 3. Project budget

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
<i>All figures as USD</i>			
Component 1	12,700,000	112,615	< 1 %
Component 2	1,406,000	278,480	20 %
Monitoring and Evaluation	294,000	37,184	13 %

³ Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

Project Management Cost	720,000	271,808	38 %
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Table 4. Expenditure by Component

Stakeholders

27. UNEP identifies stakeholders broadly as all those who are affected by, or who could affect (positively or negatively) the project's results. It further distinguishes between 'rights-holders' and 'duty-bearers' while acknowledging that these categories are not necessarily exclusive. Rights-holders then should be empowered by their involvement in projects, while duty-bearers should have their capacities strengthened to meet their obligations to rights-holders. Stakeholders can include politicians, religious leaders, the academic community, companies, business networks, consumer associations, labour unions, UN agencies, Funds and programs and development partners, and other special interest groups. Stakeholders can also include locally affected communities, sub-groups in the population, individuals, or marginalized or disadvantaged people may be affected (positively or negatively) by the project.
28. The UNEP Evaluation Office (herein evaluation office) provides criteria with which to assess the roles of stakeholders in a project's design. Stakeholders are organized into one of four groups based on the relative relationship between their power over and interest in the project: high power/ high interest; high power/ low interest; low power/ high interest; and low power/ low interest. Table 2 below summarizes project stakeholders identified during the design, whether they were consulted in the design, and whether they were consulted during the MTR.

Stakeholders	Role in project	Consulted during project design	Consulted during MTR
Type A: High power / high interest = Key player			
UNEP GEF C&W	IA	Y	Y
UNEP Regional Office for Europe	EA	Y	Y
BRS Secretariat	KM	Y	Y
Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CEP), POPs Centre (TJ)	Main project partner in TJ	Y	Y
Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES) (TJ)	Implementation	Y	N
Department of International Cooperation (SAEPF) (KG) (Currently 'Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic')	Main project partner organization in KG	Y	Y
Department of International Cooperation (SAEPF) (KG)	NSC	Y	N
FSD, Swiss Foundation for Mine Action	NDP	Y	Y
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) (TJ)	ISWG	Y	N
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Department of Chemicalization (DEPCHIM) (KG)	ISWG	Y	N
Ministry of Health (MoH) (KG & TJ)	NSC	Y	N
Ministry of Health (MoH) (KG)	NSC	Y	N
Ministry of Transport (KG)	NSC	Y	N
Office of the Prime Minister (KG)	NSC	Y	N
Ozone Centre	NDP	N	Y
Type B: High power/ low interest over the project =Meet their needs			
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	To be consulted	Y	N
FAO	PSC	Y	Y
Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) (KG)	To be notified	Y	N
Type C: Low power/ high interest over the project= Show consideration			
Aarhus Centre in Osh and "Ecomedical" Public association in Osh (KG)	Implementation	Y	N
Aarhus Centre Kumsangir - NGO Mohi Munir (TJ)	Implementation	Y	N
Ecological Environmental Information Service (Ekois) (KG)	Implementation	Y	Y
Environmental Movement BIOM (KG)	Implementation	Y	N
Foundation to Support Civil Initiatives (TJ)	Implementation	Y	N
Greenlight (KG)	Implementation	Y	N

Independent Ecological Expertise (part of IPEN network) (KG)	Implementation	Y	N
Peshsaf (TJ)	Implementation	Y	Y
<i>Type D: Low power/ low interest over the project= Least important</i>			
11 populated areas within 10 km of project sites (KG & TJ)	Targeted by awareness raising	N	N
Academia	Targeted by awareness raising	N	N

IWSG=intersectoral working group; NDP=national delivery partner; NSC=national steering committee; PSC=project steering committee

Table 2. Stakeholders and roles identified in the project design

29. The Project Document includes a stakeholder and gender assessment, a gender action plan and a stakeholder engagement plan. The plans are well aligned with the alternative scenario. Ninety-five percent of the indicative budget to execute these plans has been accounted for in the project budget. The project includes a well elaborated Project Policy Brief and Gender Guidance finalised November 2022 and slightly updated with respect to the project’s stakeholder grievance and redress mechanism in March 2023.

III. Review Methods

30. The Review was carried out between May and August 2023 in line with guidance provided by the evaluation office. Information was gathered through structured interviews over video conference, review of Project Documentation, and by questionnaire. Twenty-two different individuals were interviewed as part of the MTR. A preliminary list of interview questions was presented in the Inception Report. The list was based on previous MTRs and a review of the Project Document. Interviews involved questions selected from the list as well as additional questions that either came organically from the interview or that followed from previous interviews. Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes to 1 hour and were recorded. Notes were taken by the reviewer to highlight salient points. In most cases, recordings were viewed by the reviewer during report preparation. Interviews were carried out in English with two interviews requiring interpretation. The name and role of interpreters is presented in Annex C.

31. Interviews were initiated with the Task Manager and then generally proceeded on to actors at the activity (i.e. country) level. The intention here was to move from general to specific, with the broad outlines being provided early on by the UNEP GEF C&W unit Task Manager and then specific details being provided by National Delivery Partners, governments and consultants. In general, individuals involved early on in the development and conception of the project were also interviewed earlier in the MTR process than those currently executing activities. An effort was made to triangulate any significant findings, with a third-party assessment being sought in the case of any conflicting accounts. Interview findings were supplemented by an anonymous questionnaire in English (n=3) and Russian (n=8) distributed via Google Forms.

32. Throughout this review process and in the compilation of the final review report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All information was gathered after prior informed consent from people. To the extent possible, all discussions remained anonymous and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct. Interview recordings and transcripts were not shared. Only summary information is presented in this report.

33. A desk study was carried out concurrently with interviews. Documents were primarily acquired by accessing either the relevant folder of the GEF C&W SharePoint or the separate UNEP ROE SharePoint folder. In addition, several files not contained in either of these two locations were attained by email

or through video conference. Any unclear or conflicting information was raised with the UNEP ROE Project Manager for clarification.

34. A number of limitations are worth noting. One such limitation relates to the lack of site visits and face-to-face interviews. The entire review was carried out remotely. Importantly, much of the physical work of the project had not yet begun at the time of the MTR. Specifically, no waste at either Vakhsh (Tajikistan) or Suzak A (Kyrgyzstan) had yet been managed at the time of the MTR. Both sites have been extensively characterized by this and preceding projects, thus only marginal benefit would have been gained through a site visit and any qualitative assessment by the review. In addition, the reviewer had visited the Vakhsh site and multiple pesticides contaminated sites targeted for REAs in Tajikistan as part of an unrelated USAID-funded project and thus had a basic personal familiarity with the locations.
35. The lack of face-to-face interviews is likely a more substantial limitation than the absence of site visits. Structured formal interviews by video conference are an efficient method of gathering information from multiple stakeholders in different locations over a brief period. They however lack the nuance and much of the nonverbal communication of face-to-face meetings. In this way, they may not be best suited for reviews of more complicated or further progressed projects. In this case, the limited progress and relatively small number of key stakeholders made the project more amenable to a remote assessment.
36. A related limitation was the reviewer's lack of Russian language skills. While only two interviews required an interpreter, these interviews lacked the fluidity of native language conversation and thus may have missed information that might have otherwise been covered. It is not likely that this limitation significantly affected the document review or questionnaire components of the assessment, as these documents were mostly in English or could easily be translated with software tools.
37. A final limitation of the review relates to its timing. For multiple reasons the project had only made limited progress at the time of the MTR. It follows then that one major recommendation is that an extension be requested from the GEF Secretariat. The timing of the MTR is in line with GEF and UNEP requirements, however given the only very limited progress of the project it inevitably focuses more on design and early execution challenges than an MTR of a different project might.

Statement on ethics

38. Mid-Term review findings and judgements are intended to be based on sound evidence and analysis which should be clearly documented in this report. Information has been triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements is generally spelled out. As this review is being undertaken at the mid-point of project implementation, particular attention has been given to identifying implementation challenges and risks to achieving the expected project objectives and sustainability, which will support potential course correction. Among others, certain key questions that were considered include:
 - Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?
 - Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?
 - Are results statements in keeping with both UNEP and GEF definitions (e.g. outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)
 - Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?
 - Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting in the annual PIR)?
 - Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?
 - Have plans for inclusivity (human rights, gender considerations, disability inclusion etc) been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?
 - Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?
 - Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end, being incorporated in the project implementation?
 - Have recommendations from previous performance assessments (where they exist) been appropriately addressed?
 - What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

- What corrective action is needed at this mid-point for the project to optimise its effectiveness?

39. In addition, the review will address the strategic questions listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution.

Q1: Will the project allow Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to comply with their obligations under the Stockholm Convention?

Q2: How will the project deal with the cancellation of the tender to supply equipment for supercritical water oxidation?

Q3: What exit strategy is needed to ensure any remaining waste is dealt with according to the Convention's guidelines?

Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

40. The five questions below are required for the GEF Portal and will be addressed in the appropriate sections of the report. A summary will be provided of the findings in the conclusions section of the report:

Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:

What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets? *(For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided⁴).*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:

What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:

What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:

What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and any measures taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions. *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

41. The review assesses the project along the following criteria (n=11) provided by the UNEP Evaluation Office: strategic relevance; quality of project design; effectiveness; financial management; efficiency; monitoring and reporting; sustainability; factors and processes affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues; environmental and social safeguard; country ownership and driven-ness; and communication and public awareness.

IV. Theory of Change

42. UNEP defines a theory of change (ToC) as the following: 'Method for planning, participation and evaluation. It defines long term intended impact and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. It is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a context. A Theory of Change also allows for unintended positive and/or negative effects to be depicted.'

43. Three issues have been identified with ToC submitted with the Project Document. The first and most minor relates to the small inconsistencies in the phrasing of language between the ToC and the results framework. The second relates to a major discrepancy between Outcome 1 in the ToC and Outcome 1 in the results framework, with the former referring to technical feasibility and the latter referring to national capacity. Finally, a third issue is that multiple Outputs under Component 1 are no longer relevant as the SCWO approach is no longer be utilised. As part of this review a series of changes are

⁴ This does not apply to Enabling Activities

proposed to the ToC. These changes are outlined in Table 5 below, which includes a justification for each change.

Formulation in original Project Document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
Title		
Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)	Transformation of regional capacity to manage DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)	Better reflects the current project activities.
Long term impact		
Demonstrated non-thermal technology is transferred to low income countries with private sector investment to enable long term sustainable hazardous waste management	The environment and human health are protected from POPs wastes	Aligned with revised project approach
Intermediate states		
5,000 tons of POPs are disposed of	The Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan meet their obligations to the Stockholm Convention	Originally phrased as output
Licensed facilities able to destroy hazwaste in the region	The Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan have domestic capacity to permanently destroy POPs	Originally phrased as outcome
National hazardous waste management strategies being implemented in Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan	--	Removed; Originally phrased as output; redundant with Outcome 2
Risk reduction measures elaborated for ten priority sites	--	Removed; Originally phrased as output
Project Objective		
National and regional capacity for the ESM of hazardous waste including DDT and other POPs in place in both countries in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.	National and regional capacity for the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous waste including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and other POPs in place in both countries in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.	Acronyms spelled out to be fully consistent with results framework
Project outcomes		
Feasibility of technology transfer to treat 5,000 tons of DDT and other wastes demonstrated at major high risk sites	Outcome 1 Recipient governments manage DDT and other wastes at major high-risk sites in line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions	Aligned with results framework
Both countries have capacity to manage hazardous waste and environmental and health risks from priority sites are reduced	Outcome 2 Countries adopt policies and commit resources, technical skills and knowledge to manage hazardous waste in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions	Aligned with results framework
--	Outcome 3 Project progress is monitored, evaluated and reported to the project steering committee	New; M&E outcome and outputs were absent from ToC
Outputs		
1.1 Pilot and commission demonstration technology	1.1 Technical feasibility of disposal method confirmed with private sector partners	Made consistent with current project approach; beneficiary (i.e. private sector) added;
1.2 Site Specific management plans	1.2 Site specific management plans disclosed to national stakeholders and submitted to government for approval	Made consistent with results framework; beneficiary (i.e. national stakeholders) added
1.3 Scale up of technology	1.3 Disposal technology is scaled up by private sector	Aligned with revised project approach; beneficiary (i.e. private sector) added
1.4 Treatment of POPs waste	1.4 Excavated POPs wastes are destroyed by private sector in an environmentally sound manner	Made more consistent with results framework; beneficiary (i.e. private sector) added
2.1 Development of hazardous waste management plans	2.1 Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption	Made consistent with results framework
2.2 Capacity of national environmental inspectors increased	2.2 Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring increased	Made consistent with results framework
2.3 Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns	2.3 Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted	Made consistent with results framework

2.4 Risk management at 10 additional sites	2.4 Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started with national project partners	Made more consistent with results framework; beneficiary (i.e. national project partners) added
2.5 Project results are shared to sustain capacity in the region.	2.5 Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders	Made consistent with results framework
--	3.1 Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project execution	Made consistent with results framework; M&E outcome and outputs were absent from ToC
--	3.2 Midterm and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders	Made consistent with results framework; M&E outcome and outputs were absent from ToC
Assumptions		
Scale-up of operations possible through attracting investment from other development partners	Scale-up of operations possible through attracting investment from other development partners	No change
Governments provide adequate co-finance and infrastructure support to operations	Governments provide adequate co-finance and infrastructure support to operations	No change
Technology can be applied in the regional context	Technology can be applied in the regional context	No change
Governments support technology transfer and actively facilitate national operations	Governments support technology transfer and actively facilitate national operations	No change
--	Practicable domestic disposal options in line with the Stockholm Convention can be identified during the project	New
--	Governments empower their staff to improve hazardous waste management	New; assumption related to outcome 2 was absent
--	The project steering committee adopts an adaptive management approach	New; assumption related to outcome 3 was absent
Drivers		
Need to guarantee food safety for national and export markets	Need to guarantee food safety for national and export markets	No change
Need for in-country capacity to deal with POPs waste due to geographic isolation and export controls	Need for in-country capacity to deal with POPs waste due to geographic isolation and export controls	No change
Protection of at-risk communities	Protection of vulnerable groups	The phrase 'at-risk,' which does not appear in the Project Document, has been replaced with vulnerable
Need to protect fragile regional and national ecosystems	Need to protect human health and the environment	Replaced 'fragile ecosystems,' which does not appear in the Project Document with 'environment'; combined with driver on human health
Reported public health concerns	--	Removed; combined with driver on environment
--	The project steering committee is motivated to improve efficacy	New; M&E driver was absent

Table 5. Suggested changes to ToC

44. Each of the units that comprise the ToC was reviewed against its analogue in the results framework. Where appropriate simple modifications were made to phrasing of these units. This was either done to ensure consistency across the elements of the project design or make the definitions in line with the UNEP glossary of results.⁵ UNEP defines an outcome as 'the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an Output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behaviour, attitude or condition' and Outputs as 'the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions.'⁶

45. Major changes include a revised title and impact statement, a revised results chain along Outcome 1, and the addition of a new results chain along Component 3. The reconstructed ToC reflects the new direction of the project – in particular the termination of the SCWO procurement – and allows for flexibility while other disposal options are finalised. It also corrects for inconsistencies between the results framework and the ToC. The basic architecture of the results framework remains intact as does

⁵ UNEP, 'Glossary of Results Definitions' (2021) <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28374/1/UNEP_Results_Glossary.pdf>.

⁶ UNEP (n 11).

the overall objective. No changes were required to these aspects as the project was initially well designed and followed an extensive baseline assessment. The reconstructed ToC is presented in Figure 2 below.

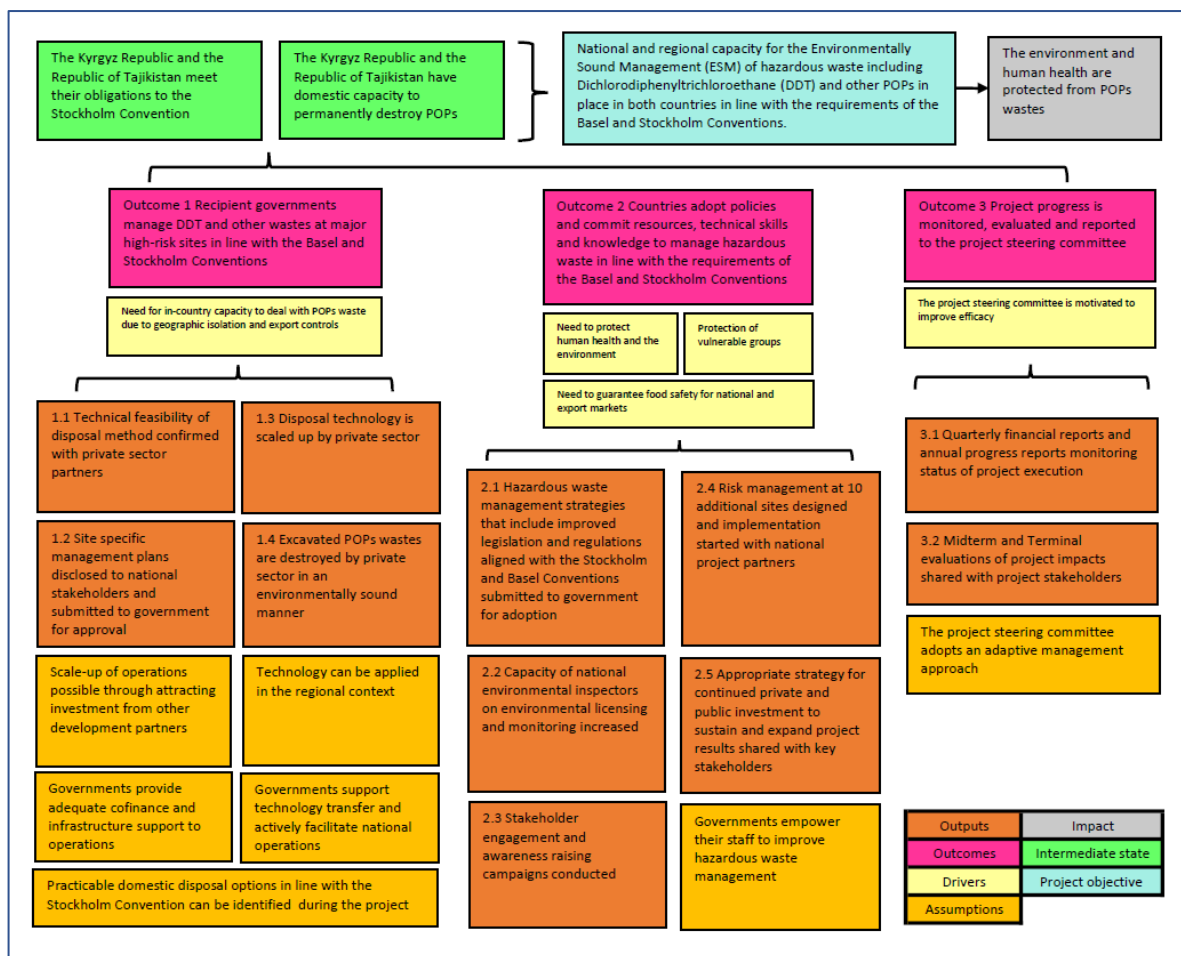


Figure 2. Reconstructed Theory of Change

GEF Core Indicators

46. The Project Document states that the project will result in the destruction of 5,000 tonnes of POPs and directly benefit 150,000 people (50 % female). The beneficiaries include trainees as well as people residing within 10 km of the targeted sites. The Project Document identifies 11 different populated areas that meet this criterion.

V. Review Findings

Summary

47. This section is organized around the review criteria set out in the MTR Terms of Reference (Annex E). These criteria are generally aligned with the guidance provided by the evaluation office. Where qualitative judgements or rankings are provided they have been based on objectively laid out criteria.

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

48. The project is well aligned with the UNEP 2018–2021 Medium Term Strategy (MTS) Priority Area on chemicals, waste and air quality. Specifically, the project supports outcomes on the ‘Sound management of chemicals leading to reduced negative impacts from chemicals on environmental and

human health’ and the ‘Prevention and sound management of waste leading to reduced negative impacts from waste on environmental and human health.’ Accordingly it also supports the organization objective of 2020–2021 UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) on ‘sound management of chemicals and waste and improved air quality contribute to a healthier environment and better health for all.’

49. The project is further aligned with UNEP MTS 2022–2025, specifically the thematic sub-programme on chemicals and pollution action by contributing to Outcomes 3A relating to human health and the environment, 3B on waste management, and 3C pollutant releases. In addition it supports the delivery of Direct Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 3.13 of the UNEP 2022–2023 PoW.

Alignment with GEF Strategic Priorities

50. The project is well aligned with GEF-7’s strategic priorities including those related to ‘leverag[ing] the GEF’s unique position’ and ‘improv[ing] GEF’s ability to catalyse private sector action.’ With regard to the former the use of SCWO or CKT highlight the GEF’s role ‘funding demonstration and pilot activities with a potential for being an incubator to test and refine approaches that can subsequently be funded at larger scale from other sources.’ With regard to the latter the use of SCWO or CKT likewise utilise GEF resources ‘where scarce public resources are used to unlock significant private finance.’
51. The project aims to destroy 5,000 tonnes of POPs contributing to GEF core indicator 9.1 and benefit 150,000 people (indicator 11). As part of the PIR process contribution to 9.4 were also identified; specifically two national hazardous waste management strategies to be approved.

Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

52. As Parties to the Stockholm Convention, both countries completed and submitted National Implementation Plans (NIPs) outlining their Convention obligations will be met. Kyrgyzstan finalized its initial NIP in 2006 and submitted its most recent update 2016. Tajikistan’s initial NIP was submitted in 2007 and has not yet been updated. In both cases significant stocks of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) wastes, including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), were identified in rudimentary landfill sites known regionally as ‘polygons’ which were constructed during the Soviet Union period. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many of these sites have fallen into disrepair. Multiple barriers exist to the Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of the wastes they contain, including geographic and technical capacity challenges. The project was thus developed to address these barriers.
53. The project is consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016–2021 for Tajikistan (the most recent), specifically Outcome 6 regarding environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources which that the ‘[United Nations Country Team (UNCT)] will provide assistance to the national partners [for the] [...] management of chemicals and waste.’⁷ It is likewise consistent with Priority 3 on environment, climate change, and disaster risk management of the most recent UNDAF (2018–2022) for Kyrgyzstan which endeavours in part to support the country to achieve SDG targets, including 3.9 ‘[b]y 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.’⁸

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

54. The Project Document describes a number of relevant efforts in the region, including World Bank and EC supported projects. The Project Document clearly lays out the incremental addition made by this project, building on previous efforts. This includes the selection of SCWO technology which was

⁷ United Nations, ‘United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016–2021 for Tajikistan’ (2016) <<https://tajikistan.un.org/en/104780-united-nations-development-assistance-framework-undaf-2016-2021-tajikistan>> accessed 21 May 2023.

⁸ United Nations, ‘The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Kyrgyz Republic 2018–2022 | United Nations in Kyrgyz Republic’ (2018) <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/35640-united-nations-development-assistance-framework-undaf-kyrgyz-republic-2018-2022>> accessed 21 May 2023.

identified as a possible approach for these sites in World Bank Project ID: 100020592 (2009). It also includes the use of the FAO Environmental Management Toolkit (EMTK) and associated Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA), the development and/ or refinement of which was done in the region as part of EC, FAO GCP / RER / 040 / EC (2012). Both NGOs engaged in the project (Peshsaf and Ekois) have previous experience have previously worked on related efforts and in turn have a high level of familiarity with both the EMTK and REA. Clear linkages are made to other preceding projects as well.

55. The project is being carried out in parallel with GEF ID 5000 Lifecycle Management of Pesticides and Disposal of POPs Pesticides in Central Asian Countries and Turkey which is currently being implemented by FAO in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey. The project, which includes assessment and disposal of POPs, has clear overlap with the current project. Some level of coordination has been occurring with a Memorandum of Agreement currently awaiting signature.

Review criteria	Rating
Strategic Relevance (aggregate)	Satisfactory
Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Moderately Satisfactory
Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	Highly Satisfactory
Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national issues and needs	Satisfactory
Complementarity with existing interventions	Satisfactory

Table 6. Strategic relevance rating

B. Quality of project design

56. The project is presented in a comprehensive Project Document that includes an extensive description of the baseline scenario and proposed actions. The project is set out in an alternative scenario which has been developed around three interrelated components. Each component is associated with a number of Outputs and activities, all of which contain narrative descriptions. The Project Document includes both a results framework and Theory of Change (ToC) which further elaborate the role of components, Outputs and activities in the project design and provide additional information on assumptions, mitigation strategies, drivers, and indicators, among other factors. The basic project hierarchy is presented as both an organisational chart and in narrative form.

57. The Project Document also contains multiple supporting annexes, including a budget and workplan that correspond with the alternative scenario, and supporting appendices, including a compendium of technical reports.

58. As part of this MTR an assessment of project design quality was carried out. The resulting table of this exercise is included below. In addition, some specific strengths and weaknesses of the project design identified during this exercise are noted below.

Project Design Strengths

59. The project is generally well designed and based on an extensive review of associated projects and disposal alternatives in line with waste hierarchy. The design logically and incrementally builds on previous related projects in region, including those supported by the World Bank, EC and GEF. It also includes an innovative deployment of a state of the science approach. Risks are mostly well elaborated with an adequate consideration of mitigation measures. The overall objective is satisfactorily supported by the components and associated Outputs.

60. The design's clearest strength is its extensive baseline characterization – which relies both on preceding projects and on new research done during project preparation. The technical annexes are

comprehensive and clearly the result of a substantial amount of effort. Some of these documents, with minor revisions and updating, could be integrated into the baseline of related projects. It is this extensive baseline that is in part enabling the project to pivot from SCWO to other disposal options following the waste hierarchy.

Project Design Weaknesses

61. A possible weakness with the project also relates to the baseline. Specifically, the costing of the proposed SCWO technology was based on estimates from a single commercial provider, General Atomics. These cost estimates ballooned during procurement and forced the project to explore other approaches. To some extent, this risk was implicit with using a state of the science approach with limited provider options. It is also clear that supply chain issues attributable to the pandemic contributed to the discrepancy in estimates.
62. The project design contains certain inconsistencies. Among them, the ToC and results framework are not fully aligned. Multiple minor differences in the phrasing of Outputs and outcomes exist. In addition, Outcome 1 in the results framework and alternative scenario is wholly different from Outcome 1 in the ToC, with the former referring to national capacity and the latter referring to technical feasibility. This is significant because the project impact is set out in the ToC only and relies on an incorrect outcome description. These discrepancies are more fully assessed above in the Theory of Change section of this report.
63. A separate apparent discrepancy relates to the calculation of GEBs. Specifically, it is estimated that the project will ultimately destroy 5,000 tonnes of POPs. The Project Document (Output 1.4) explains that this value is based on the operation of 'three iSCWO units in parallel for 24hr/day over a 220-day year for a 5-year operational period.' However, the workplan (Annex F of the Project Document) does not begin treatment of wastes until the third quarter of year 3. Thus there is either a discrepancy in these values or the design implicitly assumes that destruction will continue beyond the life of the project. The point is not directly addressed by the Project Document.
64. Finally there is a not an adequate assessment of risks associated with certain external factors, such as conflict, natural disasters, or change in governance.

Assessment of project design quality

65. An assessment of the project design quality was carried out as part of the MTR using the 'template for the assessment of project design quality' made available by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The completed template is provided in Annex C. The resulting table (Table 6) of scores is provided below.

	SECTION	SELECT RATING	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	Unsatisfactory	2	0.4	0.08
B	Project Preparation	Highly Satisfactory	6	1.2	0.72
C	Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
D	Intended Results and Causality	Moderately Satisfactory	4	1.6	0.64
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.4	0.24
G	Partnerships	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.4	0.24
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
J	Efficiency	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4

K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Moderately Satisfactory	4	1.2	0.48
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
	Overall Rating of Project Design Quality	Satisfactory		TOTAL SCORE	4.8

Table 7. Project Design Quality Score

Review criteria	Rating
Quality of Project Design (aggregate)	Satisfactory

C. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

Outputs used to evaluate progress in this section

66. This section is organized around the project Outputs and is intended to assess progress on their delivery by the project’s mid-term. As noted above in the section on the Theory of Change, Component 1 of the project requires revision to better align it with the current project’s direction. Specifically, the procurement of non-thermal destruction technology (i.e. SCWO) was ultimately terminated and the use of an alternative approach (i.e. CKT or containment) was being explored at the of the MTR. Much of Component 1 in the original alternative scenario was predicated on the use of a non-thermal disposal approach and has yet to be adjusted to account for this change. The MTR offers the opportunity to correct the structure of these Outputs to better align with the practical realities of execution. In line with evaluation guidance this section is therefore organized around the newly worded Outputs presented in Table 5. However, because the SCWO procurement was such a substantial aspect of this project’s design, and its termination so substantial in impact, that procurement is addressed here as well.
67. Where possible progress is reported against individual activities described in the Project Document, however in several cases there is a not a functional list of activities. In these cases, progress is reported against deliverables outlined in the 2022-2023 Workplan.

Timeline used to evaluate progress in this section

68. The mid-term review is carried out halfway through project implementation to assess whether the project is on-track, which problems or challenges the project is encountering, and which corrective actions are required. This official start date for this project was 16 September 2020. As noted above (2.4 External challenges), the project has encountered a number of challenges that have complicated execution. These have included the following, among others: the dissolution of the anticipated executing agency; the Covid-19 pandemic; and the termination of the procurement of the preferred destruction technology.
69. The current project manager, Wouter Pronk, was onboarded in April 2022. Prior to this date only limited progress had been made against indicators for reasons addressed elsewhere in this document. To maximize the utility of this review, Outputs are assessed in this section against the 2022–2023 workplan (herein workplan; Annex D) in use by the PSC since Mr. Pronk’s hiring. The intention here is not to minimize the significant delays in project execution before April 2022, but rather to be able to provide useful observations through a more nuanced reporting of progress to date.

Status of Output delivery at mid-term

Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs

Outcome 1: Recipient governments manage DDT and other wastes at major high-risk sites in line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

Output 1.1. Technical feasibility of disposal method confirmed with private sector partners

70. In their review of the Project Information Form (PIF), the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) identified the need for contingency plans in the event that the proposed SCWO approach was unsuccessful (see Annex B of the Project Document). In response the UNEP GEF C&W unit completed a series of technical annexes (collectively Annex I in the Project Document) surveying possible alternatives to SCWO as well as an in-depth assessment of the most likely alternative, co-processing in cement kilns. Thus, while not fully integrated into the alternative scenario, the project implicitly acknowledged the existence of a 'plan B' to be used if Plan A (i.e. SCWO) were unsuccessful.
71. This Output originally referred specifically to ex-situ trials conducted of SCWO technology that would be used to confirm commissioning. Because the SCWO option has been abandoned, this Output has been revised and is being reviewed as it applies to Plan B, Cement Kiln Technology (CKT). In the SCWO approach the ex-situ pilot demonstration was planned for year 1 of the project. The logic here was that the technology was being used in an innovative way and thus its application should be confirmed before any scaling to larger equipment took place. In the case of CKT, this sort of ex-situ testing is carried out on site as part of a detailed feasibility study including a 'trial burn.' Thus, the Output has been revised to capture the technical evaluation of various plants and the engagement of private sector partners. However, owing to the SCWO procurement's outsized role in the project, it is summarized here as well.
72. The SCWO procurement was conducted by the Procurement Section of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), began in late 2019 and was ultimately terminated in September 2022. A Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) was issued through the UN General Marketplace (UNGM) platform, the common procurement portal of the United Nations system of organizations, by the UNON procurement service between 29 November to 20 December 2019 (EOIUNON17000). Four different companies responded with only one (General Atomics of San Diego, USA) meeting the minimum requirements. A sole source procurement was approved on this basis and a Request for Proposals (RFP), including a detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and evaluation criteria were issued to General Atomics in March 2021. General Atomics responded in July 2021 with a full proposal that exceeded the available project budget. Subsequent negotiations between UNON and General Atomics were prolonged with both organizations requiring time to respond to additional requests for information.
73. General Atomics is primarily a US military contractor and is subject to US Defence Contract Audit Agency and Defence Contract Management Agency pricing requirements. The organization also has no previous experience operating in either Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan, creating significant unknowns. Further, geopolitical instability in the region owing in particular to events leading up to and including the invasion of Ukraine created uncertainty. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the technology was highly detailed and placed multiple responsibilities including technology development, transport and deployment and liability of product failure with the provider. This in turn led to challenges in agreeing to contract terms. General Atomics opted to price in substantial contingency to address these requirements in the context of such uncertainty. Finally supply chain issues attributable to the pandemic increased material costs. Thus in September 2022 the procurement was cancelled and the project shifted focus to other disposal alternatives following the waste hierarchy. An internal UNEP memo lists delays and cost as the reason for the cancellation.

74. Beginning in late 2022, the project engaged a CKT consultant (Ed Verhamme) to further review the feasibility of CKT in the context of this project. Mr. Verhamme had previously completed the CKT assessment included with the Project Document, which he has essentially updated and better-defined during project execution. In general Mr. Verhamme's work is perceived by stakeholders as being of high quality. Given the sensitivity around the use of CKT in the region, the project has opted to engage a second Technical Expert to review Mr. Verhamme's work. Only preliminary results of this assessment were not received during the MTR. These findings noted additional technical issues with the use of CKT. The production of these deliverables has involved meetings with the operators of two cement plants in each country (total=4). With regard to specific deliverables outlined in Ed Verhamme's workplan, 12 of 17 have been produced and the other are expected within the 3rd quarter.
75. In the case of Tajikistan, only one of the plants reviewed was characterized as technically viable by the consultant. The plant operator in this case expressed only limited enthusiasm for the proposal. Moreover, the Tajikistan government has recently expressed reluctance for this approach and instead has suggested a third option (i.e. mobile incineration) be explored, with a written request being sent to the Project Manager in June 2023 (Annex G). This was in contrast with their support at the stage of approval of the project document and at project inception, which included CKT as a backup option. The mobile incineration technology was not initially reviewed during project development and is not specifically addressed in the relevant Basel Convention guidance.⁹ In response, the project has hired a third-party consultant to review the proposed technology and submit a report.
76. In Kyrgyzstan, both identified cement kilns were characterized by the CKT consultant and others present as viable. However, since those visits one plant (Kyzyl Kiya) has ceased communicating with the project and is no longer perceived as a possible option. During the MTR, the project was in active negotiations with the second plant (Aravan). Other barriers remain including NGO and community resistance, cost and sustainability (owing to a regional dearth of alternative fuel sources). In addition, preliminary results of peer-review indicate that additional technical barriers may be present. Thus results on the use of CKT at the time of the MTR were inconclusive.
77. In both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan the long-term disposal of POPs wastes in engineered landfills remains the likely option. In both cases, the most likely scenario would involve the construction of cells within both Vakhsh and Suzak A to allow for improved management. Of note, there is a lack of clarity among stakeholders about the suitability of Suzak A for long-term disposal, owing in part to groundwater contamination risks. This lack of clarity is not present in the relevant environmental assessment which notes no such risk. It is likely that the PSC will have the technical inputs required to make a decision regarding final disposal within 2023. The Output is thus generally consistent with the timing in workplan.

Output 1.2. Site specific management plans disclosed to national stakeholders and submitted to government for approval

78. This Output and associated activities presented in the Project Document are broadly applicable to the revised project. The Output is comprised of the following 4 activities: Conceptual site model finalization; Waste treatability tests conducted for Category II and III wastes; Collate and disclose site-specific risk management plans; Permitting and disclosure. To date the first two have been completed and the third is expected in Q3, being 70 % complete at the time of the MTR and with a well-developed draft having been seen by the Review Consultant.

⁹ Basel Convention (n 8).

79. The project results framework includes the following indicator: 2 site specific clean-up plans for all wastes. This indicator is still relevant and as noted above is expected to be completed in Q3.
80. A consultant for this Output, Guido van de Coterlet was engaged by the project in mid-2022. The consultant has provided a range of services, including training of project staff on rapid assessment, the development of detailed site assessments, and the development of risk management plans. The consultant's work has been well received by multiple stakeholders and despite delays in other areas of the project the delivery of this work has been generally consistent with the workplan.

Output 1.3. Disposal technology is scaled up by private sector

81. No progress is expected or has been made on this Output. It is thus not evaluated here.

Output 1.4 Excavated POPs wastes are destroyed by private sector in an environmentally sound manner

82. No progress is expected or has been made on this Output. It is thus not evaluated here.

Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management

83. Outcome 2: Countries adopt policies and commit resources, technical skills and knowledge to manage hazardous waste in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

Output 2.1 Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption

84. The Project Document includes two activities for this Output, both of which are still relevant: Drafting support to update existing policy and legal frameworks; National Hazardous Waste Management Strategies. The Results Framework includes the following midpoint indicators: Advice for updating legislation submitted to government; Strategy and Action Plan for ESM of hazardous waste management developed.
85. The project has engaged two separate consultants for the delivery of this Output. In the first case, the consultant delivered documents that were deemed inadequate by the Project Management Unit (PMU). Specifically, the work that was developed focused on pesticide application than disposal. In response, the consultant's contract was terminated and in early 2022 a separate consultant was contracted to complete the review. Working with national consultants in both countries, Dr. Tatiana Tugui has thus far produced gap analyses in both countries. It is expected that her ToR will be expanded to include supporting the drafting of national hazardous waste management strategies.
86. While this is somewhat behind the schedule presented in both the workplan and results framework, the PMU adapted well to the challenges posed by the first consultant's deliverables. Given delays elsewhere in the project, specifically related to the delivery of Output 1.1, the on-time delivery of this Output is not critical.

Output 2.2. Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring increased

87. The Project Document contains two activities supporting the delivery of this Output: Guidance on environmental licensing and monitoring; Training on environmental licensing and inspection. Both of these remain relevant to the current project direction. The results framework does not contain a mid-point target.
88. Minimal progress has been made against this Output. Dr. Tugui has supported the selection of national consultants licensing and monitoring. In the context of delays associated with Output 1.1, the on-time delivery of this Output is not critical. Specifically, if CKT (or a separate alternative) is not in operation there is nothing to license or monitor. However, it is equally possible that preliminary activities could be carried out to support this delivery of this Output when the timing is more appropriate. The Project Document includes an activity on guidance development (2.2.1), for instance, toward which progress could be made without the selection of an ultimate method of disposal.

Output 2.3. Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted

89. The Project Document included three activities to support this Output: National seminars on project waste management strategy; Development and implementation of national awareness raising campaigns; Development and implementation of local community campaigns. All three of these are still relevant to the current project direction. In addition, the results framework includes the following mid-point targets: Training of national NGOs, community organizations and political decision makers; 2 national campaign strategies developed.
90. NGOs have been engaged to carry out this work, which has generally proceeded on schedule with the workplan. As noted above, this work is being carried out by Ekois in Kyrgyzstan and FSD in Tajikistan. In total since the start of the project 284 stakeholders have been involved in meetings, trainings, and seminars of the project, including 87 women and 197 men. Given the expected community resistance to one of the possible disposal technologies (i.e. CKT), these trainings are of high importance in Kyrgyzstan in particular.

Output 2.4. Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started with national project partners

91. The Project Document contains the following three activities to support the delivery of this Output, all of which are still relevant to the current project direction: Finalization of REA and Prioritisation of highest risk sites; Risk management planning at ten additional sites; Risk mitigation actions at a minimum of two sites. The results framework contains the following mid-point target, which is still relevant: Prioritization of top 10 risk sites.
92. In the case of Kyrgyzstan the National Delivery Partner, the Ozone Centre, has been contracted to carry out this work and has been supported by the consultant Guido van de Coterlet. To date 11 Rapid Environmental Assessments (REAs) have been completed. Two of these have been shared with the Review Consultant and are of high quality. In Tajikistan, the National Delivery Partner FSD has contracted the local NGO Peshsaf to carry out the REAs. To date none have been completed.
93. The mid-point target 'prioritization of top 10 risk sites' has been met. This target however is unambitious and inconsistent with the workplan which indicates that the REAs will be completed in 2022. The remaining work is then scheduled for completion in 2023. The first two activities supporting this Output could be carried out independent of other project Outputs as they are not dependent on the results of those Outputs. Accordingly, teams have been engaged to carry out REAs.

While no risk management plans have been produced these are expected in the coming quarters. The third activity is entirely dependent on the disposal options supported by the project and thus cannot proceed until Component 1 is much further along.

Output 2.5. Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders

- 94. The Project Document contains two activities that support the delivery of this Output: Project reviews and lessons learnt workshops and publications; Project exit/ investment strategy and partner engagement. Both activities are still relevant to the current project direction.
- 95. No progress is expected or has been made on the second activity. With regard to the first the project has made efforts to share lessons learnt both internal and external to the project. This has included a Disposal Strategy Disclosure Meeting was held during the Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the project in November 2022; A presentation on the project at a BRS COP side event to an international audience of DDT project stakeholders on 3 May 2023 in Geneva; and the engagement of project countries in a Green Energy & Waste Recycling Forum (GEWR) in Astana, Kazakhstan in July 2023 to discuss lessons learnt.

Component 3: Monitoring & Evaluation

Output 3.1. Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project execution

- 96. Reports of adequate quality have been submitted in a timely fashion.

Output 3.2. Midterm and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders

- 97. The midterm review is being carried out midway through the project and is thus consistent with the workplan.

Ranking of Output delivery

- 98. The evaluation office generally provides clear guidance on the ranking of each criterion. An exception relates to the delivery of Outputs, where the guidance suggests that the ranking be primarily a function of the importance of each Output and its delivery at mid-term. To provide the PSC with more detail into how this section was evaluated, the table below (Table 7) indicates the weight of importance assigned to each Output (1–3, with 3 being most important) and its percent completion at mid-term (with 100 % being the planned progress). The total percent delivered then is the weighted average of the Outputs.

Output	Importance (1-3)	Percent Delivered at mid-term toward mid-term targets	Percent Delivered at mid-term toward end of project targets
1.1 Technical feasibility of disposal method confirmed with private sector partners	2	70 %	70 %
1.2 Site specific management plans disclosed to national stakeholders and submitted to government for approval	2	70 %	70 %
1.3 Disposal technology is scaled up by private sector	3	N/A	0 %
1.4 Excavated POPs wastes are destroyed by private sector in an environmentally sound manner	3	N/A	0 %
2.1 Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption	3	50 %	50 %
2.2 Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring increased	2	N/A	0 %

2.3 Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted	1	25 %	25 %
2.4 Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started with national project partners	1	40 %	40 %
2.5 Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders	2	N/A	0
3.1 Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project execution	2	100 %	50 %
3.2 Midterm and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders	1	100 %	50 %
	Weighted % Delivered	66 %	28 %

Table 8. Percent delivery and relative importance of Outputs

Progress towards outcomes

99. The project contains three major Outcomes each linked with the Components above. The Outcomes in the Theory of Change were inconsistent with those presented elsewhere in the Project Document and have been revised in the reformulated ToC presented above. The results framework in the Project Document includes mid-point and end point Outcome indicators. These are used here to assess progress.

Outcome 1. Recipient governments manage DDT and other wastes at major high-risk sites in line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

100. The Project Document results framework provides two end of project indicators with which to assess progress against this Outcome: Tons of DDT and other POPs waste destroyed in an environmentally sound manner; Number of facilities licensed and equipped to ESM hazardous waste in Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. No mid-point indicators were provided, making an assessment of progress at this stage difficult.

101. Interviews conducted during the MTR indicate a moderate optimism among stakeholders that 5,000 tons of will be disposed of as part of the project, assuming an extension of 2 years. Very few stakeholders expressed the view that the disposal option would be wholly comprised of destruction. To date no facilities have been licensed or equipped in either country.

Outcome 2. Countries adopt policies and commit resources, technical skills and knowledge to manage hazardous waste in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions

102. The results framework contains the following end of project indicators: Environmental inspection protocols and annual reports; 260 inspectors; 10 NGO staff; policy makers trained; 2 national hazardous waste management strategies approved; Risks reduction measures elaborated for ten priority sites. No mid-point indicators were provided, making an assessment of progress at this stage difficult.

103. To date no progress has been made against any of the end of project indicators, with the exception of the indicator relating to NGO staff. To date 47 NGO staff have been trained.

Outcome 3. Project progress is monitored, evaluated and reported to the project steering committee

104. This Outcome was added as part of the MTR and thus was not included in the results framework and does not have any associated indicators. Reporting has been regular and of high quality.

Likelihood of impact

105. For UNEP, impact can be assessed through an evaluation of the replication and scalability of a project as well as its innovativeness. The evaluation office provides certain templates to support this evaluation including a Microsoft Excel-based calculator that relies substantially on assumptions and drivers identified in the Theory of Change. Because the ToC has undergone significant revision at midterm, all of the newly identified drivers and assumptions still hold. Thus, it may not be appropriate to use the revised ToC to evaluate this parameter. Rather, the original ToC was used. Using this approach, the likelihood of impact was found to be moderately likely. This is generally consistent with Interviews conducted as part of the MTR, which identified a moderate level of optimism in the project’s ability to achieve its Objective and major outcomes. The evaluation office notes that it is difficult to assess the likelihood of impact at mid-term. Nevertheless, this exercise is required.

106. Drivers are defined by UNEP as significant external factors that realization of the intended results of a project. The drivers identified in the logframe were confirmed. Assumptions are defined by UNEP as significant external factors that realization of the intended results of a project but are beyond the influence of the project. The assumptions identified in the logframe were partially confirmed. Government support for technology transfer has been inconsistent and co-finance has been unconfirmed.

Review criteria	Rating
Effectiveness (aggregate)	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Availability of outputs	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Achievement of project outcomes	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Likelihood of impact	Moderately Likely

Table 9. Effectiveness rating

D. Financial Management

107. The evaluation office maintains an objective list of criteria with which to assess the Financial Management of the project. These criteria are provided in the table below. An associated document provides guidance on the rating of these criteria.

108. Both the IA and EA have clear, current and transparent methods of recording and projecting expenditures. The primary budgeting mechanism for the EA is its quarterly reporting the IA, which reports expenses by line item across Outputs.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
Adherence to UNEP’s policies and procedures:		HS	Reports have been submitted on time and are considered to be of high quality. Procurement was carried out consistent with UNEP policies.
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project’s adherence ¹⁰ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules			No
Completeness of project financial information¹¹:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		HS:HU	MS
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost’s tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes

¹⁰ If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹¹ See also document ‘Criterion Rating Description’ for reference

B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	N/A
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	No
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	Yes
Communication between finance and project management staff		HS:HU	HS
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	HS
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	HS
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS:HU	HS
Overall rating			HS

Table 10. Financial management rating matrix

Review criteria	Rating
Financial Management (aggregate)	Highly Satisfactory
Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	Highly Satisfactory
Completeness of project financial information	Satisfactory
Communication between finance and project management staff	Highly Satisfactory

Table 11. Financial management rating

E. Efficiency

109. For UNEP, efficiency captures the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution as measured in the delivery of activities and Outputs. As of the second quarter of 2023, the EA had reported expenditures of USD 692,264 (or 19 %) of the EA's allocated budget of USD 3,625,000. Over the same period the EA has delivered 66 % of Outputs required at midterm, as noted in Table 7 above. Some of these Outputs, including the Site Specific Management plans and CKT assessments, are relatively more costly as they are done by International Consultants. Therefore, conservatively assuming a linear rate of expenditure and Output delivery, the EA has delivered 33 % of its Outputs at 19 % of its allocated budget. Thus, from a simple mathematical perspective its delivery has been highly cost efficient.

110. Of note, the vast majority of expenses have been incurred since the Second Quarter of 2022. Cumulative expenses by Component are displayed below in Figure 3.

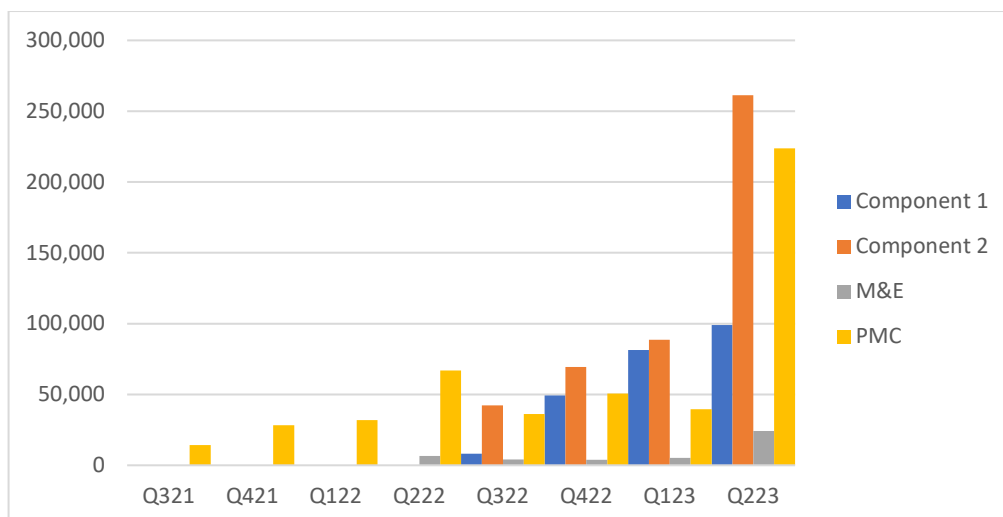


Figure 3. Cumulative expenditure by Component

111. The majority of the GEF allocation of the project budget (76 %) is currently being managed by the UNEP GEF C&W Unit with this amount having been set aside at the start of the project for the procurement of the SCWO equipment. None of these resources have been expended as no major procurements have occurred. It is expected that the ultimate disposal method for POPs wastes will be decided within 2023 and be consistent with the waste hierarchy. Disposal will account for the vast majority of resource allocation and has not yet occurred. It is therefore not possible to assess the efficiency of most of the project’s expenditures.

112. The evaluation office provides guidance with which to assess this criterion objectively. In this case, it is clear that the project will require an extension of at least 2 years. This conservative assessment has been confirmed with stakeholders of all levels. This alone earns this criterion a rating of moderately unsatisfactory. In general Outputs have been well sequenced. In addition the project has leveraged products generated by previous projects and other agencies into substantial cost savings (e.g. site lists, site assessments, and the EMTK and REA tools).

Review criteria	Rating
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory

Table 12. Efficiency rating

F. Monitoring and Reporting
Monitoring design and budgeting

113. The Project Document has a well-articulated and adequately budgeted system for monitoring and evaluation that includes regular reporting and evaluations. Certain mid-term indicators included in the results framework were not fully adequate. The following five issues stand out in particular:

- multiple mid-term indicators associated with Component 1 were not adequate to capture the technology change (Output 1.1, 1.3, 1.4);
- indicators were not provided for multiple Outputs (Outputs 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2);
- certain mid-point indicators were under ambitious (Output 2.4, 2.5);
- with the exception of Output 2.3, no other Outputs have more than a single mid-term indicator provided;

- No indicators are disaggregated by gender.

114. The project document contains a preliminary gender assessment and action plan. A more well developed gender guidance document was not finalised until November 2022, two years into the project.
115. The project has adequately assessed the stakeholder landscape and made moderate efforts to promote stakeholder ownership. In general there has been a good effort to share information with stakeholders.
116. The project assesses progress against indicators in several ways. The first is a running tally of tasks titled 'project tracker' maintained by the EA. The tracker is an Excel document managed by the Project Manager and Regional Project Manager with a task description, due date, responsible party and other descriptors. Once tasks are completed they are hidden from view but still accessible to the user by changing filters. While technically a tool to manage the project, the tracker also acts a record of work conducted and thus facilitates monitoring.
117. The project also assesses progress during monthly calls between the IA and the EA. Minutes are taken and stored in the EA project folder, making the project amenable to assessment. Beginning in September 2022, these minutes have been organized around progress against Outputs, better facilitating assessment.
118. The Project Manager and Regional Project Manager make quarterly trips to each country to speak with stakeholders and NDPs and assess progress.
119. Inception meetings were held in each country 16 months after the project began. There has been only one other meeting of the Project Steering Committee, in November 2022, with a second planned for Q4 of 2023. The Project also includes National Steering Committees in addition to the PSC, which have each met once (Tajikistan in December 2022 and Kyrgyzstan in June 2023). Progress against gender indicators has not been recorded as having been discussed at monthly meetings, in the project tracker or in Inception or PSC meetings. Gender is recorded in the PIR.
120. The project's workplan is not consistent with the project document. This is because the workplan has not been adequately updated following changes to Component 1. Rather a subsection of Component 1 under the heading 'Plan B' is provided. The list is comprised of a heterogenous list of Outputs (e.g. Conduct facility upgrade); activities (e.g. Collate and disclose site specific risk management plans; and a combination of both (e.g. Enabling activities (certification / communication / training). Moreover the current workplan is inadequately granular with years 2022 and 2023 being tracked by quarter only and subsequent years being planned in increments of 1 year. Overall the workplan requires substantial improvements to be made adequate for a project of this size and complexity. The IA and EA intend to make such improvements following the MTR.
121. With the exception of the gender expert hired to complete the guidance and the Review Consultant hired for the MTR no expenses have been incurred on the monitoring of the project. The gender expert will soon review the risk-based management plans.

Project reporting

122. Project documentation is substantial but still incomplete. The filing system used by the project is not fully legible or amenable to assessment. Multiple documents or reporting against indicators were sent to the Review Consultant by email because they were not available or immediately discernible within the EA SharePoint.

123. Project reporting has been consistent with GEF and UNEP requirements, with quarterly financial and progress reports and Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) being submitted for years 2022 and 2023. Communication between the IA and the EA has been consistent and of high quality. The IA Task Manager has clear insight into the project and provides regular technical support in a manner consistent with the IA role outlined in the Project Document.

Review criteria	Rating
Monitoring and Reporting (aggregate)	Satisfactory
Monitoring design and budgeting	Moderately Satisfactory
Monitoring of project implementation	Moderately Satisfactory
Project reporting	Satisfactory

Table 12. Monitoring and reporting rating

G. Sustainability

124. The evaluation office defines sustainability as the probability of project’s benefit being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The review then includes the following three considerations: a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards, b) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained and c) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance.

Socio-political sustainability

125. The consistent engagement of government stakeholders has posed a challenge for the project. In both countries there have been changes (or an absence) of the appointed government focal point at key phases of implementation. This has been most pronounced in Kyrgyzstan where much of the project has occurred without a focal point. Mr. Ali Khalmurzaev of the Department of International Cooperation in Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision attended the inception workshop in 2021, but was shortly thereafter shifted to a different position. The project was then without a Kyrgyzstan government focal point until Mr. Khalmurzaev was reappointed to the role along with Ms. Gulumkan Bekturova (Director of the State Regulation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources) in April 2022. Both were then shortly thereafter replaced in July 2023 by Mr. Taalaibek Abaskanovich Dalbaev, Head of the Water and Land Resources Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision. In the absence of formal government participation, Mars Amanaliev of the Ozone Centre has played a de facto role in representing the government of Kyrgyzstan. The Ozone Centre is the National Delivery Partner for Kyrgyzstan and also a semi-autonomous organization under the under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision. This dual role in oversight and execution is a potential conflict of interest.

126. In Tajikistan the focal point for the project is Abdusalim Juraev, Director of Stockholm Convention Centre at the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CEP). Mr. Juraev has been involved at some level with the project for at least a decade, beginning with early discussions on the concept. However from 2014 – 2018, during a critical phase of project development, he was working on other efforts within CEP and was not actively involved in the project. It was during this phase that the project’s preferred disposal method (SCWO) and preferred secondary option (CKT) were integrated into the project. Mr. Juraev has expressed concerns about both approaches and has instead formed a technical committee within CEP which has identified a third option, mobile incineration provided by a Turkish vendor. The technology was not initially reviewed during project development and is not specifically addressed in the relevant Basel

Convention guidance.¹² This lack of shared vision for the project creates a challenge for implementation that might have been addressed earlier on with more consistent representation from the Tajikistan government.

127. The Tajikistan government has generally been very active in project development and execution. They have played an important role in encouraging the IA and EA to deliver activities in a timely manner. This has been most directly through formal letters sent to the IA most recently in June 2023. While their interest in the project is a clear strength there have also reportedly been discussions within CEP about whether to withdraw from the project over growing frustration on the delayed timing of Outputs. In addition CEP has expressed an interest in prioritizing ‘mini dumpsites’ located throughout populated areas in Tajikistan which often pose an immediate risk to human health. Targeting such sites may have merit but is inconsistent with the existing project document.

Financial sustainability

128. The project budget was initially developed around the procurement and installation of mobile SCWO units with GEF funds. However much of the operating costs were envisioned to be covered by co-financing, including substantial fuel and maintenance costs. As noted above in design weaknesses, the project design also included an apparent error with regard to the amount of POPs wastes that could be destroyed in the project timeframe, thus substantially relying on sustained financial support from co-financing to ensure the attainment of GEBs.

129. In contrast with SCWO, two of the current approaches being considered by the project (CKT and containment) could attain the intended GEBs with existing project funds within the project timeframe inclusive of capital and operating expenses, assuming a two-year extension. The third option, mobile incineration, as not yet been reviewed by the project for cost implications. However given these factors, and in line with evaluation guidance, the financial sustainability of the project is rated as likely.

Institutional sustainability

130. With regard to the attainment of GEBs, the identified adverse impacts of socio-political sustainability challenges are likely ameliorated by the available resources. The likely disposal methods (Component 1) can be covered entirely by allocated GEF resources even in the absence of sustained government involvement. The likelihood of Outcome 2 is more difficult to assess at this stage.

Review criteria	Rating
Sustainability (aggregate)	Moderately Unlikely
Socio-political sustainability	Moderately Unlikely
Financial sustainability	Likely
Institutional sustainability	Likely

Table 13. Sustainability rating

H. Factors Affecting Performance Preparation and Readiness

131. For the evaluation office ‘preparation and preparedness’ refers to work conducted in the period between project approval and first disbursement. It includes then the finalisation of key documents (e.g. workplan, safeguards), engagement of stakeholders and project partners, and the adequate integration of project partners.

¹² Basel Convention (n 8).

132. The project incurred multiple delays in the early stages of implementation due largely to external factors. These included the dissolution of the preferred EA and the COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared such only three weeks after the project was approved by the GEF Secretariat.
133. There were also several internal constraints within the EA. With regard to institutional capacity, the UNEP ROE office had no previous experience managing GEF C&W projects of comparable size and technical complexity. They further had little relevant technical expertise in the subject matter. The Internal Cooperation Agreement (ICA) was finalized in September 2020, concurrent with the return of Mijke Hertoghs to the organization from the International Telecommunications Union where she had been seconded for 1 year. Ms. Hertoghs was met with multiple pressing issues that required her attention upon returning to ROE. 9421 Project Coordination responsibilities were given to her in addition to her existing fulltime work responsibilities. Together these factors indicate that 9421 was at least initially not a priority for ROE.
134. While UNEP ROE maintains an office in Almaty, all administrative matters – including those related to contracting and expenditures – are managed by the UNEP ROE Geneva office. These procedures, which are consistent across UN Secretariat organizations, have been reported by multiple stakeholders as overly onerous. As such, to facilitate delivery of the project, NDPs have been engaged in roles may be more consistent with EA responsibilities.
135. During the early phases of the project these internal and external challenges compounded resulting in delays that critically damaged the effectiveness of this key phase. NDPs were not formerly engaged until March and June 2022 for FSD and the Ozone Centre, respectively (23 and 26 months after project approval). A fulltime Project Manager (with a contract of at least 12 months duration) was not appointed until March 2022, 24 months after project approval. In the interim, a Regional Coordinator was contracted in April 2021 on short term contracts and with limited authority. This person now serves as the Regional Project Manager. Finally, Inception meetings were significantly delayed, being held 17 months after project approval and before either an NDP or fulltime Project Manager were in place.

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

136. The project is overseen by Russell Cobban, the UNEP GEF C&W. Mr. Cobban is a fulltime consultant to and therefore coordinates with Jitendra Sharma, who is a fulltime staff person within the unit. Both Dr. Sharma and Mr. Cobban have extensive experience in the subject matter and are highly skilled administrators. For UNEP ROE day-to-day project management is done by the Project Manager, Wouter Pronk, and the Regional Project Manager Baurzhan Nassimullin. The pair of project managers meet weekly with the ROE Project Coordinator Mijke Hertoghs whom together functionally (if not in title) serve in the role of the Project Management Unit (PMU).
137. The PMU meets formally on a monthly basis with UNEP C&W. There is some overlap and confusion between roles (e.g. Dr. Sharma and Mr. Cobban; Mr. Pronk and Mr. Nassimullin), but in general the overall project management is efficient, adaptive and forward looking.
138. Meetings regularly occur with the NDPs and other project partners on an ad hoc basis. PSC meetings are currently occurring annually. In both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan the relationships between NDPs and the NGO project partners are stressed. The specific reasons for this are distinct, but in both cases the tension exists in part because of an implicit sense of competition between the organizations over project resources. In Kyrgyzstan, the partner NGO Ekois has been engaged by the Ozone Centre for a relatively limited number of activities and has been effectively siloed out from the project management structure. This is a critical project management weakness as the delivery of the

community awareness campaign in Kyrgyzstan is both essential for the success of the project and wholly dependent on Ekois.

139. In Tajikistan, the NDP has a broad mandate that includes a set of clear deliverables agreed in advance as well as more ad hoc responsibilities to meet the needs of an evolving project. This second set of responsibilities taxes FSD's administration and in turn its relationship with Peshsaf. In the context of a preexisting sense of competition for resources, this arrangement fosters an adversarial relationship between all three organizations.
140. Despite these challenges, Project Management and Supervision since mid-2022 has been of high quality. Project implementors are perceived as experts in their fields and largely have fully constructive roles in the project. They identify issues in a timely manner and appropriately adapt management accordingly.

Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

141. The project has adequately assessed the stakeholder landscape and made moderate efforts to promote stakeholder ownership. In general there has been a good effort to share information with stakeholders.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

142. As noted above, gender considerations have not been directly covered in regular project meetings or incurred project expenses. An exception is the hiring of a gender consultant in late 2022 that completed a guidance document and training for NDPs, both of which were of high quality. In line with the project document, the gender consultant will review the risk-based management plans when they are available.
143. On a practical level, many deliverables where gender considerations would be most evident, such as trainings and community awareness raising activities, have not yet been scaled up. Several key roles in the project are filled by women, including the ROE Project Coordinator, the legal expert, the licensing expert and the director of Ekois. There is also a high level of awareness of gender and human rights considerations within the project at all levels.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

144. UNEP's standard assessment the Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN) was submitted and approved by the UNEP Project Review Committee (PRC) during project development. The Project Document also extensively addresses environmental and human health risks, both in its main narrative and various supporting technical appendices. As part of execution detailed environmental assessments and environmental management plans have been conducted at both of the high priority sites. Multiple Rapid Environmental Assessments (REAs) have also been conducted. Evidence indicates that in both cases these have been in line with best international practice. The CKT assessments specifically address environmental and human health risks and these assessments will be reviewed by an International Expert to ensure best practice among other considerations. To support the management of environmental and social risks from CKT and in compliance with GEF STAP requirements regarding co-processing, the project is collecting additional information on amongst others compliance of co-processing with Basel Convention, EU directives and other international standards, fate of heavy metals and mercury, baseline emission data of involved cement plants, impacts on climate change, liability insurance. In addition the project is carrying out a series of Disposal Strategy Meetings where independent information on risks of different disposal technologies including co-processing are provided by international experts on CKT and other forms of POPs disposal such as thermal disposal in mobile incinerators to country stakeholders.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

145. The government of Tajikistan has consistently demonstrated ownership over the project including those criteria outlined by the evaluation office: strategic guidance of project delivery; driving or advocating for change to achieve higher level results; endorsing or accepting project results; initiating non-cost complementary or additional activities; provision of in-kind co-financing. Of note the CEP’s priorities have not consistently aligned with the project’s and described above in the section on sociopolitical sustainability.
146. The government of Kyrgyzstan has been consistently involved in the project through the work of the NDP, the Ozone Centre, but has been unable to provide a regular project focal point. This could substantially affect project results in the next phases, which will require high level support to permit disposal options and shepherd in legislative changes.

Communication and Public Awareness

147. As noted above (availability of Outputs) community awareness has generally progressed in a manner appropriate for this stage in the project. The project does not maintain a project website and does not have a shared repository where knowledge management products or other documents appropriate for a wider audience (beyond the PMU) are shared. The project has presented at a side event at the BRS COP as well as at the Green Energy & Waste Recycling Forum (GEWR) in Astana, Kazakhstan in July 2023.

Review criteria	Rating
Factors Affecting Performance (aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Preparation and Readiness	Unsatisfactory
Quality of Project Management and Supervision (IA)	Satisfactory
Quality of Project Management and Supervision (EA)	Satisfactory
Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation	Moderately Satisfactory
Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality	Moderately Satisfactory
Environmental and Social Safeguards	Highly Satisfactory
Country Ownership and Driven-ness	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Communication and Public Awareness	Moderately Satisfactory

Table 14. Sustainability rating

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

148. The project ‘Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9241)’ has encountered multiple critical external and internal challenges. These challenges most strongly impacted the development and early execution of the project. As a result, inception meetings were substantially delayed and the architecture to manage day-to-day project operations was not in place until mid-2022, nearly 2.5 years after the project was approved. As such the project is effectively one year into execution of a five-year timeline, with the EA accordingly having expended about a fifth of resources.
149. The project is fully in line with GEF, UNEP and country priorities. It was also satisfactorily designed. While certain weaknesses were identified – such as the project’s reliance on a technology with one known provider – preliminary work carried out as part of the PPG is allowing the project to pivot to alternatives, such as CKT or containment.

150. The project has delivered ~66 % of its Outputs expected at mid-term and ~28 % of those expected by completion. While this is clearly behind the schedule set out in the Project Document, it also indicates substantial progress in the context of the delayed start date. In general the project has progressed well on the measures necessary to ensure delivery of the main Objective, including the assessment of CKT feasibility and the gap analysis of legal frameworks.
151. Financial management of the project has been highly satisfactory. Reports are adequately detailed and submitted on-time. While the project was rated moderately satisfactory for efficiency, this mandatory rating was triggered by the requirement for a two-year extension and belies the efficient delivery of Outputs since the PMU was fully formed in 2022.
152. Reporting has been consistent and of high quality, with quarterly reports and PIRs being submitted in a timely fashion. The PMU hold weekly internal meetings and once a month meets with the UNEP GEF C&W Task Manager to review progress against indicators. The Project Manager, who is based in the Netherlands, makes regular visits to the project countries. Ongoing monitoring of indicators could be improved as only minimal expenditure has been incurred here to date.
153. The project has adequate budget in place to achieve its ultimate Objective. However, government involvement has been checkered. In Tajikistan, the focal point has been strongly engaged having sent multiple letters to the UNEP GEF C&W unit regarding project Outputs. However because the current focal point was not put in place until after project design his priorities are not fully aligned with the that design. In particular the focal point places a clear emphasis on managing the multiple 'mini dumpsites' present throughout the country owing in part to their human health impact, while the project was designed with an emphasis on a single major site, Vakhsh. In Kyrgyzstan, there has been an absence of a consistent focal point since the start of the project.
154. With regard to factors affecting performance, the substantial delays incurred during project inception have posed a significant challenge. These have included the hiring of key staff including a fulltime Project Manager, the contracting of NDPs and the holding of Inception Workshops. Altogether this essential project management architecture was not in place until nearly two years after the project start date.
155. Since being established, the PMU has put in place a series measures that have facilitated progress against indicators. Most importantly this has included contracting of human resources appropriate for the scale and complexity of the project. Most critically, capable NDPs are in place in both countries. Both FSD and the Ozone Centre have in turn engaged NGOs whose relevant expertise supplements the NDPs in key areas, including community outreach and technical expertise. In both cases the roles of the NDPs could be better defined. In Tajikistan, FSD has taken on human resource management responsibilities that may not be fully consistent with its ToR and are overly ad hoc. In Kyrgyzstan, the Ozone Centre's de facto role includes occasional government representation.
156. The PMU has also put in place key software tools for managing the project. These include, importantly, a centralised project SharePoint folder accessible to the PMU. The folder includes most project documentation, though consistent use could be improved with certain important files (e.g. consultant ToRs) not always being available. The Project Tracker, a running tally of tasks and deadlines, is a useful and effective project management tool. Meeting minutes are consistently taken and stored on the server.

Strategic Questions

157. The Review Consultant ToR lists four 'strategic questions.' These questions are also provided above in the Review Methods section. Corresponding responses are provided below.
158. *SQ1: Will the project allow Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to comply with their obligations under the Stockholm Convention?*
159. SQ1 response: The project will likely allow Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to comply with their obligations under the Stockholm Convention by transforming regional capacity to manage POPs wastes. In the most probable scenario this will involve improved containment at existing sites and the introduction of regulatory changes. In a less probable but still possible scenario, it could involve the use of CKT in Kyrgyzstan and the use of mobile incineration in Tajikistan.
160. *SQ2: How will the project deal with the cancellation of the tender to supply equipment for supercritical water oxidation?*
161. SQ2 response: The project has a well articulated Plan B scenario which is basically proceeding as anticipated and in line with Basel Convention technical guidance. The use of CKT was identified as the most appropriate alternative during project design and was being explored at the time of the MTR. A third, and more likely option, is the improvement of existing containment facilities. Finally, a fourth option, mobile incineration, was not reviewed during project preparation but has been proposed by the government of Tajikistan. The PMU has been adequately responsive and has hired a third party consultant to assess the technology.
162. *SQ3: What exit strategy is needed to ensure any remaining waste is dealt with according to the Convention's guidelines?*
163. SQ3 response: The project design includes the development of regulatory modifications and the training of government staff. The project also includes the development and deployment of a disposal method in line with the Conventions. If the governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were to adopt the regulatory changes, important requirements for the management of POPs waste would be in place. Each of the disposal methods currently being considered would require that various logistical confirmations be addressed to support sustainability, however these are not insurmountable in the context of the current project.
164. *SQ4 What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?*
165. SQ4 response: The pandemic clearly adversely impacted the inception phase of the project causing delays with knock-on effects for procurement and contracting. While likely not the most significant factor in the termination of the SCWO procurement, the pandemic did play a major contributing role through the increase of costs. The impact of other delays attributable in part to the pandemic, such as contracting of NDPs and the Project Manager, were not made fully manifest until recently. It may therefore be the case that some frustration targeted at implementors for their current actions may in fact be better attributed to pandemic delays at inception.

GEF Portal Questions

166. In addition to strategic questions, the Review Consultant ToR lists five questions required for the GEF portal. These questions are also provided above in the Review Methods section. Corresponding responses are provided below.

167. *GQ1: What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets?*
168. GQ1 Response: The project has put in place the basic project infrastructure required to meet its Objective such as the contracting of key staff, NGOs and NDPs and the delivery of major Outputs including the CKT assessments, site investigations and legal gaps analysis. The project has not yet made measurable progress against GEF core indicator targets.
169. *GQ2: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program?*
170. GQ2 response: Government stakeholders have been difficult to engage in Kyrgyzstan. The government has been unable to provide a consistent project focal point. In Tajikistan a change in the project focal point after project design has resulted in conflicting priorities between the project document and the Tajikistan government. The project has been responsive. In the case of Kyrgyzstan the project has provided new focal points with updated information and made key project staff available for meetings. In Tajikistan a recent request for a new disposal technology (i.e. mobile incineration) was met with the hiring of a third-party technical consultant to provide a review. Community awareness efforts will begin more earnestly in the second half of the project.
171. *GQ3: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas?*
172. GQ3 response: A Gender Expert was contracted in 2022 for the development of a gender guidance document, which was finalized in March 2023, and gender seminar for the governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, IA, EA, NDPs and partner NGOs. Progress against gender indicators has been consistently tracked. Women are involved in multiple key roles in the EA, NDPs and partner NGOs.
173. *GQ4: What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?*
174. GQ4 response: The project has accurately tracked and managed the risks identified in the project document as part of its regular PIR submissions. This has included adjusting certain risks in response to conditions encountered during execution, including changing a risk associated with stakeholders' perception of technology from moderate to high. The risk associated with government adoption of environmental management plans has been consistently characterized as low in the PIR. Based on the limited engagement of the Kyrgyzstan government and the resistance to the proposed technology by the Tajikistan project focal point, this may be better characterized as moderate.
175. *GQ5: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables*
176. GQ5 response: The project has shared key knowledge management products with stakeholders as they have been developed. To date this has included a gender guidance, detailed site investigations, and a regulatory gap analysis.

Overall Project Rating

177. The evaluation office provides an Excel-based template for the calculation of the overall project rating. The template uses the values defined above against the various ratings criteria and outputs a single value. A summary table of that template is prevented below. The completed template is attached as Annex F.

Review criteria	Rating
Strategic Relevance (aggregate)	Satisfactory
Quality of Project Design (aggregate)	Satisfactory
Effectiveness (aggregate)	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Financial Management (aggregate)	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Monitoring and Reporting (aggregate)	Satisfactory
Sustainability (aggregate)	Moderately Unlikely
Factors Affecting Performance (aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Project Rating	Moderately Satisfactory

Table 16. Overall project rating

B. Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1:	There are benefits and costs associated with Internal Execution
Context/comment:	<p>There are clear benefits associated with internal execution. These include the shared use of UNEP’s servers and software clients (i.e. Teams, SharePoint), reporting mechanisms, and familiar work culture. It is very likely that these factors have been major contributors to the on-time and high-quality project reporting.</p> <p>There are also costs associated with internal execution. One significant cost is that UNEP’s administrative requirements may be overly onerous for use in day-to-day management of short-term complex projects. Challenges here include procurement (addressed further below) and contracting of consultant and NDPs. A separate cost relates to the lack of technical expertise in the subject area, resulting in a reliance on IA guidance and external consultants. Finally, while the EA maintains a regional office in Almaty all administrative procedures are managed by the ROE Geneva office. Initially the Geneva office also managed day-to-day operations directly. Geographically closer management would have been preferable.</p>

Lesson Learned #2:	Procurement of complex services requires more active negotiation and pricing in of contingency
Context/comment:	<p>The ToR for the SCWO procurement set out six distinct phases for the fixed price contract. These included a range of services from provision to transportation, installation and operation of the equipment. Negotiation with the provider was highly formalized and conducted primarily by email. General Atomics’ (GA) status as a US defense contractor requires a set of administrative and pricing requirements. Likewise UN procurement is a rigorous and well defined exercise. The iterative negotiation was prolonged and included significant cost increases outside of the available budget, largely for the purpose of pricing in contingency by a risk averse contractor.</p>

	<p>A face-to-face meeting between the UNEP GEF C&W and GA may have been more amenable to the identification of sticking points and minimal requirements than formalized remote negotiations. This would not have been possible 2020 owing to the pandemic but would have been feasible in the second half of 2021 or throughout 2022.</p> <p>Contingency could have been better priced into the project budget. This would in turn require the lowering of GEBs.</p>
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Lesson Learned #3:	Importance of ensuring consistent government involvement
Context/comment:	Government involvement has been checkered in both countries posing a risk to the project Objective. Representation has been inconsistent over the life of the project with regular changes in national focal points and subsequent challenges to the project’s shared vision. These challenges relate primarily to the selection of the disposal method (para. 125–129). The essential role of government in this project and moderate risk of their lack of involvement could have been better identified at the project design stage.

Lesson Learned #4:	Importance of clear ToRs negotiated in advance with NDPs
Context/comment:	The roles of NDPs could have been better articulated at project inception. A lack of shared understanding between the EA and the NDPs on the latter’s role has led to potentially avoidable tension.

Lesson Learned #5:	Future use of CKT in similar projects
Context/comment:	While reports completed by the CKT consultant identified some cement kilns in the region where co-processing of POPs wastes may have been technically feasible, further technical barriers were identified during peer-review resulting in inconclusive findings. In addition multiple and significant social or political barriers were present. CKT may be a viable option in other similar projects in the region with limited disposal options but may not be applicable in this case.

C. Recommendations

Critical

Recommendation #1:	The alternative scenario, results framework, workplan and budget should be reconstructed and presented to the PSC and GEF Secretariat
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project title and multiple Outputs no longer apply to the current direction of the project (Table 5). The overall Objective is attainable though a revised results framework and workplan with a two-year extension are required, owing to delays caused by external factors including the COVID-19 pandemic (paras. 68, 112, 129). Concrete progress in Tajikistan in particular is required to ensure continued government support (paras. 127, 153). The budget should be adjusted in response with UNEP ROE responsible for a larger proportion as the large procurement has been terminated (para. 111). The disposal options should be presented in a manner consistent with the waste hierarchy as per the Basel and Stockholm Conventions. The Project Document can then be updated if the PMU, in consult with the PSC and the GEF Secretariat, determines such revision is necessary.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project and Partners
Responsibility:	Russell Cobban, Wouter Pronk and Baurzhan Nassimullin

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q4 2023
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Important

Recommendation #2	Implementation arrangements should be revised to reflect the current roles of the IA, EA and NDPs
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	As the SCWO procurement has been terminated, UNEP GEF C&W's role should be adjusted accordingly in a manner consistent with the revised work plan (para. 111). The roles and scopes of work of the NDPs (FSD and the Ozone Centre) should be made more clear to avoid confusion and disagreement (paras. 139, 155). Ekois and Peshsaf's roles should be equally better defined and expanded (paras. 138–139) particularly in the context of their institutional knowledge (para. 54). Likewise the minor confusion in roles within the PMU could be clarified with updated and agreed upon ToRs.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	Wouter Pronk and Baurzhan Nassimullin
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q3 2023

Opportunity for Improvement

Recommendation #3	A short-term consultant (<1 month) should be contracted to develop a centralized file management system with different levels of access for different users
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The current project folder structure is not legible or logically organized. Project partners should be required to store key documents (e.g. assessments, reports, sign in sheets) in the project folder (paras. 33, 156).
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	Wouter Pronk and Baurzhan Nassimullin

List of Annexes¹³

- Annex A – Response to stakeholder comments received but not fully accepted by the Review Consultant
- Annex B – Mid Term Review TOR
- Annex C – Review Itinerary
- Annex D – Evaluation Framework
- Annex E – List of Documents Consulted
- Annex F – Brief CV of Consultant
- Annex G – Summary of Co-finance Information
- Annex H – Communication or Outreach Tools to Disseminate Results

Annex A – Response to stakeholder comments received but not fully accepted by the Review Consultant

Comment	Reviewer	Response
The reviewer noted apparent incongruencies between reported EA (19 % of EA budget) and project (7 % of project budget) expenditures.	1	These numbers are consistent with expenditure as the EA manages < 25 % of the budget.
Noted that the following statement is debatable: "As this procurement (iSCWO) has now been terminated, much of the project document is not immediately relevant to execution."	1	This statement was triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders
Noted that the following statement is debatable: "The use of SCWO has always been perceived by project stakeholders as presenting a high risk of failure. It was for this reason that the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel recommended the exploration of back up alternatives. When the SCWO procurement was ultimately terminated and the alternatives pursued, a substantial percentage of the project's time frame had been expended. "	1	This statement was triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer noted in executive summary that the project design should not be considered satisfactory in owing to a) disagreement about disposal methods and b) project delays.	2	Project design is assessed against objective criteria set out by the evaluation office and made fully available later in the document. The challenges noted by the reviewer are not included in the assessment of project design.
The reviewer noted disagreement with the Effectiveness rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory because of a) the low rate of expenditure and b) because the project had not yet destroyed any DDT.	2	For the evaluation office, rate of expenditure is assessed under efficiency note effectiveness. Regarding the lack of DDT destroyed, the project document does not set out destruction until the second half of the project.
With regard to financial management, the reviewer external intervention into the project management is required.	2	The review found that indeed project management might have benefitted from such an intervention in its first two years. However since the current Project Manager was contracted in March 2022 the project has made substantial gains. This finding was triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer introduces an administrative issue related to contracting.	2	The MTR has noted similar issues elsewhere and developed a recommendation accordingly. The point is noted but comes too late in the MTR to be validated by further interviews. The relevant recommendation regarding improved ToRs for NDPs and NGOs adequately addresses the concern.

The reviewer suggests that CKT is no longer being considered for the project	2	That CKT is still being considered was triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer noted that NDP's roles are already clearly defined in existing ToRs	3	The observation being contended was triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer noted co-benefits from CKT including a reduction in GHG emissions	4	This observation could not be triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer suggested a training on CKT be included in the recommendations	4	This level of detail with regard to project activities is better identified by the PMU than the MTR consultant
The reviewer suggested that an Outcome suggested from removal as part of the MTR not be removed	4	The Outcome in question was phrased as an Output and was redundant with Outcome 2
The reviewer notes that the private sector is interested in the project	4	The interest of the private sector has already been adequately characterized in the document (paras. 75 and 76)
The reviewer notes that CKT is allowed under the Basel and Stockholm Conventions	4	This point is already noted in paragraph 23
The reviewer notes that a different government agency would be a more appropriate focal point	5	The point was not raised in any interviews and was raised too late here to be triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.
The reviewer introduced a new request for a change in operation modalities	5	The point was not raised in any interviews and was raised too late here to be triangulated with 3 or more stakeholders.

Annex B – Mid Term Review ToR

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF project
Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic
and Tajikistan)**

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

(This section describes what is to be reviewed. Key parameters are: project timeframe, funding envelope, results framework and geographic scope)

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	Chemicals and Pollution Action	UNEP Division/Branch:	Economy Division/Chemicals and Health Branch
Expected Accomplishment(s):	3A, 3B and 3C	Programme of Work Output(s):	3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	Good health and well-being (SDG3) Clean and affordable energy (SDG7), Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG 12) Measures to combat climate change (SDG13)		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7 ¹⁴)	N/A (This is a GEF - 6 Project). We have identified core indicator targets during PIR. 9.1- 5,000 tons of Cat I POPs wastes undergoing treatment 9.4 - 2 national hazardous waste management strategies approved 11 – 150,000 people benefitted		
Dates of previous project phases:	NA	Status of future project phases:	NA

FROM THE PROJECT'S PIR REPORT (use latest version) :

Project Title:	Demonstration of non-thermal treatment of DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan)
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¹⁴This does not apply to Enabling Activities

Executing Agency:	UNEP Regional Office for Europe
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Project partners:	Swiss Fund for Mine Action FSD (Tajikistan), National Ozone Centre (Kyrgyzstan)
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Geographical Scope:	Regional
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Participating Countries:	Republic of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic
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GEF project ID:	9421	IMIS number*¹⁵:	
Focal Area(s):	Chemicals and Waste	GEF OP #:	Stockholm Convention.
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	Chemicals and Waste-2 Programme 3 Reduce the prevalence of harmful chemicals and waste and support the implementation of clean alternative technologies/substances	GEF approval date*:	12-Feb-20
UNEP approval date:	2-Mar-20	Date of first disbursement*:	14-Oct-20
Actual start date¹⁶:	16-Sep-20	Planned duration:	60 months
Intended completion date*:	30-Jun-25	Actual or Expected completion date:	TBD
Project Type:	FSP	GEF Allocation*:	USD 15,120,000
PPG GEF cost*:	USD 300,000	PPG co-financing*:	USD
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	USD 29,062,033	Total Cost*:	USD 44,182,033
Mid-term Review (planned date):	Q2 2023	Terminal Evaluation/Review (planned date):	1-Jun-26
Mid-term Review (actual date):	Q2 2023	No. of revisions*:	NA

¹⁵ Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer

¹⁶ Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases where a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	15 Nov 2022	Date of last Revision*:	NA
Disbursement as of 30 June [year]*:	USD 1,574,016	Date of planned financial closure*:	30-Dec-2025
Date of planned completion^{17*}:	30-Jun-25	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June [2022]¹⁸:	USD 78,293
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December [2022]	USD 152,740	Actual expenditures entered as of 31 December [2022]*:	USD 334,417.42
Leveraged financing.¹⁹			

2. Project Rationale

Global contaminants such as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are regulated by Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan became Parties to the Stockholm Convention on 21 May 2002 and 03 May 2005 respectively. The NIP for Kyrgyzstan was finalized in July 2006 and submitted to the Stockholm Convention Secretariat in the first half of 2013 whilst the NIP for Tajikistan was finalized in 2007.

The National Implementation Plans (NIPs) of both project countries identify significant stocks of waste POPs pesticides, including Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) that were accumulated during the Soviet era. Due to the lack of disposal facilities across FSU countries, the Soviet administration advocated burial of waste pesticides in polygons or dumpsites in countries across its territory. Since the collapse of the FSU many of these sites have fallen into disrepair resulting in various types of emissions impacting on human health and environmental systems locally and further afield. Baseline studies highlighted barriers to the environmentally sound management (ESM) of POPs waste which the project has been designed to address. It is evident that both countries require support to develop waste management infrastructure and the technical capacity for ESM of POPs through waste management. Additionally, there is a need to improve governance of hazardous waste management through guidance and legislation and provide capacity building amongst key institutions to allow better monitoring and enforcement. Furthermore, the project seeks to address the low awareness of POPs and their associated health risks and proper waste management and destruction of POPs amongst a range of stakeholders.

3. Project Results Framework

The projects results framework presented in the table below, displays an overview of the project's objectives, components, indicators, targets, and risks.

Project Outcome/ Output	Outcome/ Output level Indicators	Baseline	Targets and Monitoring Milestones	Means of Verification	Assumptions & Risks
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¹⁷ If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.

¹⁸ Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Project Manager

¹⁹ See above note on co-financing

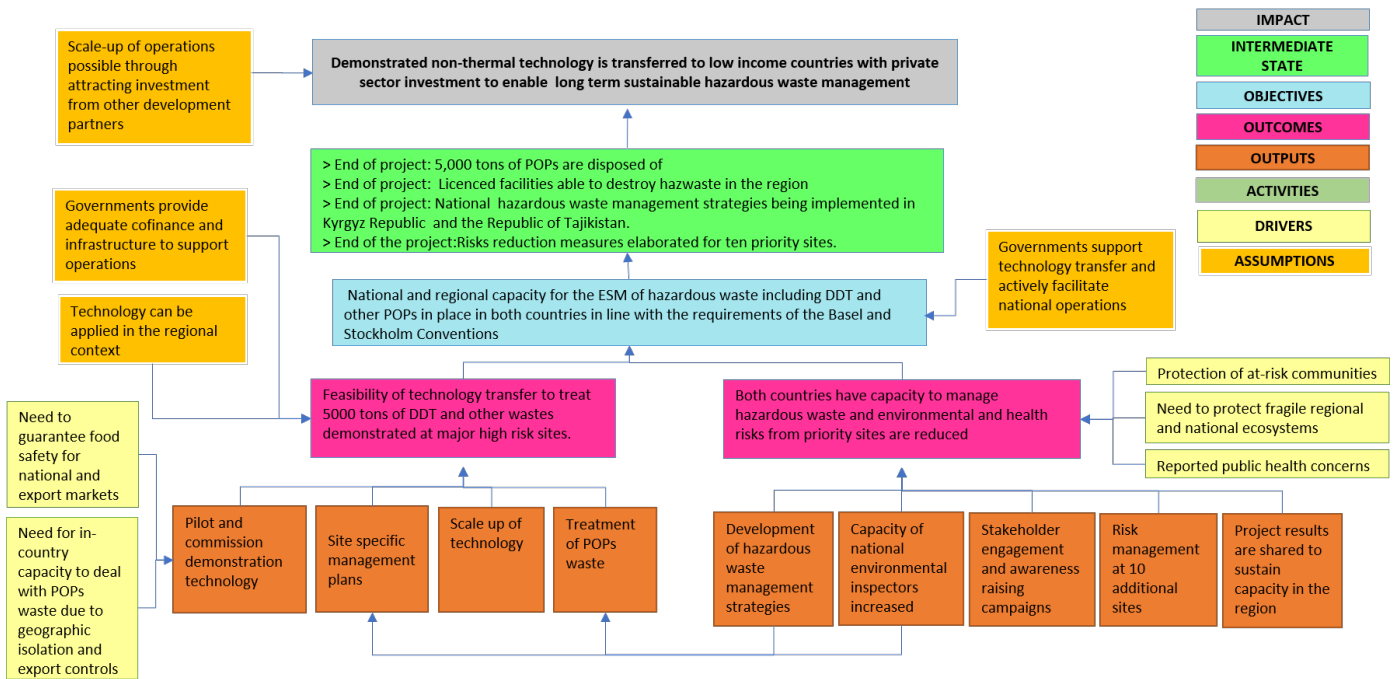
Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs					
<p>Outcome 1: Recipient governments manage DDT and other wastes at major high-risk sites in line with the Basel and Stockholm Conventions</p>	<p>Tons of DDT and other POPs waste destroyed in an environmentally sound manner</p>	<p>3,348 tons of Cat 1 wastes identified and quantified at Vakhsh, 2,254 at Suzak A during PPG</p> <p>Previous safeguarding initiatives at multiple sites in the two countries – 246 tons of additional Cat 1 wastes available for destruction at other sites in the project countries</p>	<p>End of project: 5,000 tons of Cat 1 POPs wastes undergoing treatment</p> <p>Risk reduction of 36,000 tons of Cat 2 and 3 wastes overlaying Cat 1 wastes (additional target)</p>	<p>Destruction reports</p>	<p>Both governments remain stable and partner agencies fully support the project, endorse clean-up plans, and import, and operation of equipment</p> <p>Lack of transparency and accountability relating to funds transfer</p> <p>Site investigations and quantifications are accurate</p>
	<p>Number of facilities licensed and equipped to ESM hazardous waste in Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan</p>	<p>No treatment facilities exist to treat wastes and exiting cement kilns not able to co-process wastes</p>	<p>Licensed facilities able to destroy hazardous waste in the region</p>	<p>Facilities licenses</p> <p>Monitoring/ lab reports</p>	<p>Lack of suitable company/organization to run the facility long-term</p> <p>Scale-up of operations possible through attracting investment from other development partners</p>
<p><u>Output 1.1:</u> Demonstration technology piloted and results used to confirm commissioning</p>	<p>Off-site SCWO test on simulated waste complete</p> <p>iSCWO pilot scale facility operational on 1 site</p>	<p>Disposal options analysis based on questionnaire survey, conducted according to FAO EMTK 6: a) long list of assessment of technologies for each waste category, b) detailed qualitative and technical assessment including performance criteria and costs.</p> <p>iSCWO supplied by General Atomics selected</p>	<p>Mid-term target: Preliminary POPs destruction testing completed in US</p> <p>On-site pilot testing of iSCWO completed to confirm treatment technology including emissions testing</p>	<p>Signed contract with General Atomics.</p> <p>Performance and emissions reports (General Atomics and third-party laboratory)</p> <p>Import permits</p> <p>Photos of installation</p> <p>Mission reports</p> <p>National environment inspection reports</p>	<p>Local infrastructure, power and labour resources are adequate for the needs of the pilot facility.</p> <p>Costs and procedures for import remain as planned and free of import charges</p> <p>Co-finance support from governments is sufficient to enable pilot testing on site</p> <p>iSCWO pilot is successful</p>
<p>Output 1.2 Site specific management plans disclosed and submitted to government for approval</p>	<p>Number of site-specific clean-up plans endorsed by governments</p>	<p>National capacity assessment completed. Site Investigations reports available for Vakhsh site, Suzak A</p> <p>Permitting at the Vakhsh site already allows intended treatment activities, Vakhsh is already a designated hazardous waste storage site</p>	<p>Midterm target: 2 site specific clean-up plans for all wastes</p>	<p>Site specific management plan documents*</p>	<p>Any relevant permits for waste management activities on the 2 sites are issued by governments</p> <p>Component 2 activities are completed in time</p>
<p>Output 1.3: Non-thermal technology is scaled up and site installations complete</p>	<p>Number of iSCWO installed and operational</p>	<p>iSCWO summary: Non-thermal, DE>99.999, DRE>99.9999 reported for DDT. Have been used to treat wide variety of POPs and other wastes. Only NaCl and water produced as by products</p>	<p><u>End of project:</u> iSCWO imported and installed in 2 countries</p>	<p>Import records</p>	<p>Necessary equipment to excavate and pre-treat waste is locally available</p> <p>Government provide necessary infrastructure</p>

			Power and water supply in place Solar farm commissioned	Installations and solar plant design	(access roads, power supply, water) Full scale iSCWO units are procured and imported in a timely manner iSCWO will be used to treat waste at one site then moved to the other.															
Output 1.4 Excavated POPs wastes are destroyed in an environmentally sound manner	Tons of Category I feedstock processed	Pre-treatment required to reduce particulate size to <0.5-1.0mm. This is completed through a process of gross and micro grinding. Diesel fuel is added to improve energy characteristics and water to make a slurry (8-9 times volume) and allow oxidation.	<u>End of project:</u> Pre-treatment and blending of Cat I wastes – Est 40,000 tons of liquid feedstock	QA/QC reports by government inspectors and NGO teams On-site lab reports	Pre-treatment method and technology function as intended at full size / capacity Capacity exists for adequate site management															
	Tons of Category II and III wastes contained	<p>Wastes identified at four sites:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Cat. II (tons)</th> <th>Cat. III (tons)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Vakhsh</td> <td>18,702</td> <td>10,295</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SZA</td> <td>3,134</td> <td>2655</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SZB</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>2044</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Village No.1</td> <td>504</td> <td>4900</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Cat. II (tons)	Cat. III (tons)	Vakhsh	18,702	10,295	SZA	3,134	2655	SZB	n/a	2044	Village No.1	504	4900	<u>End of project:</u> Containment and in-situ remediation of soil/ remaining waste as per sit-specific clean-up plan	Site remediation reports*	Capacity exists for adequate site management Budget is available and adequate to safely contain all excavated wastes
		Cat. II (tons)	Cat. III (tons)																	
Vakhsh	18,702	10,295																		
SZA	3,134	2655																		
SZB	n/a	2044																		
Village No.1	504	4900																		
Emissions levels kept below acceptable limits	<p>For category I wastes, potential dioxin emissions and destruction efficiency need to be monitored.</p> <p>For Category 2 and 3, potential leaching has to be monitored.</p>	Environmental monitoring throughout	Lab emission reports for Category 1 Soil reports for Category 2 and 3	Capacity for monitoring on-site and analysis off site can be provided as cofinance National inspectors trained under Component 2 (output 2.2) are available																
Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management																				
Outcome 2: Countries adopt policies and commit resources, technical skills and knowledge to manage hazardous waste in line with the requirements of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions	Number of trained national experts on hazardous waste management	<p>Lack of inspectors</p> <p>Some NGO and government experts from previous projects.</p>	<u>End of project target:</u> Environmental inspection protocols and annual reports 260 inspectors; 10 NGO staff; policy makers trained	Inspectors reports	<p>Existing inspectors are available to participate in training and able to translate learning into improvements in practices</p> <p>National legislation/ regulations updated to support inspection mandates</p>															
	Number of hazardous waste management strategies being implemented in both countries	<p>Incomplete legislative framework - Hazardous waste is treated in the same way as municipal and other types of wastes.</p> <p>No systematic national policy or regulations for separate treatment.</p> <p>Fragmented administrative responsibilities</p>	<p>2 national hazardous waste management strategies approved.</p> <p>Risks reduction measures elaborated for ten priority sites</p>	<p>Government Gazette or report</p> <p>National Steering Committee meeting minutes</p>	Preparedness of national governments to mainstream hazardous waste management into national policies and strategies															

	Number of individuals reporting activities to reduce risk and exposure	Communities mining waste sites and unaware of health risks	Behavioural change reported by at least 150 community members and policy makers Gender Action Plan implemented	KAP survey results Gender report to regional PSC (annual)*	Alternative behaviours for communities to avoid risks are feasible for people Health risks are too abstract for stakeholders to prioritize
<u>Output 2.1:</u> Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption	National hazardous waste management strategies developed in both countries	Regional Roadmap including the main and common elements of an environmentally sound management system for hazardous waste (including inventories, legal and regulatory frameworks, organization, destruction capacity innovation and prevention) Incomplete legislative framework	<u>Mid-point Target:</u> Advice for updating legislation submitted to government Strategy and Action Plan for ESM of hazardous waste management developed	National hazardous waste management strategy documents*	Support and engagement from the government departments mandated to draft legislation, to guide project consultants/ experts. Alignment with the Eurasian Customs Union requirements is compatible with international best standards and the BRS requirements.
<u>Output 2.2</u> Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring increased	Number of inspectors trained and aware of international standards	Industrial permitting and monitoring measures not in line with international best practices including BRS requirements Monitoring capacity is limited in terms of technical understanding and persons available with responsibility for hazardous waste monitoring	<u>End of project target:</u> 260 inspectors trained	Training manuals* Training report* Post-training assessment	National legislation and inspectors' mandate is updated to meet BRS and international best practice National environmental inspectors exist and can visit facilities
<u>Output 2.3:</u> Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted	Number of national awareness raising campaigns Number of events for communities living in close proximity to DDT waste sites	Biom (Kyrgyzstan) and Kumsangir Aarhus Centre (Tajikistan) have conducted modest national awareness raising campaigns under FAO 040 and DDT II projects.	<u>Mid- Point Target:</u> Training of national NGOs, community organizations and political decision makers 2 national campaign strategies developed <u>End of project:</u> At least 20 media stories on POPs per country At least 80 community events at 10 high risk sites	National strategies Awareness raising materials* Media clips/ cuttings Consultation records	Awareness materials previously developed by Biom and Kumsangir Aarhus Centre will be available to use National and regional media and journalists are interested and cover the issue
<u>Output 2.4:</u> Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started	Number of sites with risk management plans in place Number of sites with risk mitigation measures	51 potential sites identified across Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan under EC040, of which 32 REAs completed. FSD has proposed risk management measures at two sites (Oykamar and Village No. 1 in Tajikistan) but limited funding available to initiate actions. Suzak B site investigation report done during PPG. Confirms	<u>Mid-term target:</u> Prioritization of top 10 risk sites <u>End of project target:</u> Further eight management plans for priority sites in both countries.	National PSC reports Site management plans*	Project partners are able to engage local communities and get buy-in for management plans. Access to the sites is granted by the owners

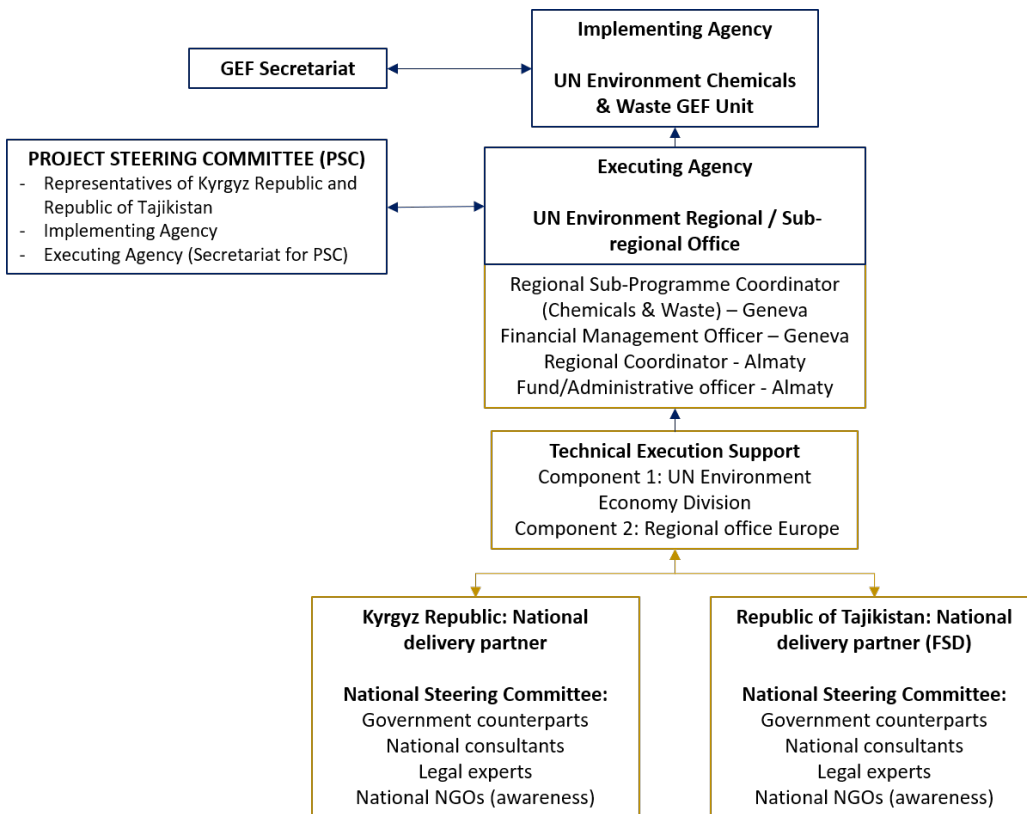
		contamination above health limits although with no POPs above Stockholm Convention limits.	2 national Cat II and III waste management plans Risk mitigation actions undertaken at minimum 3 sites (e.g. transport of Cat II and II wastes to Suzak A and Vakhsh; FSD intervention at Oykamar and/or Village No 1)	National waste plans* Site photographs PSC meeting reports and documentation.	Necessary transport permits are issued by national and local authorities Local contractors exist to manage and transport low level wastes
<u>Output 2.5:</u> Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders	Number of development partners engaged with scale up of project results	World Bank project in Kazakhstan to develop a hazardous waste incinerator was cancelled in 2016 (GEF ID 3982)	<u>Mid-term target:</u> Lessons and perspectives publication on demonstration pilot results and findings <u>End of project:</u> Exit/ investment strategy developed with at least 5 banks and other regional development partners	Number of lessons learnt publications* and website BRS COP side event report Consultation meeting reports (at least 3) Exit strategy finalized	Demonstration project is successful and destruction technology is established in the project A regional competent and reliable management structure is in place for the operation of the technology Development partners and other donors are engaged and provide support to sustain the facility into the future.
Component 3: Monitoring & Evaluation					
<u>Output 3.1</u> Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project execution <u>Output 3.2</u> Midterm and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders	Number of monitoring reports	None	Mid term: 10 quarterly reports; MTR report 3 regional SC meetings 2 PIR reports <u>End of project:</u> 20 quarterly reports 5 PIR reports Terminal Evaluation 5 regional SC meetings	Reports and records	EA is adequately staffed and technically capable of producing project reports Adequate technical support by technical assistance consultants

Theory of Change



4. Executing Arrangements

The organigram diagram below shows the executing arrangements of the project.



Implementing Agency (IA): The GEF Unit in the Economy Division of UN Environment serves as the IA. The IA is responsible for overall supervision of the project and oversees its progress through the monitoring and evaluation of activities and through progress reports. The IA reports on the project implementation progress to the GEF and takes part in the PSC. The IA provides guidance and oversight of project execution by the EA including through the review and approval of work plans, budget allocations and budget revisions proposed by the EA. The IA is also responsible for overseeing and managing the major destruction technology procurements, in cooperation with UN procurement services in Nairobi and/or New York.

Project Steering Committee (PSC): The PSC has been established and carries out the function of a Project Board. The PSC consists of representatives of the beneficiary countries, the IA and the EA acting as Secretariat for the PSC. The role of the PSC is to:

- Oversee the project;
- Provide overall guidance and ensure coordination among all parties;
- Provide overall supervision for project implementation;
- Approve the annual work plan and budget;
- Oversee the implementation of corrective actions;
- Enhance synergy between the project and other ongoing initiatives related to hazardous waste management in the region.

Executing Agency (EA): The UN Environment Regional Office for Europe and its Sub-Regional Office in Almaty serve as the EA for the project. The EA reports on the project implementation progress to the IA (including those activities executed by the Executing Partners) and organizes and acts as Secretariat to the PSC. The EA ensures that all activities, including procurement of goods and services, are carried out in strict compliance with the rules and procedures of UN Environment and GEF, and ensures coordination between the countries and consistent execution and reporting of national project activities.

The EA is responsible for, inter alia, the following required activities to achieve the project objectives, outputs and outcomes:

- Establishing, hosting and supervising the project management team;
- Acting as Secretariat for the PSC;
- Ensuring that the project is executed according to the agreed work plan and budget;
- Review and submit required reporting obligations to the IA, including quarterly expenditure and progress reports and annual Project Implementation report (PIR);
- Ensuring all procurement is done in compliance with GEF Agency standards;
- Provide project and financial management including producing periodic monitoring reports, legal instruments and procurement;
- Ensure programmatic coordination between the two countries and with other initiatives in the region;
- Ensure visibility of the project;
- Support technical staff and activities;
- Communicating with and disseminating information to the National Delivery Partners and other stakeholders.

Project coordination and reporting functions are delivered by the Regional Coordinator based in the Almaty office. Financial management including procurement, are provided by the UN Environment Regional Office

for Europe, based in Geneva, allowing additional oversight and coordination with the Implementing Agency for major procurement including the destruction technology.

National Steering Committees: The beneficiary countries have established national steering committees to ensure efficient project delivery with all relevant national stakeholders. Countries have designated a National Focal Point during the inception phase, to act as the liaison between the government, the EA and project partners. The National Focal Point is fully involved in project delivery, including the selection of the national consultants and experts, advising on the development of the project EMPs, and ensuring alignment with national regulations including approval of EIA or equivalent and the issuance of environmental and other permits required for the operation of the project sites. The National Steering Committee and Focal Point also facilitate collaboration of the project with other country initiatives, stakeholders and institutions, for example national chemical management coordinating committees. Special attention is given in both countries to overcoming fragmentation across sectors in decision making related to project's goals and activities; and to supporting regional coordination on hazardous waste management issues to contribute towards the development of regional hazardous waste management capacity.

National Delivery Partners deliver local activities such as national meetings, procurement of local equipment and national-level contracts (together with the UN Environment procurement officer), and recruitment, contracting and payment of national consultants and teams working on the sites. In the case of Tajikistan, this also allows the project to comply with the requirement to register the project with a national organization. National Delivery Partners will be sub-contracted by the Executing Agency and report directly to the regional project officer based in Almaty. The national partners will be supported by the Executing Agency for all administrative and coordination issues; and by the international technical assistance consultants for Components 1 and 2.

An assessment of potential partners was initiated during the PPG phase based on the following criteria:

- High level of financial management capacity and transparency with sound financial accounting system and project auditing in place;
- Efficient processes for procurement of relatively low-value goods and services;
- Relevant technical experience in community-based campaigns and vulnerable group analysis;
- Relevant technical expertise on non-thermal and hazardous waste destruction, initially, iSCWO projects and access to an international network of experts;
- Able to play a neutral role and not to sit on the Project Steering Committee

The FSD was already registered with the relevant authorities in Tajikistan for activities related to hazardous waste management and following consultation with the CEP was confirmed as the National Delivery Partner (please also refer to PPG report for details on consultations with the CEP confirming this approach).

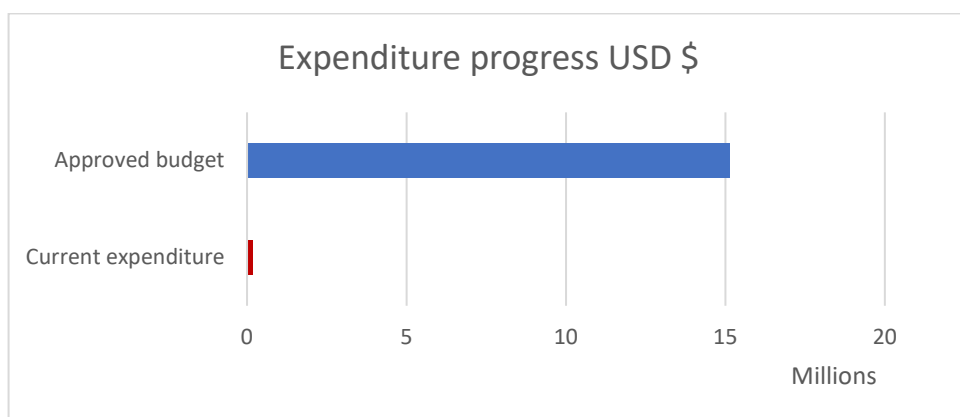
For the Kyrgyz Republic, the selection of the Ozone Centre as the National Delivery Partner was finalized during the inception phase of the project.

5. Project Cost and Financing

The following numbers present the budget and expenditure figures of this project:

- GEF Grant Amount: USD \$ 15,120,000
- Co-Financing: USD \$ 29,062,033
- Cumulative amount spent Q4 2022: USD \$ 334,417
- Cumulative unspent balance to-date: USD \$ 14,785,583

The Graph below shows the expenditure progress for the project.



The following table presents the different co-finance sources for the project defined at PPG stage:

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
Recipient Government	Ministry of Environment Kyrgyz Republic	In-Kind	5,750,000
Recipient Government	Committee for Environmental Protection Tajikistan	In-Kind	5,750,000
GEF Agency	UN Environment Regional Office for Europe	Grants	1,583,333
GEF Agency	UN Environment Regional Office for Europe	In-Kind	1,275,000
Private Sector	General Atomics	Grants	14,000,000
Private Sector	General Atomics	In-Kind	275,000

CSO	Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD)	Grants	408,700
CSO	Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD)	In-Kind	20,000
Total Co-financing			29,062,033

6. Implementation Issues

The project has faced the following implementation issues which have been resolved or the project is in the process of resolving:

1. Difficulties and delays caused by COVID-19
2. The project was delayed for approximately 1 year as there were difficulties in hiring an appropriately qualified and experienced project manager at EA level
3. The initial concept and title of the project centered on the non-thermal treatment of POPs. Comments made by the GEF STAP committee review on the PIF mandated a contingency solution to Super Critical Water Oxidation (SCWO) which was the favored technology. Accordingly, development of the alternative scenario in the project document included an analysis of disposal technologies highlighted in the Stockholm Convention that included a variety of possibilities including thermal alternatives. Cancellation of the tender for the provision of SCWO was made following several months of negotiations between the technology provider, the UNON procurement unit and the UNEP GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit. Following the tender cancellation, a 'Plan B' involving co-processing of POPs wastes using cement kiln technology was approved for consideration by the GEF subject to the fulfillment overall analysis of the Plan B.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy²⁰ and the UNEP Programme Manual²¹, the Mid-Term Review is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTR will assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and supporting their sustainability.

8. Key Review Principles

Mid-Term review findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

As this Review is being undertaken at the mid-point of project implementation, particular attention will be given to identifying implementation challenges and risks to achieving the expected project objectives and sustainability, which will support potential course correction. Possible questions to be considered include:

- Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?
- Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?
- Are results statements in keeping with both UNEP and GEF definitions (e.g. outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)

²⁰ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

²¹ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

- Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?
- Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting in the annual PIR)?
- Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?
- Have plans for inclusivity (human rights, gender considerations, disability inclusion etc) been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?
- Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?
- Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end, being incorporated in the project implementation?
- Have recommendations from previous performance assessments (where they exist) been appropriately addressed?
- (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?
- What corrective action is needed at this mid-point for the project to optimise its effectiveness?

A Mid-Term Review is a *formative assessment*, which requires that the consultant(s) go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance is and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance is as it is. (i.e. what is contributing to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project at the mid-point and the recommendations that support adaptive management for the remainder of the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations/reviews. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Partners and key project Stakeholders. A key aim of the Mid-Term Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff, the Executing Agency and key project stakeholders. The Review Consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. There may be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The Task Manager will plan with the Review Consultant which audiences to target and the easiest and most effective way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation. Draft and final versions of the Main Review Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Task Manager and a copy of the final version will be submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office.

9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**²² listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make

²² The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the MTR.

Q1: Will the project allow Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to comply with their obligations under the Stockholm Convention?

Q2: How will the project deal with the cancellation of the tender to supply equipment for supercritical water oxidation?

Q3: What exit strategy is needed to ensure any remaining waste is dealt with according to the Convention's guidelines?

Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a **summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report**:

- a) Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:
What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets? *(For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided²³).*
- b) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:
What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
- c) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:
What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
- d) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:
What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and any measures taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
- e) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:
What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions. *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

10. Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-G below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1. A weightings table will be provided in excel format (see note in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating.

A. Strategic Relevance

²³ This does not apply to Enabling Activities

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Review will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy²⁴ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building²⁵ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence²⁶

²⁴ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

²⁵ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

²⁶ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization²⁷, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed during the review inception phase in order to highlight any design features that may affect project implementation and which should be assessed during the Mid Term Review. The UNEP Evaluation Office offers a tool to structure this assessment of design quality (the Reviewer may have an alternative tool). When this tool is used, ratings are attributed to identified sub-criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating²⁸ should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

C. Effectiveness

The Review will assess effectiveness across three dimensions: availability of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and, where appropriate and feasible, likelihood of impact. At the mid-point more emphasis is placed on performance at the output and outcome levels, but observations about likelihood of impact may be helpful for course correction or adjusting the emphasis of the project's efforts (these adjustments should be reflected in the recommendations made in the Main Review report).

i. Availability of Outputs²⁹

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

²⁷ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

²⁸ In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

²⁹ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes³⁰

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ³¹ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. Where possible, the Review should report evidence of attribution, contribution or credible association between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

It is noted that at the project's mid-point, any assessment of the likelihood of impact is challenging. Below is the guidance provided for Terminal Reviews, which may still provide some insights relevant to insights available at the mid-point.

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project reviews is outlined in a guidance note and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role³² or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration

³⁰ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

³¹ UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during a review will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the Review.

³² The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms

component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Review will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

D. Financial Management

Under financial management the Mid-Term Review will assess: a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. Any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. Expenditure should be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget.

Ratings should be provided for three sub-categories (*adherence, completeness and communication*), as assessed at the mid-point: i) the Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies; ii) the Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner and iii) the Review will assess the level of communication between the Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

E. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. The Review will assess the *cost-effectiveness and timeliness* of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximize results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project is being implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches. The Review will also assess ways in which potential project extensions can be avoided through stronger project management.

The Review will give special attention to efforts being made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities³³ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

F. Monitoring and Reporting

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

³³ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART³⁴ results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system is operational and facilitates the timely tracking of results and progress towards project milestones and targets throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it is being used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring are being used to support this activity.

The performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets should be reviewed. For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the Project Manager. Donors may have specific reporting requirements and copies of reports will be made available by the Project Manager. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and Donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Where corrective action is indicated in any project reports (e.g. as an identified risk), the Review Consultant will record whether this action has been taken.

G. Sustainability

Sustainability³⁵ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of the project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that *are likely* to undermine or contribute to the endurance of benefits at

³⁴ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

³⁵ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

the outcome level. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

The Review will ascertain that the project has put in place *an appropriate exit strategy* and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The Review Consultant will consider: a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards, b) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained and c) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

H. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other review criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the Review Criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the reviewed project should be given in this section.)

i. Preparation and Readiness

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project. The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements.

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' may refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP as Implementing Agency. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program should be reviewed. This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment³⁶.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the Review will consider the extent to which *project design, the implementation that underpins effectiveness and monitoring* have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

³⁶The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening, risk assessment and management (avoidance or mitigation) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements³⁷ were met to: screen proposed projects for any safeguarding issues; conduct sound environmental and social risk assessments; identify and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, mitigate, environmental, social and economic risks; apply appropriate environmental and social measures to minimize any potential risks and harm to intended beneficiaries and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project is minimising UNEP's environmental footprint.

The Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and any measures taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. This ownership should adequately represent the needs and interests of all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Review will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice;

³⁷ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Mid-Term Review will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the Review Consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings.

Where applicable, the Review Consultant should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Review will be based on the following: [This section should be edited for each Review]

- (a) **A desk review** of:
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia:
 - Project Document and Appendices
 - Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
 - Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.
- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
 - UNEP Task Manager (TM) and team members;
 - Representatives of Executing Agencies and national governments;
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).
- (c) **Field visits:** Not applicable, the meetings to be organized virtually. If required, option for field visit will be explored by the UNEP (IA)
- (d) **Other data collection tools:** If needed, to be decided by the Review Consultant at the inception phase

11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

18. The Review Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 3 for guidance on structure and content) containing confirmation of the results framework and Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
- **Draft and Final Review Reports:** (see Annex 4 for guidance on structure and content) containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings

organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

Review of the Draft Review Report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Task Manager will share the cleared draft report with key project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Task Manager for consolidation. The Task Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

At the end of the review process and based on the findings in the Review Report, the Task Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate **Lessons Learned**.

12. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Task Manager Russell Cobban in consultation with the Portfolio Manager Ludovic Bernaudat, the Fund Management Officer, Anuradha Shenoy. The consultant will liaise with the Task Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders (with assistance from the Executing Agency), organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the Review Consultants to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 5 months [1st April to 31st August 2023] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including developing and/or evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of POPs and hazardous waste is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in Russian is desirable but not mandatory. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Task Manager, for overall management of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Review Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

13. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report	15 Apr 2023
Review Mission	Not applicable
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	30 Apr 2023

PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	26 May 2023
Draft Report to Task Manager	09 June 2023
Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	23 June 2023
Final Main Review Report prepared for and submitted UNEP (IA) review	15 July 2023
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	31 July 2023
Deck of presentation submitted to UNEP after all inputs covered	31 July 2023

14. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant(s) will be selected and recruited by the Task Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Task Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per annex I document #9</i>)	33%
Approved Draft Main Review Report (<i>as per annex I document #10</i>)	34%
Approved Final Main Review Report and presentation	33%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Task Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, Anubis, SharePoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report.

In case the consultant(s) are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the Task Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch/Unit until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to the Task Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize

the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

Annex 1: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Review

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the Evaluation Office (janet.wildish@un.org / fabio.fiscaro@un.org), are intended to help Task Managers and Review Consultants to produce review products that are consistent with each other. This suite of documents is also intended to make the review process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the review needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the review process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Task Manager and the Review Consultant in order to produce review reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link provided by the Evaluation Office during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the review.

List of Tools, templates and guidance Notes available:

Document #	Name
1	00_Tools Description and Mapping (Word File)
2	00a_UNEP Glossary Results Definitions (PDF file)
3	00b_List of Documents Needed for Reviews (Word File)
4	01 Review Criteria (Word File)
5	02_Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix (Word File)
6	03_Review Ratings Table ONLY (Word File)
7	04_Weighed Ratings Table (Excel File)
8	05_Project Identification Table ONLY (Word File)
9	06_Inception Report Structure and Contents (Word File)
10	07_Main Review Report Structure and Contents (Word File)
11	08_TOC Reformulation Justification Table ONLY (Word File)
12	09_Quality of Project Design Assessment (Word File)
13	09a Quality of Project Design Assessment Template.xlsx (Excel File)
14	10_Stakeholder Analysis Guidance Note (Word File)
15	11_Gender Methods Note for Consultants (Word File)
16	12_Safeguards Methods Note for Consultants (Word File)
17	13_Use of Theory of Change in Project Reviews (Word File)
18	14_Financial Tables (Word File)
19	15_Likelihood of Impact.xlsm (Excel File)
20	15a_Likelihood of impact Test Case (Excel File)
21	16_Recommendations Quality Guidance Note (Word File)
22	16a_In Report Template Presenting Recommendations and Lesson Learned (Word File)
23	17_Recommendation Implementation Plan Template (Word File)
24	18_Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Review Report (Word File)

Annex 2: Review Criteria and Ratings Table

The Review should provide individual ratings for the review criteria described in the table below. A suite of support tools, templates and guidance notes is available from the Evaluation Office to support the assessment of performance against these criteria (contact: janet.wildish@un.org / fabio.fisicaro@un.org)

Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). *Sustainability* and *Likelihood of Impact* are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU). A Criteria Ratings Matrix is available, within the suite of tools, to support a common interpretation of points on the scale for each review criterion. The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating.

In the Conclusions section of the Main Review Report, ratings will be presented together in a table, with a brief justification for each rating, cross-referenced to findings in the main body of the report (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Project Performance Ratings Table

Criterion <i>(Once the ratings have been determined, enter the rating for each sub-category into the Weighted Ratings Table and the aggregated scores will be automatically calculated, as well as the Overall Project Performance Rating. Note that for items B, C and F the rating needs to be entered at the level of the whole category).</i>	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance		HS → HU
1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities		HS → HU
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities		HS → HU
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities		HS → HU
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions		HS → HU
B. Quality of Project Design		HS → HU
C. Effectiveness		HS → HU
1. Availability of outputs		HS → HU
2. Achievement of project outcomes		HS → HU
3. Likelihood of impact		HL → HU
D. Financial Management		HS → HU
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures		HS → HU
2. Completeness of project financial information		HS → HU
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS → HU
E. Efficiency		HS → HU
F. Monitoring and Reporting		HS → HU
1. Monitoring design and budgeting		HS → HU
2. Monitoring of project implementation		HS → HU
3. Project reporting		

Criterion <i>(Once the ratings have been determined, enter the rating for each sub-category into the Weighted Ratings Table and the aggregated scores will be automatically calculated, as well as the Overall Project Performance Rating. Note that for items B, C and F the rating needs to be entered at the level of the whole category).</i>	Summary Assessment	Rating
G. Sustainability <i>(the overall rating for Sustainability will be the lowest rating among the three sub-categories)</i>		HL → HU
<i>1. Socio-political sustainability</i>		HL → HU
<i>2. Financial sustainability</i>		HL → HU
<i>3. Institutional sustainability</i>		HL → HU
H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues ³⁸		HS → HU
<i>1. Preparation and readiness</i>		HS → HU
<i>2. Quality of project management and supervision</i> ³⁹		HS → HU
<i>2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:</i>		HS → HU
<i>2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:</i>		HS → HU
<i>3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation</i>		HS → HU
<i>4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality</i>		HS → HU
<i>5. Environmental and social safeguards</i>		HS → HU
<i>6. Country ownership and driven-ness</i>		HS → HU
<i>7. Communication and public awareness</i>		HS → HU
Overall Project Rating		HS → HU

³⁸ While ratings are required for each of these factors individually, they should be discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting issues as they relate to other criteria. Note that catalytic role, replication and scaling up are expected to be discussed under Effectiveness if they are a relevant part of the TOC.

³⁹ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP, as the Implementing Agency. Comments and a rating should be provided for both types of supervision and the overall rating for this sub-category is calculated as a simple average of the two.

Annex 3: Guidance on the Structure and Contents of the Mid Term Review Inception Report

(NOTE: This report should be written as original text and not copied from the TOR)

See the SharePoint link shared with you containing a suite of tools, templates and guidance notes. Please make a fresh download for every new Terminal Review as we update these materials regularly.

Section	Notes	Data Sources	Recommended no. pages
Preliminary pages	Review and complete (where necessary) the Project Identification Table that was in the Terms of Reference.	TOR, ProDoc, PM	1
1. Introduction	<p><i>Summarise:</i></p> <p>Purpose and scope of the review (<i>i.e. learning/accountability and the project boundaries the review covers e.g. timeframe, funding envelope etc</i>)</p> <p>Project problem statement and justification for the intervention.</p> <p>Institutional context of the project (<i>MTS, POW, Division/Branch, umbrella etc</i>)</p> <p>Target audience for the review findings.</p>	TOR and ProDoc	1
2. Project outputs and outcomes	Confirm and present the formulation of planned project outputs and expected outcomes. The project should be assessed against its intended results, but these may need to be rephrased, re-aligned etc to make them consistent with UNEP results definitions ⁴⁰ and to create the Theory of Change (TOC). <i>Where the articulation of the project's results framework, including outputs, outcomes, long term impacts and objectives/goals, needs to be revised, a simple table should be provided showing the original version and the</i>	ProDoc, formal Revision Documents ⁴¹ , consultation with Project Manager (PM)	1 / 2

⁴⁰ UNEP, 2019, Glossary of Results Definitions

⁴¹ Formal revisions can be evidenced through ProDoc revisions, GEF PIRs, Steering Committee meeting minutes, Recommendation Implementation Plan from an MTR/MTE etc.

	<p><i>revisions proposed for use in the review (see sample table below)</i></p> <p>SPECIFY WHICH GEF CORE INDICATOR TARGETS WERE IDENTIFIED AT CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL (For projects approved prior to GEF-7 these will be identified retrospectively and progress against them assessed).</p>		
3. Review of quality of project design	<p>Complete the template for assessment of Project Design Quality, including section ratings, and present as an annex (<i>template available</i>)</p> <p>Summarise the project design strengths and weaknesses within the body of the inception report.</p>	Project document and formal Revision Documents.	1-page narrative and completed assessment of PDQ template
4. Stakeholder analysis⁴²	<p>Identify key stakeholder groups and provide an analysis of the levels of influence and interest each stakeholder group has over the project outcomes. Give due attention to gender and under-represented/marginalised groups. (<i>guidance note available</i>)</p>	Project document Project preparation phase. PM	1
5. Theory of Change	<p>The Project Design document should have a TOC. Review, revise and reconstruct, as necessary, the TOC at Review Inception⁴³ (<i>TOC at Review Inception</i>) based on project documentation and formal Revision Documents.</p> <p>Present this TOC as a one-page diagram, where possible, and explain it with a narrative, including a</p>	Project document narrative, logical framework and budget tables. Other project	Diagram and up to 2 pages of narrative

⁴² Evaluation Office of UNEP identifies stakeholders broadly as all those who are affected by, or who could affect (positively or negatively) the project's results. At a disaggregated level key groups should be identified, such as: implementing partners; government officials and duty bearers (e.g. national focal points, coordinators); civil society leaders (e.g. associations and networks) and beneficiaries (e.g. households, tradespeople, disadvantaged groups, members of civil society etc.).

⁴³The project's *TOC at Review Inception* is prepared during the inception phase of the review and refined during the review process to become the *TOC at Review*. For the *TOC at Review Inception* the review team will need to examine the result statements and their causal logic from the project logframe and the drivers and assumptions from the narrative sections from the ProDoc (in particular from the critical success factors and risks sections). Stakeholder roles may be available from the description of the project intervention and the stakeholder and partner analysis sections.

	<p>discussion of the assumptions and drivers (guidance note and samples available). Identify aspects of the <i>TOC at Review Inception</i> that need to be explored further during the Review process with the project team and stakeholders.</p> <p>Note if the needs of different groups (vulnerable, gender groups, those living with disabilities etc) need to be reflected in the TOC</p> <p>Identify any key literature/seminal texts that establish cause and effect relationships for this kind of intervention at higher results levels (e.g. benefits of introducing unleaded fuel)</p>	<p>related documents.</p>	
<p>6. Review methods</p>	<p>Describe all review methods (<i>especially how sites/countries will be selected for field visits or case studies; how any surveys will be administered; how findings will be analysed etc</i>)</p> <p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability, disability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p> <p>Summarise data sources/groups of respondents and methods of data collection to be used with each (<i>e.g. skype, survey, site visit etc</i>)</p> <p>Create a review framework that includes detailed review questions linked to data sources. Note that the Evaluation Office provides a matrix for rating each of its review criteria. Include any new questions raised by review of Project Design Quality and TOC analysis. Present this as a table/matrix in the annex (samples available)</p> <p>Design draft data collection tools and present in the annex (<i>e.g. interview schedules, questionnaires etc</i>)</p>	<p>Review of all project documents.</p>	<p>1-page narrative. The review framework as a matrix and draft data collection tools as annexes.</p>

7. Team roles and responsibilities	Describe the roles and responsibilities among the Review Team, where appropriate		½
8. Review schedule	Provide a revised timeline for the overall review (<i>dates of travel, where appropriate, and key review milestones</i>) Tentative programme for site/country visits, where appropriate.	Discussion with PM on logistics	½ (table)
9. Learning, communication and outreach	Describe the approach and methods that will be used to promote reflection and learning through the review process (<i>e.g. opportunities for feedback to stakeholders; translation needs, etc.</i>)	Discussions with the PM	½
TOTAL NARRATIVE PAGES			8-12 pages, plus annexes
Annexes (to be provided by the Review Consultant)	A - Review Framework B - Draft data collection tools C - Completed assessment of the Project Design Quality D - List of documents and individuals to be consulted during the main review phase E - List of individuals and documents consulted for the inception report		

Annex 4: Guidance on the Structure and Contents of the Main Mid Term Review Report

*NOTE: The final product is called a **Review Report** (and not an Evaluation Report). Review Consultants are kindly advised to refer the reader to paragraphs in different parts of the report instead of repeating material.*

Please refer to the “Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Review Report” for the report template.

See the SharePoint link shared with you containing a suite of tools, templates and guidance notes. Please make a fresh download for every new Terminal Review as we update these materials regularly.

<p>Preliminaries</p>	<p><i>Title page</i> – Name and number of the reviewed project, type of review (mid-term or terminal), month/year review report completed, UNEP logo. Include an appropriate cover page image.</p> <p><i>Disclaimer text to be included</i> – “This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Mid-Term Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's mid-point. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.”</p> <p><i>Acknowledgements</i> – This is a maximum of two paragraphs. At the end of acknowledgements name the Project Manager and Fund Management Officer.</p> <p><i>Short biography of the consultant(s)</i> – giving relevant detail of experience and qualifications that make the consultant a suitable candidate for having undertaken the work. (Max 1 paragraph)</p> <p><i>Contents page</i> – including chapters, tables and annexes</p> <p><i>Abbreviations table</i> – only use abbreviations for an item that occurs more than 3 times within the report. Introduce each abbreviation on first use and ensure it is in the table. Where an abbreviation has not been used recently in the text, provide its full version again. The Executive Summary should be written with <u>no abbreviations</u>.</p> <p><i>Paragraph numbering</i> – All paragraphs should be numbered, starting from the Executive Summary</p> <p><i>Header/footer</i> – Name of reviewed project, type of review and month/year review report completed. Page numbers, header and footer do not appear on the title page</p> <p><i>Font</i> – Roboto 10</p> <p><i>(Cover page, prelims and style sheet/Main Review Report template available)</i></p>
<p>Project Identification Table</p>	<p>An updated version of the Project Identification Table</p>
<p>Executive Summary <i>(Kindly avoid all abbreviations in the Executive Summary)</i></p>	<p>The Executive Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main review product. It should include a concise overview of the review object; clear summary of the review objectives and scope; overall review rating of the project performance and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to</p>

<p><i>Start numbering paragraphs from the Executive Summary.</i></p>	<p>where the review ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic review questions) and selected lessons learned and recommendations. (Max 4 pages).</p>
<p>I. Project Overview <i>(describe the Evaluand)</i></p>	
	<p>Provide an overview of the project, covering, <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its institutional context within UNEP (where managed from etc) • implementation structure (with diagram) • the problem/issue the project aims to address • project parameters for the review (start and end date; geographic reach; total budget etc) • project results framework - Theory of Change diagram⁴⁴ to be included under Review findings below (<i>justify any revisions to the formulation of results statements to conform to UNEP definitions and/or international standards</i>) • description of targeted groups/stakeholders and their relationship with the project (including, stakeholder analysis diagram) • any major and agreed changes to the project (e.g. formal revisions, additional funding etc) • any external challenges faced by the project (eg conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval etc) • financial tables ((a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing <p>(Max 3 pages)</p>
<p>II. Review Methods</p>	<p>This section is the foundation for the review’s credibility, which underpins the validity of all its findings.</p> <p>The section should include: a description of review methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation, including different gender groups; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc). The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address limitations to the review such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider review questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p>

⁴⁴ During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports, etc. Revisions to results may be formalised through official communication between the project team and the funding partner (e.g. Steering Committee minutes; email exchange with the donor; GEF Project Implementation Review report; email confirming adoption of revisions after a mid-term review etc.)

	<p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. E.g. <i>‘Throughout this review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct’.</i> (Max 2 pages)</p>
<p>III. Theory of Change</p>	
<p>Reconstructed Theory of Change of the project</p>	<p>Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions⁴⁵ of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project’s intentions or do not follow UNEP’s definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project’s results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the TOC at Review⁴⁶. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results ‘goal posts’ have not been ‘moved’.</i> (see sample table below).</p> <p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i> was reconstructed (who was involved, which source documents were used, formal revisions, need for reconstruction, etc.)</p> <p>The <i>TOC at Review</i> should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors. The insights gained by preparing the TOC at Review should be identified (e.g. gaps or disconnects in the project’s logic that were identified; added value or UNEP comparative advantages that were highlighted; lessons in project design that became apparent etc).</p> <p>Work to promote human rights and gender equality is central to the aims of UNEP but does not always appear within results frameworks. The TOC should include assumptions/drivers relating to human rights and gender equality and the TOC narrative should discuss how greater equality and inclusivity was expected to be achieved by the project. For example, if the project document includes commitments to gender equality/gender strategies etc, these should be identified as drivers. <u>If the project document is silent, then the UN</u></p>

⁴⁵ Revisions to results may be formalized through official communication between the project team and the funding partner (e.g. Steering Committee minutes; email exchange with the donor; GEF Project Implementation Review report; email confirming adoption of revisions after a Mid-Term Review, etc.)

⁴⁶ During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports, etc. During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project implementation and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

	<p><u>expectations on human rights and gender equality should be included as assumptions. (2 pages + diagram)</u></p>
<p>IV. Review Findings</p>	
<p>**Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion**</p>	<p>This chapter is organized according to the review criteria presented in the TORs and reflected in the project performance ratings table. The Review Findings section provides a summative analysis of all triangulated data relevant to the parameters of the criteria. Review findings should be objective, relate to the review objectives/questions, be easily identifiable and clearly stated and supported by sufficient evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report and incorporates indicative evidence⁴⁷ as appropriate.</p> <p>“Factors Affecting Performance” should be discussed as appropriate in each of the review criteria as cross-cutting issues. Ratings are provided at the end of the assessment of each review criterion and the complete ratings table is included under the conclusions section, below. Please see the Performance Criteria Ratings Matrix in the suite of tools provided through a SharePoint link.</p> <p><u>Review Criteria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Strategic Relevance B. Quality of Project Design C. Effectiveness (includes delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes within the context of the Theory of Change) D. Financial Management E. Efficiency F. Monitoring and Reporting G. Sustainability H. Factors Affecting Performance <p>(Max 15 pages)</p>
<p>IV. Conclusions and Recommendations</p>	
<p>A. Conclusions</p>	<p>This section should summarize the main conclusions of the review following a logical sequence from cause to effect. The conclusions should highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, preferably starting with the positive achievements and a short explanation of how these were achieved, and then moving to the less successful aspects of the project and explanations as to why they occurred. Answers to the key strategic review questions, including an answer to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal, should be provided.</p> <p>Conclusion section should have a table summarizing the findings of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What is the performance at the project’s mid-point against Core Indicator Targets?

⁴⁷ This may include brief quotations, anecdotal experiences, project events or descriptive statistics from surveys etc. The anonymity of all respondents should be protected.

	<p>b) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program?</p> <p>c) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas?</p> <p>d) What has been the experience at the project’s mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?</p> <p>e) What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables</p> <p>All conclusions should be supported with evidence that has been presented in the review report and can be cross-referenced to the main text using paragraph numbering. The conclusions section should end with the overall assessment of the performance of the project, followed by the ratings table. The conclusions section should not be a repeat of the Executive Summary but focuses on the main findings in a compelling story line that provides both evidence and explanations of the project’s results and impact. (Max 2 pages)</p>
<p>B. Lessons Learned</p>	<p>Lessons learned should be anchored in the conclusions of the review, with cross-referencing to appropriate paragraphs in the review report where possible.</p> <p>Lessons learned are rooted in real project experiences, i.e. based on good practices and successes which could be replicated in similar contexts. Alternatively, they can be derived from problems encountered and mistakes made which should be avoided in the future. Lessons learned must have the potential for wider application and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful. Specific lessons on how human rights and gender equity issues have been successfully integrated into project delivery and/or how they could have could have been taken into consideration, should be highlighted.</p>
<p>C. Recommendations</p>	<p>As for the lessons learned, all recommendations should be anchored in the conclusions of the report, with paragraph cross-referencing where possible. Recommendations are <u>proposals for specific actions to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results</u>. They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities), specific in terms of who would do what and when, and set a measurable performance target in order that the project team/Head of Branch/Unit can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</p> <p>Structure the recommendation as a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-oriented recommendation), followed by a summary of the finding that supports it (this is the challenge/ problem identified and needs to be addressed) and an indication of the priority level, type of recommendation, responsibility, and proposed timeframe.</p>

	<p>Also, in some cases, the same challenge/problem can lead to separate recommendations (prescribed actions) to be addressed by different groups e.g. Project or Partners recommendations. In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.</p> <p>Address the strengthening of human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, in (at least) one recommendation. Alternatively, include human rights and gender-related practice carried out by the intervention as a lesson learned.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>These may include additional material deemed relevant by the Review Consultant but must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the Review Consultant, where appropriate. 2. Mid Term Review TORs (without annexes). 3. Review itinerary, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) and of people met/interviewed. <i>(A list of names and contact details of all respondents should be given to the Project Manager for dissemination of the report to stakeholders but contact details should not appear in the report).</i> 4. Summary of co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity or component 5. Any communication and outreach tools used to disseminate results (e.g. power point presentations, charts, graphs, videos, case studies, etc.) 6. List of documents consulted 7. Brief CVs of the Review Consultant(s) 8. Review TORs (without annexes)

Annex C – Review Itinerary

No visits were carried out as part of the MTR. The following is a list of remote interviews organized chronologically by date. All interviews were conducted in English without interpretation unless otherwise noted.

Name	Organization or role	Date
Russell Cobban	UNEP C&W	9 and 10 May 2023; 21 July; various additional times
Mijke Hertoghs	UNEP ROE	28 April; 27 July
Kevin Helps	UNEP C&W	7 June
Eloise Touni	UNEP C&W	7 June
Ed Verhamme	CKT Consultant	13 June
Umid Ulugov	Peshsaf	15 June
Indira Zhakipova	Ekois	16 June
Jitendra Sharma	UNEP C&W	23 June
Gulumkan Bekturova	State Regulation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, Kyrgyzstan	26 June
Ali Khalmurzaev (Gulumkan Bekturova interpreting)	Department of International Cooperation in Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision, Kyrgyzstan	26 June
Matt Wilson	FSD	27 June
Baurzhan Nassimullin	UNEP ROE	28 June; 20 July
Mars Amanaliev	Ozone Centre	29 June
Carla Valle	BRS Secretariat	5 July
Wouter Pronk	UNEP ROE	13 July; 25 July; various additional times
Anuradha Shenoy	UNEP C&W	17 July
Guido van de Coterlet	Risk assessment consultant	18 July
Abdusalim Juraev (Umid Ulogov interpreting)	Stockholm Convention Centre at the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CEP)	20 July
Tatiana Tugui	Legal consultant	20 July
John Follen	General Atomics	21 July
Erica Matson	UNEP ROE	1 August
Stephan Robinson	FAO	26 September

Annex D – Evaluation Framework

A.	Operating Context		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.08	
1	Does the project document identify any unusually challenging operational factors that are likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?	N	Neither the project document nor the related Environmental Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN) refer to this risk.	Criterion is rated for whether the operational factors have been assessed, not on the favourability of the operating context.	
ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?		N	Neither the project document nor the related Environmental Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN) refer to this risk.			
iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?		N	Neither the project document nor the related Environmental Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN) refer to this risk.			
B.	Project Preparation		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.72	
2	Does the project document entail clear and adequate problem and situation analyses?		Y	The problem and situation is well elaborated and clear.		
3	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis, including by gender/minority groupings or indigenous peoples?		Y	The project document includes a well elaborated stakeholder and gender analysis (Annex H)		
4	<i>If yes to Q3: Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation/participation during project design process? (If yes, were any key groups overlooked: government, private sector, civil society, gendered groups and those who will potentially be negatively affected)</i>		Y	Annex H includes a budgeted stakeholder engagement plan that includes vulnerable groups (i.e. women, children, people living near targeted sites).		
5	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development? (e.g. integrated approach to human/natural systems; gender perspectives, rights of indigenous people).		Y	Human rights considerations are addressed in the ESERN (Annex J)		
C	Strategic Relevance		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.4	
6	Is the project document clear in terms of its alignment and relevance to:		i) UNEP MTS, PoW and Strategic Priorities (including Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation)	N	The project document does not make mention of the MTS or PoW. The project document does refer to the UNDAFs, the Basel and Stockholm Convention, and includes and extensive review of legal frameworks in the countries.	
			ii) GEF/Donor strategic priorities	Y	Contributions to GEF core indicators are enumerated	
			iii) Regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities?	Y	The project document makes reference to the UNDAFs, the Basel and Stockholm Convention, and includes and extensive review of legal frameworks in the countries.	
			iv) Complementarity with other interventions	Y	The project document includes a review of key associated baseline projects in section A.1.2.1	

D	Intended Results and Causality		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.64
7	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (Availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the logframe or the TOC? <i>(NOTE if there is no TOC in the project design documents a reconstructed TOC at Review Inception will be needed)</i>		N	<p>The project document includes a logframe and theory of change that are not fully consistent with each other. Multiple minor discrepancies exist, though the phrasing of Outcomes differs substantially. Outcome 2 is similar in principal however Outcome 1 is wholly different – with the ToC referring to the feasibility of technology and the logframe referring the countries’ capacity to manage POPs.</p> <p>The project design has clearly been governed by the logframe rather than the ToC. Thus the ToC cannot be considered fully relevant. Because the ToC is the only part of the project document where ‘impact’ has been defined, the project is functionally without a statement of its impact.</p>	
8	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?		N	See above	
9	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, clearly described for each key causal pathway?		Y	The project includes a well elaborated alternative scenario and logframe. The stakeholder engagement plan is organized around the alternative scenario.	
10	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?		Y	The outcomes defined in the logframe are achievable within the timeframe of the project.	
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.4
11	Does the logical framework ...	i) Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?	N	See above	
ii) Have appropriate and ‘SMART’ results at output level?		Y	The logframe is well elaborated		
iii) Have appropriate and ‘SMART’ results at outcome level?		Y	The logframe is well elaborated		
iv) Reflect the project’s scope of work and ambitions?		Y	The logframe is well elaborated		
12	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?		Y	The logframe is well elaborated	
13	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?		Y	The logframe is well elaborated	
14	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?		N	There is no midterm target for POPs destruction or proxy indicator.	
15	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?		Y	There is a well elaborated M&E plan which include this MTR	
16	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress?		Y	See above	

17	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic? <i>(e.g. Adequate time between capacity building and take up etc)</i>	Y	There is a somewhat detailed workplan to the activity, not task, level.	
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.24
18	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? <i>(Steering Committee, partner consultations etc.)</i>	Y	Figure 8 includes a detailed management hierarchy	
19	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined? <i>(If there are no stated responsibilities for UNEP Regional Offices, note where Regional Offices should be consulted prior to, and during, the evaluation)</i>	Y	Roles are described in the narrative of the Institutional Arrangement and Coordination	
G	Partnerships	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.4
20	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed? <i>(CHECK if partner capacity was assessed during inception/mobilisation where partners were either not known or changed after project design approval)</i>	Y	There is a formal assessment of the private sector partner, General Atomics. The project document refers to a formal assessment of FSD and UNEP regional office for Europe, but does not present the results of that assessment	
21	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?	Y	The roles and responsibilities of partners seem appropriate to their level of experience and scope	
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.24
22	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?	Y	The project document includes a well elaborated narrative and closed loop diagram (figure 9) on knowledge management. Figure 9 however is not consistent with either the logframe or ToC.	
23	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, during the project life? <i>If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?</i>	Y	The stakeholder engagement plan builds on an thorough analysis and includes methods of communicating with stakeholders	
24	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project? <i>If yes, do they build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks?</i>	Y	A lessons learned workshop is proposed to be held toward the end of the project	
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.2
25	Are the budgets / financial planning adequate at design stage? <i>(coherence of the budget, do figures add up etc.)</i>	Y	Major budget categories sum correctly.	
26	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic? <i>(E.g. If the expectations are over-ambitious the delivery of the project outcomes may be undermined or if under-ambitious may lead to repeated no cost extensions)</i>	Y	The project budget is based on the GEF allocation, which is reliable and consistent.	

J	Efficiency	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.4
27	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?	Y	The technologies were priced out with the supplier in advance of the project.	
28	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	Y	Baseline projects are well described. The use of SCWO is innovative though measures were taken to ensure its applicability including multiple meetings with the provider and a review of alternatives	
29	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (i.e. increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?	Y	Cost was considered throughout, including in the evaluation of alternatives	
30	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date? <i>(If yes, explore the reasons for delays and no-cost extensions during the evaluation)</i>	N	It is reasonable to assume that this may occur based current progress	
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.4
31	Are risks appropriately identified in both the TOC/logic framework and the risk table? <i>(If no, include key assumptions in reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception)</i>	Y	The logframe includes risks and assumptions. The ToC includes assumptions.	
32	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate? <i>(consider unintended impacts)</i>	Y	The risk table and ESERN adequately present many risks and mitigation strategies. Those related to external environmental factors (e.g. natural disaster) or governance are not adequately captured. The 'back-up' approach is not addressed in the risk table, but is built in to the project and was in part pre-emptively addressed through the feasibility study.	
33	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative environmental footprint? <i>(including in relation to project management and work implemented by UNEP partners)</i>	Y	Addressed through ESERN	
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.48
34	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?	Y	The project risk table is well elaborated	
35	Was there a credible sustainability strategy and/or appropriate exit strategy at design stage?	N	The project anticipates destruction of 5,000 tonnes of POPs based on 5 years of SCWO operation but does not plan for operation to begin until year 4. Thus it implicitly relies on 3 years of operation after the project. Based on the project document it is not clear how these costs would be covered.	
36	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic action? <i>(if yes, capture this feature in the reconstructed TOC at Review Inception)</i>	Y	Component 2 deals specifically with the building of long term capacity	

M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating: 0.2
37	Were recommendations made by the PRC adopted in the final project design? If no, what were the critical issues raised by PRC that were not addressed.	Y		
38	Were there any critical issues not flagged by PRC? (If yes, what were they?)	Y	Issues noted above regarding ToC/ logframe consistency and the delivery of GEBs were not noted by the PRC	No rating applicable.
N	Gender Marker Score	SCORE	Comments	No rating applicable.
39	<p>What is the Gender Marker Score applied by UNEP during project approval? <i>(This applies for projects approved from 2017 onwards)</i></p> <p>UNEP Gender Scoring: 0 = gender blind: Gender relevance is evident but not at all reflected in the project document. 1 = gender partially mainstreamed: Gender is reflected in the context, implementation, logframe, or the budget. 2a = gender well mainstreamed throughout: Gender is reflected in the context, implementation, logframe, and the budget. 2b = targeted action on gender: (to advance gender equity): the principle purpose of the project is to advance gender equality. n/a = gender is not considered applicable: A gender analysis reveals that the project does not have direct interactions with, and/or impacts on, people. Therefore, gender is considered not applicable.</p>		A score is not provided in the PRC Checklist. The PRC notes that "Gender equality is adequately addressed."	

Annex E – List of Documents Consulted

Activity tracker
All UNEP Evaluation Office MTR guidance documents and example MTRs
Awareness raising and communication materials developed for the project
Consultant contracts, ToRs and reports
Expenditure reports and the UNEP C&W Financial tracking
Grant agreements, including all available PCA and SSFA documents
Meeting minutes (from conception to execution)
Meeting presentations (from conception to execution)
Mission reports
National Implementation Plans
PIF and supporting annexes
PIRs
PRC Checklist
Procurement documents
Project Document and supporting annexes
Project policy documents
Site visit reports including REAs
STAP Project review
Stockholm and Basel Conventions and related technical guidance
Technical reports and evaluations (e.g. CKT assessment, legal reviews, environmental assessments, other technical outputs)
UNEP and GEF Strategic and policy documents
Work plans
Written communications between project partners

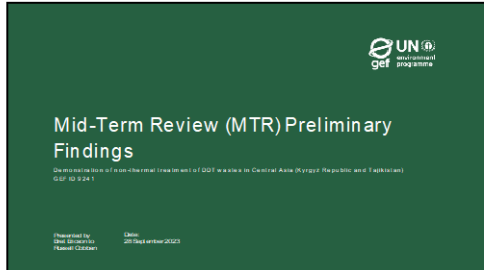
Annex F – Brief CV of Consultant

Bret Ericson (PhD, MSc) is a New York-based consultant contracted by the UNEP GEF Chemicals and Waste Unit for the purpose of conducting the MTR. Dr. Ericson has previously worked with the World Health Organization, PAN-UK and the Institute for Environmental Protection (Monterrey, Mexico). He was employed by the NGO Pure Earth from 2008–2019, where he directed projects on risk mitigation at hazardous waste sites, including those in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. He has an MSc in Urbanization and Development from the London School of Economics and a PhD in Environmental Sciences from Macquarie University. Dr. Ericson is an adjunct assistant professor of Environmental Health at New York University and the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

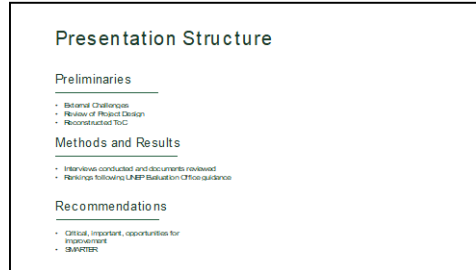
Annex G – Summary of Co-finance Information

Co-financing of USD 519,515 has been reported by the EA through June 30 2023 on the PIR. No other co-financing has been disclosed

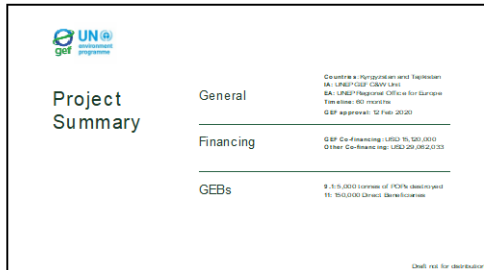
Annex H – Communication or Outreach Tools to Disseminate Results



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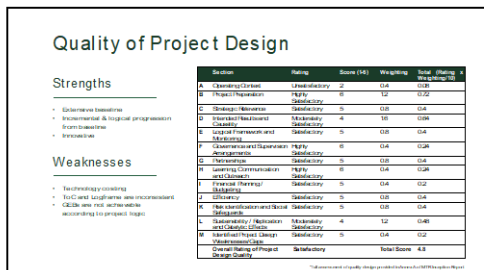
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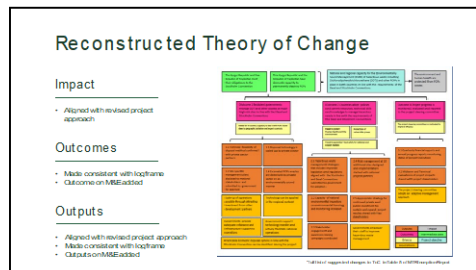
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Reconstructed Alternative Scenario

Title
Transformation of regional capacity to manage DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)

Components
Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs
Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management
Component 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

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7

Reconstructed Alternative Scenario

Title
Transformation of regional capacity to manage DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)

Components
Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs
Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management
Component 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

Outputs (Component 1)
1.1 Technical feasibility of disposal method confirmed with private sector partners
1.2 Site specific management plans disclosed to national stakeholders and submitted to government for approval
1.3 Disposal technology is scaled up by private sector
1.4 Estimated POPs wastes are destroyed by private sector in an environmentally sound manner

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8

Reconstructed Alternative Scenario

Title
Transformation of regional capacity to manage DDT wastes in Central Asia (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEF ID 9421)

Components
Component 1: Disposal and risk reduction of POPs
Component 2: Long term capacity building for improved hazardous waste management
Component 3: Monitoring and Evaluation

Outputs (Component 2)
2.1 Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations aligned with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption
2.2 Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental scanning and monitoring increased
2.3 Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted
2.4 Risk management at 10 additional sites designed and implementation started with national project partners
2.5 Strategy for continued private and public treatment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders

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Review Approach

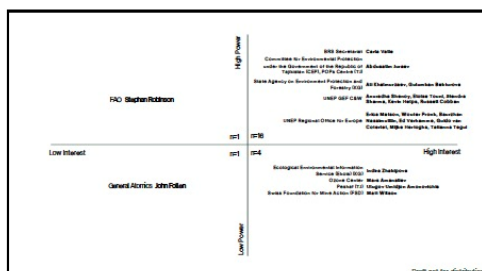
Principles
• Participatory
• Based on sound evidence and analysis
• Focus on course correction
• In line with UNEP Evaluation Office

Methods
• Desk Study
• Interviews
• Questionnaires
• Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA)

Review Team
Bret Erickson, PhD, MSc
UNEP Technical Consultant
Based in New York City
No Russian proficiency
bret.erickson@unep.org

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10



11

BRS Secretariat Curia Vale

Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Abudsalim Juraev Tajikistan (CEP), POPs Centre (TJ)

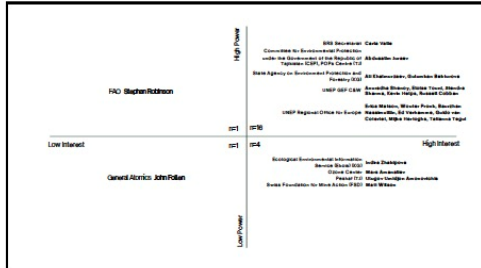
State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry (KG) Ali Khalmurzaev, Gulumkan Bekturova

UNEP GEF C&W Anuradha Shenoy, Eloise Touni, Jitendra Sharma, Kevin Helps, Russell Cobban

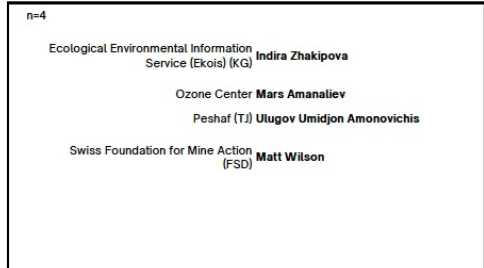
Erica Matson, Wouter Pronk, Baurzhan Nassimullin, Ed Verhamme, Guido van Coterlet, Mijke Hertoghs, Tatianna Tegui

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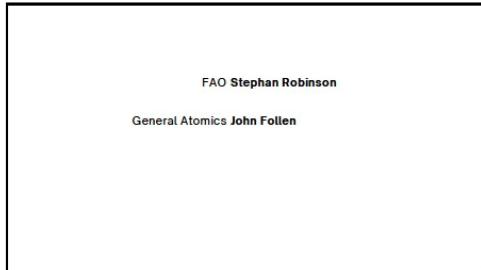
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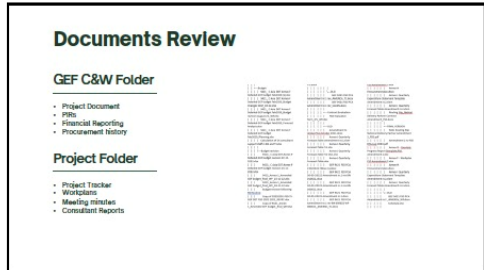
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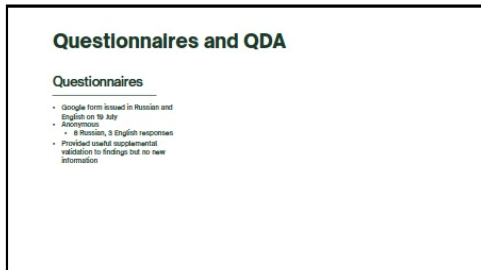
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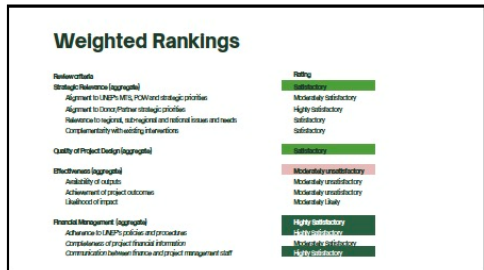
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Output Delivery at Midterm

Output	Importance	Percent Delivered
1.1 Feasibility of disposal method confirmed with private sector partners	2	25%
1.2 Site specific management plans disclosed to national stakeholders and submitted to government for approval	2	50%
1.3 Disposal technology is scaled up by private sector	2	N/A
1.4 Discarded POPs wastes are destroyed by private sector in an environmentally sound manner	3	N/A
2.1 Hazardous waste management strategies that include improved legislation and regulations agreed with the Stockholm and Basel Conventions submitted to government for adoption	3	80%
2.2 Capacity of national environmental inspectors on environmental licensing and monitoring established	2	N/A
2.3 Stakeholder engagement and awareness raising campaigns conducted	1	25%
2.4 Risk management of 10 additional sites designated and implementation started with national private partners	1	60%
2.5 Appropriate strategy for continued private and public investment to sustain and expand project results shared with key stakeholders	2	N/A
3.1 Quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports monitoring status of project available	2	100%
3.2 Mid-term and Terminal evaluations of project impacts shared with project stakeholders	1	100%
Weighted % Delivered		66%

19

Weighted Rankings

Review Criteria	Rating
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Monitoring and Reporting (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Strategy Design and Outcomes	Moderately Satisfactory
Monitoring of project implementation	Moderately Satisfactory
Project Reporting	Satisfactory
Sustainability (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Socioeconomic sustainability	Moderately Satisfactory
Financial sustainability	Subsatisfactory
Institutional sustainability	Subsatisfactory
Factors Affecting Performance (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Regulation and standards	Unsatisfactory
Quality of project management and supervision	Unsatisfactory
UNEP/Implementing Agency (based on ratings for sub-categories)	Unsatisfactory
Partners/Executing Agency (based on ratings for sub-categories)	Unsatisfactory
Stakeholder participation and consultation	Unsatisfactory
Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Moderately Satisfactory
Environmental, social and economic safeguards	Highly Satisfactory
Country ownership and alignment	Moderately Satisfactory
Communication and public relations	Moderately Satisfactory

20

Aggregate Weighted Ranking

Review Criteria	Rating
Strategy/Implementation (Aggregate)	Satisfactory
Quality of Project Design (Aggregate)	Satisfactory
Implementation (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Financial Management (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Monitoring and Reporting (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Sustainability (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Factors Affecting Performance (Aggregate)	Moderately Satisfactory
Project Reporting	Moderately Satisfactory

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21

Recommendations

Critical

R1. Russell Cobban, Woudar Pronk and Baurhan Nassimullin to reconstruct alternative scenarios, results framework and workplan and present to PSC and GEF Secretariat within Q3/4 2023

- The project title and multiple Outputs no longer apply to the current direction of the project
- The overall Objective is achievable through a revised results framework and workplan with a two-year extension are required
- Concrete progress in Tajikistan in particular is required to ensure continued government support
- The budget should be adjusted in response with UNEP RSC responsible for a larger proportion as the large procurement has been terminated
- The disposal options should be presented in a manner consistent with the waste hierarchy. The Project Document can then be updated if the PMU, in consult with the PSC and the GEF Secretariat, determines such revision is necessary.

22

Recommendations

Important

R2. Implementation arrangements should be revised to reflect the current roles of the IA, EA and NIPs

- As the ICWV procurement has been terminated, UNEP GEF CAW's role should be adjusted accordingly in a manner consistent with the revised work plan (para. 11E)
- The roles and scopes of work of the NIPs (PSC and the Coordination Centre) should be made more clear to avoid confusion and disagreement
- ECIs and Parties' roles should be equally better defined and expanded particularly in the context of their institutional knowledge. Likewise the minor confusion in roles within the PMU could be clarified with updated and agreed upon ToRs.

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23

Recommendations

Opportunity for Improvement

R3. A short-term consultant (~1 month) should be contracted by Woudar Pronk to develop a centralized file management system with different levels of access for different users

- The current project folder structure is not logical or logically organized
- Project partners should be required to store key documents (e.g. assessments, reports, sign in sheets) in the project folder

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24

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gef

Contact Us
For any questions or clarifications

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25

5

ANNEX I. GEF PORTAL INPUTS (for GEF funded projects)

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Review Report, either as copied or summarised text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarised.

Table 1: GEF portal inputs

<p>Question: What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided⁴⁸)</p>
<p>Response: The project has put in place the basic project infrastructure required to meet its Objective such as the contracting of key staff, NGOs and NDPs and the delivery of major Outputs including the CKT assessments, site investigations and legal gaps analysis. The project has not yet made measurable progress against GEF core indicator targets.</p>
<p>Question: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/programme? (This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</p>
<p>Response: Government stakeholders have been difficult to engage in Kyrgyzstan. The government has been unable to provide a consistent project focal point. In Tajikistan a change in the project focal point after project design has resulted in conflicting priorities between the project document and the Tajikistan government. The project has been responsive. In the case of Kyrgyzstan the project has provided new focal points with updated information and made key project staff available for meetings. In Tajikistan a recent request for a new disposal technology (i.e. mobile incineration) was met with the hiring of a third-party technical consultant to provide a review. Community awareness efforts will begin more earnestly in the second half of the project.</p>
<p>Question: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas? (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)</p>
<p>Response: A Gender Expert was contracted in 2022 for the development of a gender guidance document, which was finalized in March 2023, and gender seminar for the governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, IA, EA, NDPs and partner NGOs. Progress against gender indicators has been consistently tracked. Women are involved in multiple key roles in the EA, NDPs and partner NGOs.</p>
<p>Question: What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and any</p>

⁴⁸ This does not apply to Enabling Activities

measures taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Response: The project has accurately tracked and managed the risks identified in the project document as part of its regular PIR submissions. This has included adjusting certain risks in response to conditions encountered during execution, including changing a risk associated with stakeholders' perception of technology from moderate to high. The risk associated with government adoption of environmental management plans has been consistently characterized as low in the PIR. Based on the limited engagement of the Kyrgyzstan government and the resistance to the proposed technology by the Tajikistan project focal point, this may be better characterized as moderate.

Question: What has been the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions. *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response: *The project has shared key knowledge management products with stakeholders as they have been developed. To date this has included a gender guidance, detailed site investigations, and a regulatory gap analysis.*

Question: What are the main findings of the review?

Response: *Overall the project was rated Moderately Satisfactory, following criteria outlined by the Evaluation Office. The project has been substantially delayed due to a number of external challenges, including the dissolution of the anticipated EA, geo-political and institutional challenges, and the termination of the procurement of the preferred destruction technology. Of note the project was approved by the GEF Secretariat only 3 weeks before the WHO declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project began to make significant progress in mid-2022 following the hiring of new project manager delivering, by midterm, 66 % of expected outputs.*

ANNEX J. GEF RISKS TO ACHIEVING PROJECT OUTCOMES (for GEF funded projects)

Summarize risks that might affect the achievement of desired outcomes and the mitigation measures which are planned or already undertaken to address these. The risk rating should reflect the *residual* risk to achieving outcomes after considering the implementation of mitigation measures. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low. See the *GEF Risk Appetite* document ([GEF/C.66/13](#)) for more information and its Annex B for a description of each risk category. Note that the rating for the "Environment and Social" category should be the same as the risk rating for Safeguards.

RISK CATEGORIES	RATINGS	ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES
CONTEXT		
Climate	Low	Climate was not identified as a major risk at project design. The main outputs of the project are not overly vulnerable to climate change.
Environment and Social	Moderate	The project adequately addresses social and environmental risks through the use of various assessments, including the REAs, feasibility studies, site specific management plans, and regulatory reviews. There is a moderate level of risk implicit in the management of hazardous wastes.
Political and Governance	Substantial	Government involvement has been inconsistent. Focal points in both countries have changed multiple times as have priorities.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Substantial	Government involvement has been inconsistent. Focal points in both countries have changed multiple times as have priorities.
Technological	Moderate	Two technologies are proposed for disposal. CKT would be innovative and carry moderate risk. It is also the least likely to be utilized. Containment is well understood and poses a low risk of failure.
Financial and Business Model	Low	< Insert text >
EXECUTION		
Capacity for Implementation	Low	The EA has in place a capable PMU and national partners.
Fiduciary	Low	The EA is a UN agency. Financial reporting was found to be highly satisfactory.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Stakeholder engagement has been somewhat limited beyond decision makers. The project has a plan to better engage communities in the second half of the project.
Other	< Select rating >	< Insert text >

Overall Risk Rating

Moderate

The project is at moderate risk of not achieving its outcomes, according to the criteria set out by the Evaluation Office. However, based on the mid-term review recommendations, the project has adaptive management plans for the implementation of projects and achieving the desired outcomes.
