MID-TERM REVIEW

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name	
Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management	
Country	
Sao Tome and Principe	
GEF ID	Implementing Agency
10007	UNDP
Executing Entity	
Government	
Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	FSP
Objective	
Safeguard globally significant terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems services by strengthening national capacities and frameworks for biodiversity and natural resource management, integrated land use planning and environmental law enforcement as well as enhancing protected area management and the sustainability of charcoal production	

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
5/19/2020	2/16/2021
Implementation Start	First Disbursement
2/16/2021	3/31/2021
Expected MTR	MTR Submission
11/16/2023	3/4/2025
Actual MTR	Expected Completion
9/29/2024	8/16/2026

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

Project Progress Summary

The project, aimed at safeguarding terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystem services, has made notable strides at its midterm evaluation. Achievements include the renewal of the Principe's Biosphere Reserve status, distribution of monitoring and surveillance equipment, validation of PA management plans, sensitization of communities and pilot activities around improved charcoal, approval of a decree law establishing 21 new areas of High Conservation Value (HCV), the initiation of a consultancy to revise environmental laws, raising awareness about biodiversity and sustainable charcoal practices and the creation of online portal for Biodiversity related information and research at the national level. These efforts have been reflected in improved scores on the GEF Protected Area Management Effective Tracking Tool (METT) for both the Obo Natural Park (PNOST) and the Príncipe National Park (PNP), underscoring progress towards the project's objectives.

Despite these advances, the project faces considerable challenges, that could impede the realization of its full objectives. Key challenges include delays in the approval of a crucial national land use plan affected by prolonged bureaucratic delays and political hurdles that risk undermining the project's long-term goals, that will likely not be resolved in the lifetime of the project. The project's capacity building efforts have led to some development in environmental surveillance, although disagreements between key government partners have stalled training initiatives and the deployment of guards for enforcement. Similarly, the institutional framework for protecting biodiversity is lagging, also partly due to political jostling between departments perceived as more well-placed to deal with biodiversity, though some progress has been made in regard to revising the base Environmental Law, which will be an essential accomplishment in its own right. The transformation of the charcoal supply chain—the focus of component 3, aimed at mitigating an important driver of forest degradation—has not progressed as planned due to the lack of formalization in a pivotal public-private partnership and government buy-in, both around using project budget to partner with the private sector (rather than bolster scarce public budgets) and also in regards to its efficacy in actually having an impact on deforestation, coupled with concern around the livelihoods of traditional charcoal makers. Efforts to establish a Conservation Trust Fund are advancing, despite not being legally finalized yet, and its operationalization and good governance will be essential to ensure sustainability of project results. These blocks underscore the necessity for adaptive management to address emerging challenges and ensure the project's goals are met by its conclusion.

Overall, while the project aligns well with strategic objectives and has achieved certain milestones, significant challenges remain that necessitate a re-evaluation of strategies and enhancement of governmental collaboration, as well as better coordination between all partners to ensure the successful continuation and completion of its objectives. The project's ambitious scope, involving multiple key stakeholders from government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, will benefit greatly from improved coordination and communication, exacerbated by geographical dispersion and a complex management structure, as well as from a streamlined design. Finally, financial and project delivery have been compromised by slow financial disbursement and related heavy bureaucratic processes, with only about 30% of the GEF grant spent by mid-2023.

Summary of Conclusions

Project Relevance and Strategic Alignment: The project is well aligned with national priorities, focusing on biodiversity and conservation that address significant environmental challenges. Its initiation was strategically planned to enhance the implementation of the Aichi targets and adhere to the broader frameworks set by the

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), reflecting the objectives highlighted in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). This alignment ensures that the project not only tackles immediate environmental concerns but also contributes to long-term sustainability goals.

Challenges in Project Kickoff: Although the project holds immense potential for impactful outcomes, it faced considerable delays in its early stages, primarily due to prolonged negotiations with multiple partners and slow recruitment processes. These delays highlight the need for refined strategies to streamline operations, ensuring that future activities are executed without further setbacks, thereby maintaining the project's momentum.

Decentralized Implementation and Engagement: The project adopts a decentralized implementation strategy that effectively promotes local involvement, enhancing stakeholder engagement and community participation. While this approach brings several benefits, including increased local support and direct engagement, it requires robust and well-coordinated mechanisms to ensure that activities across various locations are harmonized and lead to uniform achievement of the project's objectives.

Workforce and Capacity Challenges: Staffing inadequacies and varying capacities across partner organizations pose significant hurdles to the project's effectiveness. Addressing these challenges through targeted capacity-building initiatives and strengthening the recruitment processes is crucial for enhancing the operational efficiency and impact of the project.

Legal and Regulatory Enhancements: The project underscores the necessity of updating legal frameworks to effectively address contemporary conservation challenges. Strengthening legal structures is fundamental to enhancing enforcement capabilities and ensuring that conservation efforts are both effective and compliant with current environmental standards.

Financial Sustainability and Viability: Establishing sustainable financial mechanisms is essential for the project's longevity. The project endeavors to create reliable financial structures that can support conservation activities in the long term, emphasizing the importance of financial stability for ongoing environmental efforts. Sustainability of project results after GEF funding ceases has been addressed in the project design, particularly regarding integrating the professional appointments / focal points into the organizations of the implementation partners.

Community Involvement and Acceptance: Effective community engagement has been pivotal to the project's acceptance and success. By involving local communities in the decision-making process and ensuring they benefit from conservation activities, the project has managed to secure essential local support, which is critical for the sustainability of its outcomes.

Expansion of Protected Areas: The project has successfully expanded the scope and area of protected zones, significantly contributing to national and regional conservation goals. This expansion not only enhances biodiversity preservation but also increases the ecological resilience of these areas, providing long-term environmental benefits. Emphasis however should be placed on operationalizing management plans and improving monitoring.

Continuous Stakeholder Engagement: The project recognizes the importance of maintaining continuous dialogue with all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone involved is aligned with the project's goals and actively participates in its activities, however, has a weakness in implementation in this regards. Ongoing engagement and better coordination both internally and externally is crucial for adapting project strategies to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Need for Enhanced Training and Capacity Building: Continuous capacity enhancement and training for all project participants are fundamental to sustaining the achievements of the project. By investing in human

capital, the project aims to build a knowledgeable workforce that can carry forward the conservation efforts effectively and efficiently.

Socioeconomic Considerations: Integrating socioeconomic benefits into the project's framework is essential for justifying the conservation efforts to the broader public and garnering widespread support. By demonstrating the economic and social advantages of biodiversity conservation (and the potential of a new charcoal value chain), the project can enhance its relevance and sustainability.

Resource Management Efficiency: There is a pressing need to manage financial and human resources more efficiently to meet the project's ambitious goals. Streamlining resource allocation and utilization will be crucial in ensuring that the project delivers its intended outcomes without unnecessary expenditures.

Public-Private Partnership Challenges: While public-private partnerships (PPPs) are integral to the project's strategy, aligning these partnerships with overarching project goals is necessary to prevent conflicts and ensure that all parties are working towards common objectives. The project has not yet developed an adaptive management strategy for implementation of Component 3.

Risk Management Deficiencies: The project currently lacks comprehensive risk management practices, which are essential for navigating uncertainties in project execution. Establishing robust risk management frameworks can help in pre-empting potential issues and devising effective mitigation strategies.

Impact on Biodiversity Conservation: The project has made commendable strides in conserving biodiversity, though sustaining these efforts remains a challenge. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of conservation strategies will be key to maintaining the gains achieved and expanding their scope.

Institutional Support and Leadership: Strong leadership and institutional backing are imperative for navigating the operational and bureaucratic challenges that the project faces. Enhanced leadership can drive the project towards achieving its objectives more effectively, ensuring that administrative hurdles do not impede progress.

Adaptability to Local Conditions: The project must remain flexible and responsive to the local environmental, social, and political conditions. This adaptability is crucial for ensuring that the project remains effective and relevant in varying contexts, thereby maximizing its impact.

Through project midterm, the actual date considered having been 30 December 2023, a total of USD 1,850,332 8or 24.43% of the USD 4,282,559 GEF implementation grant have been utilized. The project will need to sustain a high level of efficiency in the second half to ensure available funds are disbursed judiciously towards achievement of the intended outcomes.

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Note from Core Indicator worksheet on Indicator 4.4: The HCVF justification documentation is included in Annex 21 of PRODOC. However, with the project's activities on the island of São Tomé, the decree law approving the creation of 21 HCVs was approved and promulgated, officially defining these areas as 'Special Reserves'. The names of these 21 areas are: 1-Praia de Plancas, 2-Ribeira Funda, 3-Costa Norte,4- Ponta Furada, 5- Caludina, 6- Morros de Bindá, 7- Contador, 8-Chamiço, 9-Zampalma, 10-Vila António, 11- Praia Grade, 12- Cão Pequeno, 13-Sarcinda, 14- Prais do Sul, 15- Jalé, 16 Cantagalo-17 Xixi, 18- Mussacavu-Willy, 19- Costa Sudoeste do Ilhéu das Rolas, 20-Pico Macuru, 21- Maria Fernandes, these areas total 12. 369 ha.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

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C. Gender Equality

A gender analysis was carried out during the project preparation phase, and which described the national context in regards, and signaled the low presence of women in the workforce and decision-making positions, as well as a high burden of unpaid labor reflecting global trends, as well as overall norms related to subordinate roles for women in society, hindering inclusivity and shared benefits in various value chains, as well as in institutional and political spheres.

According, a Gender Action Plan (GAP) was designed to counter these existing trends, and to render the project’s interventions more socially inclusive. The specific objective of the Gender Action Plan is to promote gender equity practices in biodiversity related issues and improve the living conditions of communities bordering conservation areas, often dependent on the resources provided by the forest. The GAP also allows monitoring the progress of project outcomes disaggregated by sex, to ensure an equity-based implementation of the project.

The GAP encourages project staff and responsible institutions to apply gender-based principles in the selection and contracting of their local technical and administrative personnel, including for the environmental surveillance and enforcement unit to be created, and in relation to capacity-building activities. It is also striving to provide participatory approaches at the community level, by including marginalized people (e.g. unemployed youth), with attention to the participation and inclusion of women in the communities targeted by the project. Examples of gender-sensitive indicators (GSI) include a minimum quota of 30% women required for the setup of the platforms to be created by the project, 50% of staff recruited by the project to be women, and the capacity-building activities ensuring at least 1/3 of the participants are women.

The project also strives, through its Gender Action Plan, which identified 52 gender-sensitive indicators, linked to each project output, and across all project components, to engage women and youth in decision-making, training, participatory mapping, and ensure that there are both direct and indirect women project beneficiaries.

With respect to the project's third component that addresses charcoal, it was noted that women generally play important roles in the charcoal value chain but earn less than men. In response to this, the project includes gender equity criteria in the selection of the low-value grants for alternative livelihoods and sustainable charcoal initiatives. Moreover, the production of coconut-based charcoal briquettes, have lower volatile matter content than traditional charcoal, and this has positive impacts at the household level in terms of limiting health risks associated with inhalation of charcoal smoke, which has a particularly acute impact on women, overwhelming responsible for cooking.

These indicators are therefore useful to track, to help guide project implementation progress and priorities and to help assess broader development impacts, and essential requirement of both GEF and UNDP supported projects. The implementation of the GAP is discussed further below in the section on project implementation, both in the sections concerning project-level monitoring and reporting as well as regarding work management arrangement, work planning and stakeholder engagement.

D. Knowledge Management

Internal Project Communication with Stakeholders

The internal communication as discussed in throughout, has faced several challenges. While regular communication channels exist including through formal and informal meetings, events organized in the context of the project, through the field level activities carried out in partnership, through the capacity building opportunities as well as the formal channel of the PSC meetings (although there have only been two), and of course through email and phone, the effectiveness of this communication has been inconsistent. As mentioned, previous, relatively straightforward but important issue such significant delays in processing payments and in procurement, adversely affecting the morale and operational efficiency of partners and staff, is not resolved through regular follow up, and actions such as reimbursements remain unresolved for months on end. This suggests that while communication may be regular between certain parties, it is not always effective due to these consistent operational bottlenecks, nor is it comprehensive between all relevant parties.

Key stakeholders, such as the BirdLife International and OIKOS, have expressed dissatisfaction with the responsiveness and support from UNDP, indicating a gap in effective communication and feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, there appears to be limited joint work and communication flow issues among executing parties, leading to coordination challenges and delayed project activities, and lack of decision making.

Despite these issues, efforts have been made to enhance understanding and engagement through training sessions, more informal meetings and joint work on community engagement. However, there is still a

significant need for clearer lines of communication and more robust feedback mechanisms (things as simple as making sure all RPs are copied on important project milestones or bottlenecks) to ensure stakeholders are fully aware of project outcomes and can contribute effectively to the sustainability of project results.

External Project Communication

Externally, the project has established some means of communication to express its progress and intended impacts, according to the robust Knowledge management plan described above, but again the limited awareness of project objectives, activities and intended outcomes among the public, even beneficiaries' communities and broader stakeholders, signals that there are areas needing improvement. For instance, the project has conducted various training and awareness-raising activities focused on biodiversity conservation and sustainable practices, which have been well-received by community members. The community members however are not necessarily aware of which project the activities are attached to (not necessarily significant) but also the purpose of the knowledge in regard to implications on their livelihoods and relationships to resources (more significant).

However, the dissemination of information through public channels such as a dedicated web presence or extensive outreach campaigns appears to be limited. It is of course hard for the MTR team to judge this thoroughly given the time allowed in the field for the MTR assessment, but many several key stakeholders were unare of the project's objectives of accomplishments. Key stakeholders did note a lack of visibility and recognition of UNDP's contributions in community activities, highlighting a need for better public awareness efforts. To improve external communication, the project should consider slightly more emphasis on the implementation of the KMCP, including enhanced use of digital platforms (the creative of a dedicated project website that is not just a part of UNDP's site) and more frequent public updates on project milestones and successes.

Project's Progress Towards Results

The project has made some notable progress towards sustainable development and global environmental benefits. The project has initiated sustainable charcoal production methods at the community level, improved environmental governance (with support to the national parks and progress some progress on enforcement, and the initiation of the environmental law consultancy), and established a conservation trust fund. These efforts have the potential to contribute to reducing deforestation, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and enhancing biodiversity conservation. However, the project still faces challenges related to institutional coordination, financial management, and political support, which need to be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability and impact.

Knowledge Activities and Products Developed

The project has developed several knowledge activities and products to support its knowledge management approach. These include:

1. Training sessions on sustainable charcoal production and biodiversity conservation.
2. Environmental impact studies and the preparation of an environmental management plan for São Tomé and Príncipe islands.
3. Establishment of a conservation trust fund and the development of a sustainable finance plan.
4. Awareness-raising activities focused on the importance of preserving trees and using improved charcoal production technologies.
5. Community engagement initiatives to promote alternative livelihoods and sustainable resource management practices.

6. Establishment of the Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), the website of which contains more than 70 items of content, including scientific articles, studies, plans, strategies, laws, regulations, protocols, images, and photos.
7. Production of brochures, posters, role plays, and social media posts, producing 21 brochures/posters and 47 social media posts in the period between 2022 and 2023.

These knowledge activities have been crucial in building capacity, raising awareness, and promoting sustainable practices among stakeholders and communities involved in the project.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	32454	32454	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	32454	32454	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Parque Natural do Príncipe	555592842	National Park		7,180.00	7,180.00		46.00	64.00	
Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé	124355	National Park		25,274.00	25,274.00		35.00	53.00	

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Marine part of Príncipe Biosphere Reserve	na			0.00	0.00	

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	12414	12369	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	6,207.00	12,369.00	

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
High Conservation Value Forest		6,207.00	0.00	

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title
HCV Justification

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female		1,000	552	
Male		1,000	735	
Total	**0**	**2,000**	1287	**0**

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO($)	Materialized at MTR($)
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant			25006
Civil Society Organization	Birdlife International	Grant			2957259.19
Civil Society Organization	Birdlife International	In-kind			245025.47
Total Co-financing				**0.00**	**3,227,290.66**

Comments

The total sum of confirmed co-financing at project endorsement was USD 6,224,000, with contributions from national government (DGA) and provincial government (RSESD) partners, as well as UNDP as the GEF agency. Through project midterm, defined as Dec 2023, according to information provided by the co-financing partners to the PMU, the amount co-financing that has materialized through midterm, defined as Dec 2023 (though in the case the latest figures are from June 2023), is USD 3,237,284.66*, which is 52% of

the sum confirmed at project endorsement (see Figure 22). Evidence of Co-finance to be provided by UNDP. *[This must have been a typo. The co-financing table in the report shows 3,227,290.66.]

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
		Medium/Moderate	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

As part of the project preparation phase, the UNDP Environmental and Social Screening Procedure (SESP) was applied to the project, and accordingly the project rated Moderate Risk with several significant social risks identified based on the project interventions.

The first risk was regarding monitoring and enforcement activities potentially influencing the livelihoods of rural communities by restricting access to resources, and resulting in economic displacement for specific user groups, such as loggers and charcoal burners. Furthermore, as the project supports the creation of new formally protected areas of high conservation value, also potentially leading to economic displacement through restricted access. The establishment of a National Land Use Planning instrument potentially has the same implications, and in general interventions related to Component 3 on the charcoal value chain, designed to decrease the production of traditional charcoal has clear and direct implications for the livelihoods and incomes of traditional charcoal makers and their families.

To better understand these risks, as well as to design appropriately scaled mitigation measures, a four-pronged approach was taken. Firstly, the project design directly accounted for livelihood impacts on charcoal makers (as well as addressing the economic driver to produce charcoal) by incorporating an output related to alternative livelihood support. The project also required studies be carried out on the Charcoal value chain and regarding economic displacement, and finally a Human Rights Impact Assessment and associated Human Rights Action Plan to better understand the human rights implications of all activities (with a focus on economic displacement) and then to mitigate them. The project also hired an International Expert to develop a Livelihood restoration plan to account for these restrictions and inform the projects livelihood output.

Unfortunately, although the projects SESP was generally well-completed and relatively complete in identifying risks, and the required analysis and documents related to more detailed understanding of the human rights impacts and economic displacement impacts were understood through appropriate studies carried out by appropriately experienced consultant, the implementation or the identified mitigation measure lagged. Industrial charcoal production could lead to competition involving prices decrease of charcoal on national market while maintaining the levels of charcoal production produced by tree felling, resulting in a decrease in producers' incomes and the economic non-viability of the proposed PPP. In the worst-case scenario, the implementation of more sustainable charcoal kilns could lead to increased pressure on native forests with, on one side, export of coconut and other plant waste material produced coal, and, on the other side, decrease in the income of small producers, which could increase their production to reach their usual economic profitability level.

In regard to gender mainstreaming, a comprehensive Gender Action Plan (GAP) was prepared which is discussed below. Also, the project will mobilize more-sustainable charcoal kilns and charcoal sources; women generally play important roles in the charcoal value chain but earn less than their male counterparts. This is mainly because the participation of women is rarely in the middle of the value chain (mostly at the end, sales of the final product), where profits are concentrated.

Environmental Mainstreaming Officer

Finally, as part of the Project Management Unit (PMU) it was envisaged that an Environment Mainstreaming Officer (who is referred to in the project SESP as an Environmental Integration and Safety Officer), would be hired to play a key role in preventing / managing the impacts of large -scale changes. Although this is considered an important role given the extent of potential social impacts (both positive and negative) on beneficiary communities, and more broadly on community impacted by the project, this role was never filled.

Project-Level Grievance Mechanism

No project level Grievance mechanism established at the time of writing of the MTR. Beneficiaries can complain about problems to community leaders or directly to the LTN, but there is no complaints mechanism. When there are contacts with the community, not only the community leader is informed, but also other people linked to the activities, so that everyone is aware of the events, as previously there were complaints regarding participation.

The semi-structured interviews conducted with select communities as part of the HRIA process sought to identify examples of grievance mechanisms used as part of other projects, as well as existing processes within communities for resolving community conflicts. Participants in community interviews expressed that there are not necessarily formal, traditional community structures for managing conflict. It is largely handled between individuals on a case-by-case basis and, if things escalate, police may be involved. However, individuals who act in some leadership capacity within the community may be called upon to help resolve conflicts. Regarding grievances related to specific projects within communities, participants stated that the person to contact with any issues would differ based on the project. It is recommended that a Project-level grievance mechanism be established as soon as possible with a protocol communicated to community beneficiaries as well on the project's Facebook page.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	MTR Sao Tome & Principe (GEF 10007 / UNDP 5881)