TERMINAL EVALUATION

Project ID:	9409
Project Name:	Healthy Landscapes: Managing Agricultural Landscapes in Socio-ecologically Sensitive Areas to Promote Food Security, Well-being and Ecosystem Health
Countr(ies):	Sri Lanka
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name
Healthy Landscapes: Managing Agricultural Landscapes in Socio-ecologically Sensitive Areas to Promote Food Security, Well-being and Ecosystem Health

Country
Sri Lanka

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
9409	UNEP

Executing Entity

Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Bioversity International

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	MSP

Objective
Mainstreaming biodiversity using an integrated land management approach to ensure, development, health and environmental co-benefits

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval 4/30/2018	Agency Approval 4/30/2018
Implementation Start 4/1/2020	First Disbursement 9/3/2020
Expected MTR 9/19/2022	MTR Submission 9/29/2026
Actual MTR 6/1/2022	Expected Completion 6/30/2024
Actual Completion 6/30/2024	Actual TE 9/1/2026
TE Submission 9/29/2026	Final Disbursement

C. Disbursements

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
2,190,000.00	1,853,400.00

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main Terminal Evaluation Findings

- Adaptive execution in crises: confronted with a national regulatory hurdle prohibiting a Ministry PMU, severe COVID-19 lockdowns, and a macroeconomic crisis, the project's decision to subcontract local financial execution to SACEP and halve its physical infrastructure targets (from 8 to 4 tanks) bypassed national treasury bottlenecks and maintained operational viability.
- Knowledge generation vs. policy mainstreaming: the project generated technical and academic knowledge, producing 18 policy briefs and embedding cascade ecology courses into university curricula. However, systemic policy effectiveness remains partial because formal endorsement of these briefs into binding national legislation is pending.
- Institutional integration: embedding participatory landscape planning into permanent, pre-existing District and Divisional Agriculture Committees, cross-departmental collaboration and avoiding the creation of parallel structures. However, sustaining post-project momentum requires a structured facilitation and financing plan.
- Retrofitting gender equality: despite gaps in design-stage gender budgeting, the project secured economic dividends for rural women by establishing economic incentives such as the 'Hela Bojun' food outlets.
- Eco-health nexus: direct medical interventions addressing the root causes of Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown Etiology (CKDu) remained limited. Future projects targeting an eco-health nexus require concrete health metrics and direct partnerships with the medical sector.
- Scaling up: the financial sustainability of macro-level cascade restoration is constrained by the high capital costs of civil works. Future replication will require integration into a National Master Plan and the securing of dedicated climate or infrastructure finance (e.g., through a GEF-9 phase).
- Modernizing the VTCS: sustaining cascade landscapes and engaging a younger generation in agriculture requires combining traditional VTCS practices with climate-smart agriculture. Integrating precision farming and smart irrigation systems optimizes water-use efficiency and minimizes agrochemical pollution, which directly supports the eco-health nexus.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Following the MTR, the project engaged a range of stakeholders using a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach. Rather than creating temporary parallel project units, the project integrated participatory landscape planning directly into permanent local governance structures, specifically the District and Divisional Agriculture Committees. Furthermore, universities (notably Rajarata University, Peradeniya, and Ruhuna) and government agencies (e.g., NRMC, Department of Agriculture) were mobilized to coordinate knowledge products, bridging the gap between academic research and government implementation. Challenges: while institutional integration occurred during implementation, post-project monitoring indicates that stakeholder participation, local agricultural platforms and the academic Community of Practice (CoP) has declined following the cessation of dedicated project funding and facilitation.

C. Gender Equality

Although the original project design lacked a dedicated gender analysis, gender-disaggregated indicators, and a specific budget for gender-responsive actions, the project management unit retrofitted gender equality measures during implementation. The project established gender sensitive value chains that provided economic empowerment to rural women. Key measures included the establishment of women-led 'Hela Bojun' traditional food outlets and the integration of maize cash-crops, which provided rural women's farmer groups with financial dividends (e.g., LKR 25 million). The project engaged established Women's Agricultural Societies and tracked the proportion of women involved in capacity building for sustainable land management (SLM) approaches.

D. Knowledge Management

Outcomes: The project produced a portfolio of knowledge deliverables. It generated 18 policy briefs, a Ministry of Environment compendium, and the Sourcebook for Sustainable Tank Cascade Management. To bridge the gap between research and practice, the project embedded four short courses on cascade ecology into the permanent academic curriculum of Rajarata University. It also established the Cascade Ecology Database and Knowledge Portal (CTVS RedNet) to host ecological and GIS data.

Challenges: The challenge identified is the lack of a formalized exit strategy to hand over these knowledge outputs for legal ratification. Consequently, the 18 policy briefs currently serve as informational guidelines rather than binding national legislation. Additionally, the academic Community of Practice (CoP) established by the project relies on voluntary efforts and has struggled to maintain its networking momentum independently since project funding ceased.

III. Core Indicators

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)
	20000	200	1000

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)
	20,000.00	200.00	1,000.00

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)

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

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		100		100
Male		100		100
Total	**0**	**200**	0	**200**

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO($)	Materialized at MTR($)	Materialized at TE($)

Recipient Country Government	MMDE	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,272,800.00		1,315,440.00
Recipient Country Government	MMDE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,427,200.00		2,332,403.00
Other	Bioversity International	Grant	Investment mobilized	33,076.00		42,098.00
Other	Bioversity International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	314,789.00		293,766.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC)	Grant	Investment mobilized			970,409.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			1,660,950.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Agriculture (DOAS)	Grant	Investment mobilized			1,244,625.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Agriculture (DOAS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			2,143,935.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Irrigation (DOI)	Grant	Investment mobilized			688,340.00
Recipient Country Government	Department of Irrigation (DOI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			1,430,098.00
Other	University of Peradeniya	Grant	Investment mobilized			458,853.00
Other	University of Peradeniya	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			773,424.00
Total Co-financing				**9,047,865.00**	**0.00**	**13,354,341.00**

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
		Medium/Moderate	Medium/Moderate

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

The project monitored the ESERN document and associated safeguard standards (SS1, SS2, and SS3) throughout implementation. To oversee these, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of local experts was established in 2022 to provide guidance. Management prioritized the protection of local ecosystems and biodiversity during physical restoration works by employing a safety approach to tank rehabilitation. This ensured that structural measures did not disrupt existing habitats or cause soil erosion. Social safeguards focused on inclusive stakeholder engagement, which supported equitable benefit-sharing and local livelihoods (e.g., via ecotourism and value chains). No negative environmental or social safeguard issues were triggered by the project, and no grievances were received.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Prefix	Title
M and E Document	Terminal Evaluation (TE)	Terminal Review Report