

UNDP/GEF Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Samoa

Mid-term Evaluation

FINAL DRAFT REPORT – Dr David J. Butler

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Introduction

This evaluation is based on a 9-day visit to Samoa in early February during which meetings were held with Government officials, other stakeholders and visits made to project sites on Savaii (Annex 1). A draft evaluation was produced and circulated for comments and this final version was completed following a further 4-day visit to Apia in late February (Annex 1). Project documents were reviewed (Annex 2). (The initial TOR is attached as Annex 7).

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1. Introduction to project

The objective of the project is to build capacity for SLM in appropriate government and civil society institutions/user groups in Samoa, and ensure that SLM is mainstreamed into government planning and strategy development.

The lead executing agency is the Division of Land Management, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) whose Assistant Chief Executive Officer is the Project Manager and this houses the Project Management Unit (PMU) including a full-time Project Coordinator and (from 2010) a Senior Project Assistant.

The project falls within a global GEF project entitled 'LDC and SIDS Targeted Portfolio Approach for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management' developed in 2004. This followed the GEF becoming a financial mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and land degradation becoming a new Focal Area of the GEF. The aim of the global project is to develop individual, institutional and systemic capacity for sustainable land management and eligible countries were able to access an expedited medium-sized project under this Portfolio. Samoa acceded to UNCCD in August 1998 and the formulation of its

National Action Plan (NAP) was carried out in parallel with the development of this project and completed prior to its inception.

The Project Document was agreed and signed in 9 February 2007. The final shape of the project was largely determined at an Inception Workshop in June 2007 (Inception Workshop Report published in February 2008).

The project's original goal and overall objectives were modified slightly at inception to the following:

Goal: The project is contributing to the mitigation of land degradation through capacity development and mainstreaming of sustainable land management.

Overall Objective: To strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable land management while ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process.

There are four major outcomes (as follows) with 12 outputs within these:

Outcome 1: Completion of Samoa's National Action Programme (NAP) to combat land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought

Outcome 2: Capacities Developed for Sustainable Land Management in Samoa

Outcome 3: Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management in Samoa

Outcome 4: Development of Samoa's Sustainable Land Management Medium Term Investment Plan

This evaluation is occurring well after the mid-term of the project (see 'timing and duration' section below). Thus in addition to reviewing what has taken place, an emphasis will be placed on an assessment of the priorities for the project's final ten months (to December 2011). It has taken place with a tight timeframe that allowed less than a week for those involved to comment on the draft evaluation.

A particular challenge for this evaluation is that key people involved with the project have moved on. These include the UNDP Programme Associate with immediate responsibility for the project, his team leader at UNDP, the CEO of MNRE up to 2009, and the Project Manager at MNRE (from outset to 2010). A limited dialogue has been possible with some of these individuals. As a result this consultancy has been overseen by UNDP interns with very limited experience of the project.

2. Executive Summary

This was a demanding project with the aim of addressing two complex and long-term issues, capacity building and mainstreaming and it was inevitable that it took longer to deliver than planned. Most of the work has focussed on establishing pilot or demonstration projects to address SLM issues in drought-prone areas, degraded coastal areas and degraded watersheds. The challenge

in the project's final year is to start to use these pilots to deliver specific training and spread wider messages about SLM in a way that is sustainable beyond the end of the project.

The project began with an effective inception process that saw some significant changes to outputs and work plans. It has been well managed nationally by experienced staff several of whom have been working in this field prior to the project and has benefited from close involvement with UNDP staff based in Samoa. Delivery has been slow for a variety of reasons several of which seem to be common to similar projects in the region including time-consuming financial management and reporting systems, project staff being given other tasks, delays in appointing a project assistant, and lengthy consultations and decision-making processes involved in working with village communities. The Steering Committee has been very active and its management could serve as a model for other projects.

The pilot project for drought-prone areas has been the construction of a resource centre at Asau on Savaii. The Centre is impressive and well located alongside Forestry and Agriculture facilities but issues over how it is to be used, managed and sustained long-term should have been resolved before construction began. A training schedule for the use of the building is being developed and it is hoped that there will be significant work done with farmers before the project ends.

The pilot project for degraded coastal areas contained a controversial item, the construction of a seawall at Lano. While this was not a suitable pilot for SLM approaches to coastal management it was a pragmatic response to an urgent issue that was very important to the local community. Its effectiveness does need to be assessed. Over-expenditure was significant and led to the loss of a separate project output and there was argument about the relative financial contribution from the project. Again issues should have been resolved before construction started through the presentation of a budgeted plan showing the contributions from Government and the project. Follow-ups are needed to spread messages about SLM approaches to coastal degradation.

The pilot for degraded watersheds at Vaipouli Savaii was a strong project showing a good partnership between the project team, Forestry Division and Water Resources Division. The Government will need to continue to provide some ongoing support to maintain trees planted within the project.

Most of the more general capacity building and mainstreaming outputs are still to be addressed in the final year of the project. There are areas of financial management, risk management, and monitoring and evaluation where improvements are required.

UNDP has faced the loss of most staff with key roles for this project in the past year and it is hoped that replacements can be made as soon as possible to support the project in its all-important final year.

The work plan for the final year needs to be carefully reviewed as there are probably too many activities to be fitted in. Progress on some of these, such as an Integrated Financing Strategy, is largely out of the hands of the project team and dependent on new international initiatives.

This evaluation did not have time to measure how successful the project has been at capacity building and many activities in this area have still to be undertaken. The project's final evaluation should aim to address this by talking to those targeted by the project in central agencies and village communities.

3. Key Recommendations/Lessons Learned

Like many large programmes delivered in the Pacific I feel that the project document contained an unrealistic set of outputs for a three-year project. There needs to be a more thorough dialogue during project development to be sure that the country is confident it can undertake all the agreed tasks.

Some minor improvements have been suggested to the way that the project is managed including recording more of the discussions of the Project management Unit, ensuring the Steering Committee meets four times a year to meet quarterly reporting obligations, and requiring a transparent agreement before a coordinator funded by the project does other work on behalf of Government. I consider that what the project could achieve was limited by administrative requirements in Government (particularly procurement of goods and services) and UNDP (particularly reporting every quarter). There seems little prospect of changing these systems but an evaluator needs to constantly raise concerns.

Two of the project's pilot activities have included major constructions projects, a seawall and a resource centre. The former was controversial and there are some concerns about how the latter will be sustained into the future. Clear plans should have been signed off for each before they proceeded that would have addressed all the issues, including identifying costs and how they would be shared, and long-term management. The seawall cost more than budgeted resulting in the loss of a nationwide activity that still needs to occur in the future.

The third pilot project rehabilitating a water catchment was a good model of cooperation between three different divisions of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Land Management, Forestry and Water Resources) and shows the benefit of these being co-housed within the same Ministry.

Identification of risks and monitoring and evaluation are two areas requiring improved though the latter may be addressed by news systems being applied under the UNCCD Convention.

Progressing from the development of pilot projects to using these to build capacity and mainstream SLM concepts is the key challenge for the project in its final year. Too many activities have been left to the final year to accommodate them all and prioritisation is needed very soon. There should also be discussion about how to sustain these long-term initiatives beyond the end of this project and there is a potential opportunity in a GEF-5 project addressing land degradation currently under development.

4. Previous Reviews and Audits

There have been limited reviews of this project to date. No audits have occurred because of a change in the funding level at which this is triggered at UNDP from \$100K a year to \$300K a year. Project expenditure has not exceeded \$300K in any one year. However an audit is to take place shortly under the requirement that each such project is audited once in its lifetime.

No Tripartite Reviews (TPR's) have taken place largely as a result of changes in policy and reviews at UNDP. TPR's were to be replaced with quarterly reviews of all UNDP-supported projects at MNRE and one such evaluation took place in August 2007 assessing the period April-June 2007 and another in October 2010. The 2007 review noted the following for the SLM project: *'No major constraints or challenges as project is still at its early stages and is yet to commence implementation of major activities.'* I understand that such reviews were then discontinued while the UN as a whole examined the way that it worked, and only re-instated when no alternative had been put in place internationally.¹ The next review is planned for March 2011.

Two Annual Performance Reviews (APR's) (between UNEP and GEF) have been obtained covering the periods July 2008-June 2009 and July 2009-June 2010 although the latter is incomplete. The first raised three challenges: the need for an administrative assistant, delays in financial processing, and political influences which will be addressed in this evaluation. The second only mentions one challenge: problems with financial processing again.²

[Since drafting this section I have received from Meapelo a further APR submitted to the GEF Regional Support Unit in Bangkok. I am seeking clarification of the date of this and how it links to the two ASPR's for 2008/09 and 2009/10]

Audits and TPR reviews or their equivalent are typically very valuable resources for evaluations with limited time available like this one. Their absence made it more difficult both to identify the key challenges faced by the project and to understand the reasons behind them and the lessons to be learned.

It is unfortunate that the first detailed review of this individual project is taking place now after over 3 years of activity and with less than a year till completion. Why it did not take place at 'mid-term' is unclear, though it is noted that the project started slowly and an evaluation after 1 ½ years (mid-term for a 3-year project) would have had limited activities to assess.

5. Assessment by Issue

5.1 Timing and Duration:

¹ I have been unable to obtain a copy of the report on the October 2010 review.

² I have only been able to obtain a draft of this review with many tables still blank.

There have been differing interpretations of the start date of this project and it has not been possible to track documentation agreeing to the current end date of 31 December 2011.

The first Annual Performance Review (APR) (July2008-June2009) states that the ‘*Original project duration (as per Signed Project Document) is from 1 Mar 2005 to 31 December 2009 including PDF A*’ and requested a change in duration to 1 Jan 2008 – 1 Jan 2011 for the following reasons:

‘The project document was signed in Feb 2007, funds were only received in June 2007 and the Project Manager’s (Coordinator) contract commenced in July 2007. However, the Inception Report was finalized, approved and endorsed in February 2008 which marked the official start of the implementation of project activities. Hence, the progress of activities is being measured from Jan 2008 and the envisaged completion date (as per 3 years of approved project lifetime) is Jan 2011.’

The modified start date of Jan 2008 is questionable. The inception workshop took place on 28 June 2007 and the reason I was given for the c8-month delay before its findings were published (in the Project Inception Report) was that the workshop had agreed the work plan so it was less important to complete the write-up and more important to start activities. The official start date would be February 2007 when the project document was signed and I would consider the project activity to have started in July 2007.

In the second APR (July2009-June2010) there was a ‘*Revised Planned Operational Closure Date*’ of 31 December 2011 presented but no explanation in the relevant section (section 3) for the additional extension.³

The total project duration could be considered as 4 years 5 months (July 2007 to Dec 2011) compared to the 3 years originally proposed, though it will have been 4 years 10 months since the start date in the project document. Such a duration is not unusual and this is very similar to that of another Pacific Island SLM project that I have evaluated. There are many factors behind the delays in project delivery, as will be detailed later. I consider the project may also have been over-ambitious, though those who I interviewed did not see this as a major factor.

One consequence of an extended project is that an increased proportion of the budget needs to go towards project management (particularly salaries of coordinator and assistant) leaving less funds for practical outputs. However this was not a significant issue as funds were available from savings in some activities.

Project expenditure:

A further way to look at project progress is to consider expenditure. UNDP records annual expenditure as follows:

Year	Expenditure* (US\$)
2005	10,567

³ Still awaiting final report on this APR.

2006	1,653
2007	10,438
2008	72,408
2009	143,970
2010	151,726
Total	390,762

* Figures to nearest dollar

With an initial budget of \$500,000 this leaves a balance of c. US\$109,238 for 2011.

Clearly initial work on the project in the PPR stage was very slow though this is outside this evaluation. Expenditure in 2007 was largely the salary of the Coordinator together with costs of initial planning and site selection, and on-the-ground activities began in 2008.

5.2 Project Development, Design and Inception

This evaluation is not intended to cover the project preparation phase. But it is appropriate to consider whether the project was going to be achievable in a 3-year time-frame as formulated.

The project's challenges all sit within its title (highlighted in bold):

*'Samoa's **capacity building and mainstreaming of sustainable land management.**'*

'Capacity building' is very difficult to achieve over a short-time and requires well-directed delivery and re-enforcement of training and information transfer. 'Mainstreaming' of environmental issues is a major challenge in developed countries and even more so in developing countries which are trying to develop their economies and raise the living standards of their people. Finally, 'sustainable land management' is not a simple concept but involves the application of a whole range of techniques depending on the specifics of different situations.

Central to the approach to capacity building has been the development of pilot projects which required surveys (sometimes nationwide), collection of technical information, consultations and on-the-ground activity. Judging by the current status of the project, a 3-year time-frame was realistic for the development of four pilot projects, but not realistic for the development of programmes to make use of these for wider capacity building.

The project included the development of a land administration policy (capacity building) and legislative review (mainstreaming) which were always going to be very time-consuming though these were modified appropriately at inception.

The project inception process seems to have been excellent. Projects are encouraged to carry out detailed reviews of work plans and management arrangements at inception and this certainly occurred in a well-facilitated workshop. Changes were made in the work plan to outputs 2.3.1, 2.4.3, 2.5.1 to 2.5.4, 3.1.3, and 3.2.3 to 3.2.5 which did reduce the number of activities but still left a demanding programme. Major necessary changes were made to management arrangements (see

below). All the changes were written up effectively in the Project Inception Report which then serves as the main basis for this evaluation.

Recommendations: Carry out a regional or international assessment of SLM programme to review achievement and assess whether proposed outputs were realistic, particularly for Small Island Developing States.

Review progress towards capacity building and mainstreaming as part of the terminal evaluation of this project and suggest a way forward towards these long-term aims which includes the use of measurable indicators.

5.3 Project Management

My overall assessment is that this project has been very well managed and some of its procedures should serve as models for other work. It has had the advantage that most of the key players were involved with project development or UNCCD issues prior to its start.

The Project Document specified Management Arrangements that seem rather confused and overcomplicated. These included:

- a Project Executive Group (TOR provided)
- a Project Management Unit (PMU) (TOR provided)
- a National Steering Committee (NSC) (not included in the relevant section (part III) of the document but included as a TOR)
- a Technical Advisory Group (TOR included)
- a Project Manager to be funded by the project (TOR included – high level)
- a Technical Assistant and Administrative Assistant/Driver both to be provided by Government as part of its co-financing.

These were modified at inception to the following which seem an ideal combination:

- a PMU
- a NSC
- a series of Technical Implementing Groups for different activities
- a Project Manager role taken by existing senior Government official as co-financing
- a Project Coordinator funded by the project who also occupied a Government position
- Support staff provided by Government as co-financing

5.3.1 Project Management Unit

The PMU was agreed at inception to comprise:

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MNRE
- Assistant CEO-Division of Land Management (ACEO-DLM) – the Project Manager
- Principal Sustainable Land Management Officer (PSLMO) – the Project Coordinator recruited by the project
- Principal Land Development Officer (PLDO)

It was directly responsible to the NSC and was to be ‘the key body through which clear decision-making processes are made...’

While it started off along these lines, the CEO soon delegated his role to the ACEO-DLM and this arrangement continued when a new CEO was appointed in September 2009. There was subsequently a falling out between the ACEO-DLM and PLDO over project direction and the latter left, leaving the PMU consisting of two people. The nature of the Unit later changed further to include a representative of UNDP.

My impression is that the ACEO-DLM, PSLMO and the UNDP Project Officer formed an effective management team and that they interacted regularly during the course of the project. This was of course only possible because the UNDP Multi-Country Office is housed in Apia.

There were however occasions, particularly around the issue of a seawall at the village of Lano, when there was some confusion between the decision-making roles of the PMU and NSC. It would have been beneficial for the work of the PMU to be ‘minuted’ in the same way that the NSC is. While it is recognised that the PMU is continually making minor decisions on day to day details of the project, it would be worthwhile for it to have periodic formal meetings with minutes that reviewed progress and addressed more major issues.

Recommendation: Ensure that major decisions made by the PMU are recorded perhaps by taking formal minutes of meetings.

5.3.2 Project Coordination

The Project Coordinator was recruited using a TOR developed for the purpose rather than the higher level one for a Project Manager from the Project Document⁴. The appointee had a BA in Economics, Management & Public Administration and had worked in MNRE since 2003 including time in Land Management Division working with UNCCD, so had an ideal background for the position. Several interviewees gave her credit as a key factor behind the success of the project to date and her contribution will be seen as different aspects are evaluated below.

The Coordinator was appointed as the Principal Sustainable Land Management Officer (PSLMO) which reflected the salary level of her contract. This had advantages and disadvantages for the project. It meant that this position was created in the Government structure within MNRE so that the role would continue beyond the life of the project with the opportunity to sustain and build on its achievements. However it also carried other responsibilities as a Principal Officer and meant that the Ministry would ask her to undertake work not directly related to the project.

It has not been possible to quantify the non-project work undertaken by the Coordinator but it appears to have been substantial at times, particularly during the first year of the project and also recently since the ACEO-DLM has taken up another position and a replacement has yet to be appointed. It is considered likely to have been one factor behind the slow delivery of the project and

⁴ The title ‘Project Manager’ is used very loosely in project documentation to refer to different positions. In this evaluation the Project Manager refers to the ACEO-Division of Land Management and the Project Coordinator to the person recruited with GEF funds to coordinate the project.

some UNDP staff feel it has been the major one. The Project Officer did once intervene with the ACEO Land Management when the coordinator had a lot of work on seawall contracts over a 2-month period, assigned to her following the work done on the Lano seawall contract as part of the project.

The non-project work has not been a complete negative from the project's viewpoint. Regular meetings with the ACEO and other Principal Officers in the Ministry will also have built relationships that were directly relevant to the project, e.g. with Forestry and Environment Divisions, and contributed to mainstreaming SLM concepts. It also meant that the Coordinator was aware of related work occurring elsewhere in the Ministry.

Reviewing the TOR (Annex 3) there is no mention of any duties outside of the project. There is a 'catch all' clause: '*Undertake any other activities that may be assigned by the PEG (Project Executive Group)*' but this clearly only covers activity within the project which was what the PEG was to have oversight of. The TOR thus looks to represent a 100% project position. The TOR uses Principal Sustainable Land Management Officer in its title and then mentions it for the first time in paragraph 3, jumping from the use of 'Project Manager' in the previous paragraph. There is nothing to indicate that the PSLMO had responsibilities within the Government structure.

It is unclear what dialogue occurred with UNDP at the time that the TOR was created but it seems likely that the Government and UNDP had differing views on what its responsibilities would be.

Recommendation: On balance the creation of a Government position for the Project Coordinator paid for by the project has been positive. However a more explicit dialogue between UNDP and MNRE was clearly needed at the time and this should to have led to some written agreement between the two.

This agreement would have presumably have allowed for the Coordinator to undertake some non-project work within the role of PSLMO but defined this including us of some 'rules' such as:

- *The coordinator is not to travel internationally on behalf of the Government on non-project work*
- *The coordinator is not to travel away from the office on non-project work for more than one day at a time*
- *The coordinator shall not be expected to undertake non-project work for more than x days a week or y days a month*
- *The coordinator shall not serve in an 'acting' capacity for more senior staff in their absence except on a very temporary basis (to be defined)*

All such rules could be 'without the prior written approval of... (a position at UNDP)' or his/her delegate.'

This agreement would also have clarified reporting lines for the project and non-project work of the position.

An agreement like this would have assisted the Coordinator to balance commitments which can be difficult when sitting within a Government structure.

Recommendation: A Coordinator appointed to a Government position should record the hours spent on non-project work so that these can be reviewed periodically by UNDP and the Government agency against an agreement on the workings of the position.

An obvious question given that perhaps 75% of the on-the-ground work of the project has taken place on Savaii is whether project coordination should have been based there. I consider that basing the team in Apia has been the right decision which has facilitated financial management, liaison with UNDP, liaison with other divisions of MNRE and other agencies, and mainstreaming. The Coordinator generally travels to Savaii every 2-3 weeks though visits were less frequent before the appointment of the Project Assistant as there was too much administration to do. A key factor behind this system working has been the strong support provided by the Principal Forestry Officer, Forest Management, W. Savaii and *[title of Tu'ua's position please]*. They see the benefits that the project brings in building the capacity of their staff.

Recommendation: Base in Apia teams like this who are coordinating projects working in Savaii, provided that the necessary field support is present in Savaii.

5.3.3 Project Administration

Originally the Government was to have provided a full-time administrator to the project as part of its in-kind contribution. However I understand that staff changes elsewhere in the Ministry meant that this position was moved to another section and the opportunity lost. The lack of this support was a major issue for the Coordinator and delays in resolving it are clearly a significant factor behind the slow project delivery.

It was noted as early as the project's Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) for 1 Oct-31 Dec 2007 that: *'The shortage of human resources within the Project Unit is a major constraint in enabling the timely implementation of project requirements.'* This question was not specifically addressed in subsequent QPR's, but an 'urgent need' for an Assistant was identified in the 2008/09 APR (dated May 2009) due to an intense work load and the diversity of activities. The position was discussed by the NSC on 28/9/09, following a request in the Coordinator's report, which agreed that the PMU should discuss the issue with UNDP and proceed if a position was approved. There were some concerns over sustainability and finding the funds from within other activities. Some progress was only evident by the time of the next NSC meeting five months later (1/3/10) when the Coordinator reported that UNDP had endorsed recruitment and the UNDP representative commented that the TOR and recruitment were to be discussed at PMU level. An Assistant Project Coordinator was finally recruited on 23 August 2010 almost a year and a half after the issue was first raised and two and a half years after a shortage of human resources was first identified. She was a graduate of the University of the South Pacific with a degree majoring in geography and formerly worked with the Forestry Division as a Research Officer and clearly well suited to the role.

Recommendation: The lack of administrative support for the project was a significant issue that should have been addressed more quickly. Clearly there were two options, either Government providing the position as in-kind support as originally planned, or the funds being provided by the

project as finally occurred. **Issues like this need to be forced into an earlier resolution and I see it as largely UNDP's role to achieve this.**

Note: Financial management which is a major task for the assistant is discussed later (section 5.7).

5.3.4 National Steering Committee (NSC)

The TOR for the NSC in the Prodoc was clearly cut and pasted from an NCSA document with insufficient changes made! It set out a challenging role for the NSC that included 'managing the overall activities and budget' which is clearly unrealistic. A briefer and more appropriate TOR was developed at project inception which identified the group as '*responsible for making executive management decisions for a project when guidance is required by the PMU including approval of project plans and revisions*'. More specifically it would review and approve stage plans, authorize any significant deviations from these, ensure that required resources were committed and arbitrate on conflicts.

This NSC has been one of the most effective that I have seen. The reasons for this are:

- the role has been clearly and appropriately defined
- agencies have been represented by the right people (top/senior level)
- many of these people were involved in the development of the NAP and see the SLM project as the first step in its implementation
- many were involved at a hands-on level when NAP development started and they have now moved into senior positions taking that experience with them
- the same representatives have attended a good number of meetings
- meetings have been held fairly regularly
- the committee has been well supported by project staff.

For an NSC to play the stated role it needs to receive timely, detailed reports and to have its meetings well run with good minutes taken so that issues can be tracked from meeting to meeting. In this respect the Project Coordinator, helped for the past two meetings by the Project Assistant, has done a great job and her work should serve as a model for other committees.

The Coordinator prepared specific reports for every meeting in addition to providing QPR's and other information. These summarised progress against different outputs as the extracts from report no. 4 show (Annex 4). Detailed minutes were then taken of each meeting recording the main points of dialogue and decisions like the extracts from a 2008 meeting provided in Annex 5.

The coordinator also paid particular attention to ensure that those attending the meeting were well prepared. Invitations were sent out well beforehand and follow-ups made by phone to confirm who would be attending to represent the different agencies. The minutes of the previous meeting and the progress report could then be directed personally to each attendee. There was discussion at one meeting that the minutes were too long but I disagree.

Recommendation: Use the details of how this committee was supported as examples for future projects, viz: detailed project reports individually circulated before meeting and detailed minutes taken.

Four meetings were held in 2008 but only two each in 2009 and 2010. To fulfil its role of endorsing reports and approving proposed work plans and budgets it should meet quarterly as this is the reporting period to UNDP. At least four meetings are required again in 2011 to ensure that the project achieves as much as possible by its conclusion.

Recommendation: NSC's should meet four times a year to ensure they fulfil their role of endorsing reports and proposed work plans each quarter.

A minor issue for reviewers is caused by the complexity of the names used by Samoans, particularly the use of titles. In the minutes of the first meeting for example, the discussion is led by someone referred to by his title while no-one of that name appears in the attendee list so it is difficult to know what agency he represents. At other times the same person has attended two meetings but been referred to by completely different names in each set of minutes.

Recommendation: It would assist if the same names were used throughout and their agencies supplied in the attendance list each meeting.

Recommendation: Consider whether participation in the Steering Committee is an appropriate way for Samoa Trust Estate Corporation to participate in the project to assist its farmers to learn about SLM practices.

5.4 Analysis by Outcomes and Outputs

Output 1.1 and 1.2 Preparation and adoption of National Action Plan (NAP)

These outputs were largely achieved by the time that the project started and responsibility for raising ongoing awareness about it sits with the UNCCD Coordinating Unit not the SLM team.

Formulation began in 2004 and the NAP was approved by Cabinet in 2006. It was launched nationally within the SLM project during Environment Forum in 2010 with the project covering launch coats and printing. It is due for review in 2011.

While it could be argued that this should not have been included in the project document, I understand that project design at the outcome level was prescribed internationally. All projects were to have four similar outcomes including one addressing the NAP as most countries had not started formulation of theirs.

I understand that Samoa's NAP has not yet been sent to UNCCD Secretariat.

Recommendation: Send the NAP to UNCCD Secretariat as soon as possible.

Outcome 2

This outcome contains the bulk of the project's work to date. It involved a lot of discussion about pilot sites in the early stages followed by site visits on both islands which meant that it was some time before activities could begin.

Output 2.1 Enhanced capacities for the effective administration and sustainable management of lands and land-based resources

This output is largely to be worked on in the final year.

Regarding 2.1.1. *'Conduct trainings on the assessments and appropriate uses of land and land-based resources'* the project team is currently working with Forestry and Agriculture staff to develop a training schedule for 2011. This output was to have included Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) training but this was delivered by SPREP under another project. Further training in this area is also being discussed with the Planning and Urban Management Authority (PUMA)

Regarding 2.1.2 *'Update through technical and information survey of Land Tenure distribution of Samoa lands'* the project team recently met with CEO to discuss this and a TOR is to be drafted to define the work in discussion with the Ministry's Technical Services Division. This will determine whether the work is done within MNRE or whether it requires an international consultant.

Recommendation: Activities in this output to be carefully planned as part of the 2011 work plan (see section 6). Given the limited time remaining careful consideration should be given of the employment of a consultant to work alongside MNRE technical staff.

Output 2.2 Enhanced capacities for sustainable agriculture particularly in drought-prone areas

Asau Resource Centre

This output centred on a pilot project in the village of Asau in NW Savaii, the part of the country most prone to drought. Work started in late 2008 after an initial emphasis was placed on pilot projects under other outputs and delays were caused by major fires at Asau and Aopo. The original plan was to identify successful dry-land farms as demonstration projects but the focus changed to the development of a resource centre at the suggestion of the UNDP representative at the December 2008 NSC meeting. There was considerable discussion before the NSC agreed that this did not represent a major departure from the project's plan and was an appropriate response to the issue.



Photo 1: Members of project team in front of centre.

It appears that the construction of the Centre, through the renovation of an old house on Government land across the road from Forestry offices, cost cST\$105,000 and fitting it out with equipment cST\$47,000. The Centre was opened in Environment Week (November 2010) with activities (school competitions, etc) at a cost of around \$62,000 (including travel and accommodation). Sundry other costs go to make up expenditure to date of c.ST\$254,228 (US\$101,691) within the budget of US\$103,000.

Comment

The Resource Centre has been finished and fitted out to a high standard and clearly has been very well received by the Asau community who do not have a similar meeting venue and have had to hire rooms from the local hotel at some cost. There is some work to do to finish it off including installation of shelves with information material and the wiring up of computers and linking to Ministry servers with the provision of internet access. Information material has been obtained from Women in Business and METI and will be collected from Crops Division during a visit to Savaii next week and soil information is awaited from the ICCRA & HSS project. Some material is as hard copy and some electronic and printing and scanning may be needed. Completing the fit-out needs to happen as soon as possible so that the Centre can start to deliver training and SLM information and in turn the project can obtain a return on all this investment in the final year of the project.



Photo 2: Resource centre – computer room



Photo 3: Resource centre – meeting room

Work has begun drafting a TOR for the Centre and completing this is also a priority. In addition to setting out the purpose of the centre, it needs to include:

- How the Centre will be managed day to day and maintained long-term beyond the end of the project – Forestry Division staff appear to play a key role here – recognising that it has a long-term role. As part of this annual operating costs and depreciation need to be worked out to identify the funding needed.
- How requests to use the building for different purposes will be treated – priority will presumably be given to groups whose activities link into SLM but it will presumably be available to all in the community for a defined fee (to contribute to ongoing maintenance) and some means of recovering the cost of repairing any damage that occurs
- How the computers are to be managed. This seems the biggest challenge for the centre, firstly to maintain the computers in a fully operational state (linked to server, etc) and secondly to manage their use so that this is appropriate and primarily serves the aims of the SLM project. Clearly very good anti-virus and spyware programmes will be needed and kept updated. I understand that there are no IT technicians capable of servicing/maintaining their functionality on Savaii so that a system (and budget) for bringing support from Upolu will be needed. (A record should be kept of when the computers are working and not working so that arrangements can be reviewed). {Note: Computer replacement also needs addressing as equipment has a relatively short life in Samoan conditions.}
- How the Centre will serve the main objective for which it was built. Its focus should be the farmers of the villages from Aopo to Neiafu as in the original plan. While younger farmers and students at the local school may use the computers, most farmers will need to be informed using different means such as written materials and workshops.
- How the Centre may be linked to demonstration sites close to the centre, both within the Government compound and on surrounding farms. These could illustrate a range of techniques including the traditional ones being used by the successful farmers in the area, composting, mulching, green cover crops, particular vegetables or tree crops adapted to dry conditions, and drip irrigation. It should also look at other cost-effective land-uses including bee keeping which works well in the drier conditions.

An agreement like this should have been drawn up before the go-ahead for the Centre was given to ensure its sustainability.

It is recognised that building the capacity of the local community to better manage their land is a long-term issue. The Centre has a significant role to play but there will also be a need for direct mentoring of farmers, training the better farmers to train others, and this will require ongoing Government support.

Recommendations:

In future, ensure that planning for ongoing management and use of facilities is carried out before such facilities are built.

Complete the development of a comprehensive TOR asap that is signed off by Land Management Division, Forestry Division and Agriculture Department.

Develop a training plan for the last year of the project to identify how it will be used to promote SLM.

Consider placing at a prominent location within the Centre a brief message in Samoan (as a plaque, poster, laminated sheet, etc) that will ensure that all who use it (whether for SLM training or another purpose) ‘take home’ something about SLM. This could have three elements like: importance of land, importance of soil, look after your soil’.

Finalise a time-line for completing ‘fit-out’ and linking of computers asap.

Output 2.3 Enhanced capacities for rehabilitation of degraded coastal areas

This output contained two activities in the project document:

- 2.3.1 Conduct demonstration of soil protection measures through terracing and application of structural mitigation measures on eroded steep lands/slopes in Upolu and Savaii (GEF \$60,000 Co-finance – in-kind \$90,000)
- 2.3.2 Conduct extensive workshops for coastal communities for Upolu and Savaii (GEF 20,000 Co-finance in-kind \$50,000)

At project inception 2.3.1 was modified to ‘conduct coastal protection methods through the adoption of hard and soft solutions’ and its share of the GEF budget increased to \$75,000 leaving \$5000 for 2.3.2 whose wording was unchanged though there was no longer plans for an international consultant to support the activity. The ‘specified approach’ listed ‘implement construction of a seawall’ at Lano, Savaii and ‘replanting of mangroves’ at Vaitoloa, Upolu. The agreed budget for the Lano pilot project was US\$63,000 with \$12,000 allocated to Vaitoloa.

A. Lano seawall

The construction of a seawall which was the major part of the Lano pilot is the most contentious issue in this evaluation. A ‘seawall’ would generally not be considered a Sustainable Land Management option. There are three questions to examine:

1. Whether it was a justified solution to an SLM problem in this case?
2. What was the process that saw it approved?
3. What was the impact on the project?



Photo: Coastal erosion at Lano pre-project (Source: LANO TAR Annex)



Photo 4: Part of seawall with plantings behind it.

Q1 Justification of seawall

Lano was identified as the priority site on Savaii where coastal land was being degraded and lost through the combined effects of the sea and freshwater flooding after heavy rain causing erosion. The seawall that was developed in response was emphasised by the community as their key need in all consultations and it appears that an alternative approach was never going to be acceptable. It has

clearly been of direct benefit to local families halting for now the continued loss of their land which would eventually have threatened homes. It has also been considered to protect important coastal habitats including a large mangrove wetland that has also been subject to conservation planning in the past.⁵

Construction of the seawall was not the only activity carried out at Lano. Plantings were undertaken behind the seawall with advice from Forestry Division and the base of a bridge was lowered to allow adequate inflows and outflows for the mangrove wetland behind the village. These two activities were clearly valuable.

A further justification was that the wall was linked to the village agreeing to ban sand-mining. I was not able to assess whether this was working or not though I did see a villager taking sand across the road in a wheelbarrow.

Q2 Process and sign-off.

The original intention had been to survey coastal lands and identify the most degraded but vulnerabilities at Lano had already been identified (in a climate change report) so this was specified at inception. The Inception Report does explicitly specify 'construction of seawall' at Lano in its 'logical framework' so clearly it was accepted by Government and UNDP at this initial stage.

A Technical Assessment Report was produced by the Lano Technical Implementing Group (TIG) which identified major impacts of coastal erosion including loss of 'milestones of cultural significance', need for some families to move inland and loss of soil fertility through increasing salination. Its recommendations included a 'coastal protection mechanism' with a statement in the text that full Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken prior to implementation (of 'hard solution'). The words 'coastal protection mechanism' appear to have been introduced to avoid the use of 'seawall' but the latter appears throughout project reporting so this achieved little.

Progress on approving the seawall and its budget can be looked at through the minutes of Steering Committee meetings. At the 14/8/08 meeting one attendee asked for confirmation that a seawall was being built as the TAR referred to a 'coastal protection mechanism'. The UNDP representative suggested that a clear mechanism was needed to guide the PMU (on this) and the Chair confirmed that the NSC would be approving all decisions. The meeting endorsed the Lano TAR.

The issue was discussed further at the next meeting (7 October). A UNDP representative requested further clarification regarding the seawall and the contribution of the project to actual construction noting that this was not normally supported by GEF. The response was that the project's contribution would depend on the co-financing available from Government. The meeting made two decisions:

- 1. Project Unit to proceed with necessary process for the construction of seawall*
- 2. Budget to be presented during the next meeting to confirm project's contribution and Government co-financing.*

⁵ I have been unable to obtain a copy of a draft management plan developed for this wetland c.2005.

It was later noted that the advertisement and tender documents for the seawall construction had already been released (on 5th August) prior to this meeting so the decision (1. above) appeared to have already been made (presumably by the PMU).

There is no mention of the budget being presented in the minutes for the next meeting on 11 December so it is assumed that this did not occur. However this was an extra meeting associated with a field visit to Savaii. It did not receive a detailed report from the coordinator as the quarter had yet to be completed and its brief minutes suggested that it was limited in its scope. There is no evidence that the UNDP representative raised the issue.

The budget was presented at the next full meeting on 6/2/09 when the Coordinator noted a contractor's cost of ST\$232,285. An explanation was sought for the funding of the Lano construction work and it was confirmed that Government co-financing was ST\$62,000 with the balance funded by the project. This appears to be the first time that it was clear that the project was to spend such a large sum on the construction of the seawall but UNDP were not represented at this meeting. UNDP staff called several meetings once they had received the minutes but chose to take no further action. An internal memo was placed on file at UNDP stating that the seawall 'is a political commitment made by the Government of Samoa to the people of Lano'.

No further discussion is recorded at the later NSC meetings (28/9/09, 1/3/10, 6/10/10, 26/1/11).

UNDP Apia Office staff had earlier discussed the issue with the Programme's Regional Technical Advisor for SLM in Bangkok who confirmed GEF's reluctance to fund infrastructure. However it was agreed that the political drive was making it difficult to look at other options and that the community would vote for the seawall ahead of any alternatives. The wall seems to have been considered an acceptable option at this point but it was agreed that UNDP must request an Environment Impact Assessment before any final commitment was given. This had also been identified as a requirement in the Lano TAR report.

No EIA was carried out though theoretically it was required under Government regulations. This was at the instruction of the former MNRE CEO apparently based on the technical work that had been undertaken through the Government's wider Coastal Infrastructure Management Plan project and the work of the Lano Technical Group which included senior members of PUMA who are responsible for managing the EUIA Regulations. EIA's have not subsequently been required for any seawall.

Reviewing the consultations with Lano village, it is clear that most discussions took place at high level between the Faipule (MP), Pulenuu (Mayor) and one or two senior chiefs of on the village side and the Minister for Natural Resources & Environment and the CEO on the Government and project side. The Lano technical working group did make numerous visits on site and discussed with the village council/committees the findings of their assessment report. The project team organised a major consultation in September 2009 in which participants split into groups to discuss the TAR and all groups saw the seawall as the priority. There was also discussion of the village's obligations, to donate the rock for the wall and to ban sand-mining.

Q3: Impact on the project:

The expenditure on seawall construction consisted of ST\$297,285 of which the project contributed ST\$235,285 (c.US\$94,000) and the Government of Samoa ST\$62,000. Further costs associated with the Lano project (consultations, signage etc) were ST\$36,840 giving a total cost to GEF of \$272,125 or US\$108,850 (using conversion of 0.4 as budget spreadsheet). This represents overspending of US\$45,850 compared to the budgeted US\$63,000.

It would require a lengthy review of budget expenditure to assess the full impact of this overspend and whether it was partly absorbed by savings elsewhere. However it clearly had an immediate direct impact on its output as the second activity '2.3.2. *Conduct extensive workshops for coastal communities for Upolu and Savaii*' was cancelled as a result.

Conclusions:

- A seawall is not considered a good pilot demonstration activity for an SLM project.
- A seawall is still a seawall even if it is called a 'coastal protection mechanism'
- The process of approving the seawall raises a number of questions. Decisions were made at a high level largely above the PMU.
- There was no prior agreement between the Government and UNDP on the proportion of seawall costs to be met by the project and opportunities could have been taken to clarify this beforehand.
- The NSC clearly did not follow through on some details of the process, particularly receiving a clear breakdown of costs in advance of construction.
- Seawall construction could be considered a pragmatic response to the issue meeting the priorities of the community and the CEO and Minister of MNRE at the time and addressing an urgent problem. It was the only approach to prevent further ongoing damage and loss of land in the short term. It would buy time to put in place some more sustainable solutions including re-plantings. It was thus appropriate for the SLM project to make a contribution alongside Government co-financing. The balance between the two contributions was not ideal.
- Timing was unfortunate as several further seawalls have been built in the area since but funded by more appropriate sources: climate change adaptation and tsunami response.
- The costs of seawall construction did lead to the loss of an important project activity.

Recommendations:

- **An agreement needs to be in place before a construction activity with significant costs (and controversy) like this proceeds. This would address EIA (whether to be required or not) and the cost breakdown between different parties.**

This would have avoided a lot of difficult discussion and straining of working relationships.

- **UNDP and Government to discuss putting in place a mechanism (if none exists) for high-level discussion for situations in which those managing a project within the two are uncomfortable about decisions being made outside their control.**

It has been suggested that an issues paper could be presented to the UNDP Regional Representative who could meet with the head of the Aid Coordination and Debt Management Division.

- **Discussion is held to determine whether, as has been suggested, an EIA should be a requirement if a project like this is to commit funding for any infrastructure that is deemed necessary for building capacity.**

Tuvalu's NAP noted that poorly built seawalls were actually a contributor to land degradation. While reasonably effective in normal conditions they were not designed for cyclone-force waves. Seawater that washed over the walls in cyclonic conditions was trapped behind them where it caused significant vegetation die-off and land degradation.

The design process appears to have involved the then CEO of MNRE and Public Works Department and the former instructed the team on collecting measurements on coast that went into the tender document. Monitoring of construction was largely carried out by ACEO-LMD who did require a section to be taken down and re-built because the rocks used were too small.

Recommendation: I am not an expert in coastal management and a further assessment of the design specifications and construction of the seawall may be worthwhile.

Other work at Lano

Photo 5 shows the bridge in the village with the mangrove wetland in the background. The bridge was built in a way that significantly reduced water flows and the TAR recommended removal of part of the base (as shown). Water is still at a higher level on the far side of the bridge suggesting there is still some impediment of natural flows (though this is the wet season so levels will be higher than normal).

Recommendation: Consideration is given to assessing:

- 1. whether the bridge is now allowing adequate water flows to the wetland**
- 2. whether the part of the concrete base that was removed was an integral part of the design and thus the structure has now been weakened.**

Photo 6 shows where the roadway has been built up to replace a ford – a recommendation of the Lano TAR – but no culverts are evident and some water is ponding behind it. It is not clear whether this is a waterway and thus whether culverts are needed.

Recommendation: Assess whether culverts need to be placed under the roadway over the ford.



Photo 5: Bridge before mangrove wetland showing concrete removed to create channel



Photo 6: Road south of bridge showing water (on right) impounded by lack of culvert

B. Vaitoloa Mangrove re-habilitation



Photo 7: Vaitoloa mangroves showing dumped rubbish prior to project activity (Kolose photo)

I did not have a chance to visit this project site to assess work there but it has been completed so it is not an issue on which a comment on completing the work was needed. On paper it looks to have been a successful collaboration with an existing project (Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA)) whereby SLM project inputs were largely technical, to measure chemical characteristics of the site and financial, to increase the area that could be replanted with mangroves.

Recommendation: Project team obtain a final report on POWPA project from Parks & Reserves section.

C. Next steps for coastal areas:

The big challenge for the project is how to further address the issue of the degradation of coastal areas which remains a NAP priority. The seawall cannot really be used as an example of an SLM approach. The following is a listing of responses to coastal land degradation in a presentation from Mauritius's SLM project which seems to cover a range of more appropriate responses to this issue:

- Design guidance for coastal development (residential, Commercial, Industrial and Resorts)
- Set-back policy (no development within 30 metres from the HWM)
- Studies on design of buildings to cope with flooding and sea level rise
- Relocation of mooring sites for fishermen's boats and pleasure crafts
- Plantation of mangroves
- Re-forestation of beaches
- Sand dune binders
- Monitoring of coral bleaching
- Banning of sand mining in lagoons

(<http://www.wamis.org/agm/meetings/wocald06/S5-Paupiah.pdf>)

Some of the other work done at Lano, particularly the lowering of bridge supports to create improved flows for the mangrove wetland and plantings of coastal trees, do represent good demonstration activities.

No further work is planned within this output in the final year. That would make output 2.3.2 a priority for further work – e.g. for a GEF-5 SLM project. I consider that it is unsatisfactory to leave Lano village without a further follow up.

Recommendation: *A further meeting/workshop should be held at Lano village. I would encourage the presence of the current CEO-MNRE to lead this meeting as he has a strong environmental planning background. The purpose would include:*

- *Check whether the village has met its part of the agreement with the ban on sand-mining*
- *Assess the impacts of seawall on the community. Has it brought the expected positive benefits?*
- *Discussion that a seawall is not part of the usual SLM approach but was built in this case to meet a pressing humanitarian need in the village. Then move on to discuss SLM, the importance of maintaining coastal plantings and of looking after the mangroves.*
- *Discussion of an area of land – currently forested – behind another seawall built on from the bridge (Photo 8). This would encourage the village not to clear this area for development but uses it as part of its ongoing sustainable coastal protection.*

Recommendation: *Nationwide work providing communities with SLM options for addressing degradation of coastal areas should be a priority for the final year (if other commitments allow) or for follow up projects.*



Photo 8: Newer seawall (2010) with partially enclosed forest to right.

Output 2.4 Enhanced capacities for rehabilitation of degraded watershed areas through promotion of SLM practices

Vaipouli Pilot, Savaii

The Vaipouli water catchment was selected for this pilot and a strong programme has developed led by the Water Resources (WRD) and Forestry Divisions, MNRE in partnership with the community.

Key elements include:

- Watershed prioritised for work by WRD based on a national review against key criteria
- Project used as a pilot for a Catchment Management Plan. Such plans were mandated in the National Water Resources Management Act 2008 and this is the first that WRD has developed that will be used nationally as a model.
- Management Planning involves ‘characterisation’, identifying problems, and developing management responses, and long-term monitoring.
- An efficient-looking nursery has been set up on Government land – a good location for sustainability – and seedlings are growing well
- Trees have been selected for propagation through collection of ‘wildings’ based on advice from local people of the previous forest on the site – tava was dominant
- Mainstreaming has already happened with three labourers employed (two by Forestry and one by Water Division) on the project through Government budget
- Trees are being planted according to protocols developed by Forestry Division from previous plantation work on Savaii. This has also led to the development of a thorough maintenance programme for plantings (e.g. 5 visits in first year, reducing in later years) supported by accurate figures of person hours needed to maintain a given number of hectares)
- Work overseen by an experienced forester who has worked on Savaii for many years
- An MOU was established between MNRE and the District Water Committee representing the villages in which it accepted a responsibility to maintain trees once the project had planted them.
- The water intake and distribution systems have also been upgraded in parallel with the catchment work through a separate WRD project (European Union support for ‘Independent Water Schemes’).
- Staff from several agencies including the SLM project team participated in training delivered by the international consultant assisting with management planning.



Photo 9: Nursery with tava seedlings in foreground ready for planting

This has clearly been a strong pilot project with many lessons that can be applied nationally. There is one issue requiring resolution: the villages appear not to have met their part of the agreement and the plantings are not being sufficiently maintained. I was shown an area where the planted trees are surviving but not thriving because there is too much shade and some other plants, including the invasive species cinnamon, need cutting back. I would imagine that in more open areas the planted seedlings will need releasing from grass or climbers like ‘mile-a-minute’ (*Mikania*).

Two approaches to this issue were discussed.



Photo 10. Planting area in catchment showing line cleared within cinnamon (an invasive weed in Samoan conditions)

Option 1: would involve the project team taking responsibility for caring for the trees for a period, then passing them on to the villagers to maintain. This would mean fewer trees were propagated and planted to concentrate on looking after those already in the ground. Some of the Forestry workforce at Asau could be brought across to assist, or Water Resources Division casual employees. The first year is the most critical when the plantings need visiting five times. Handing over the trees at this point might be effective as they will have had a good start and could survive even if the villagers did not visit them as frequently as ideal. But they would still depend on the villagers doing something.

Option 2: attempt to get the villages to meet their obligations and put in place the required tree maintenance programme. The project team would then have a role of encouraging, monitoring and perhaps providing further training. However these days it is very difficult to persuade people to take on work that does not bring an immediate benefit in terms of food or cash.

Forestry Division staff recently met with the District Water Committee and they acknowledged the commitment to look after the trees. The original plan was for the District as a whole to get involved and divide up the area to be managed between them. However this raised concerns that partitioning the managed area could lead to some claims of ownership. So a decision was made to work with the owners using the different areas. They will be letting Forestry Division know when they are going to be doing the work so the two can do it together.

Recommendation: The proposed approach is endorsed through which Forestry Division assist the villagers to maintain the trees for several years until they require minimal input.

This may mean some involvement over 2-3 more years which ties in with WRD's approach which typically involves 3-5 years of work in any catchment. This would allow planting lines and seedlings to be well marked (flagging tape) as I would think villagers would have difficulty identifying seeing some of the current seedlings. An attempt would then be made for the Forestry team to pull back its contribution as soon as this is considered possible and timing is likely to vary depending on conditions and the presence of weeds particularly climbers.

Recommendation: Village meetings should be held to review achievements to date, remind communities of the obligations that they have agreed to, and agree on this way forward.

Output 2.5 Assessments of the appropriate use of land

It was identified in 2009 that this output would be taken up by the Agriculture Department as part of the GEF-funded Integrating Climate Change Risks in the Agriculture and Health Sectors in Samoa project (ICCRA and HSS). It was thus not included in this evaluation.

Output 2.6. Enhanced SLM through improvements in... capacity including ... national plans and policies

This output was changed significantly sometime after inception removing the development of a Land Administration Policy that was considered both too ambitious and partly unnecessary. The approach is now twofold. The team together with the Principal Land Management Officer and staff of PUMA are to raise awareness of existing policies such as Sand-mining Policy (never endorsed by Cabinet) and Reclamations Policy. The team will also work with PUMA to check whether SLM principles are adequately included in these and other relevant land use policies. Discussions have also been held ACEO Crops within the Agriculture Department about looking at their policies and seeing which need strengthening from an SLM viewpoint. One already identified during the Vaipouli project was the Livestock Policy which currently encourages farmers to have animals within 10 metres of a riverbed rather than 60m as in the watershed policy.

The work is to occur in the final year once national elections are completed in the 2nd quarter.

Output 2.7 Development of monitoring and evaluation systems on ... implementation phase of SLM project

This output changed following a Regional Workshop organised by SPREP with funding from UNCCD at which it was agreed that countries with a similar output should utilise the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) as the basis of their M&E. The UNCCD Coordinating Unit of MNRE is responsible for PRAIS which is filled in online. The challenge is to obtain the necessary information from agencies and the team are working on this with SPREP's Technical Officer and the Principal Land Management Officer. I have not had time to look at PRAIS and the work involved. This work is to take place in the final year.

In discussion with the Coordinator it was noted that the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in the Project Document had never been looked at in the course of the project. A start has been made to review progress against these (Annex 4) and this should clearly be part of a Terminal Evaluation.

Recommendation: UNDP should ensure that project teams keep the project's original KPI's in mind when evaluating performance.

Output 3.1 Mainstreaming of SLM

This is a challenging, longer-term output and the project could only expect to have made a start. However progress has been slow and key activities set down for year 2 have not yet happened. With respect to 3.1.1 'Mainstreaming successful results of project at local & national levels' it is too early for work to have been done as the project is still completing pilot projects. Some may be achieved by the end of the project.

Mainstreaming is happening at the local level – e.g. Vaipouli where both Forestry and Water Resources Division have appointed local staff. Some groundwork has been done for national mainstreaming but this will be a long term issue.

Output 3.1.2 covers mainstreaming SLM into national plans, policies and legislation. The project timing was unfortunate at the outset as the 2008-2012 National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was being finalised when project started. It is developed by the Economic, Policy & Planning Division at Treasury whose representative on the NSC is looking at entry points for SLM into the next one from 2013 onwards. There needs to be strengthening of environmental considerations in the NSDS generally.

On the legislation side work is proceeding on a Land Management Bill which is now in a consultation phase. This will be followed by drafting work which may require a tender to be issued for a local consultant's assistance if it is to be close to completion by the end of the project.

Recommendation: activities need to be carefully planned for this output for the balance of the project to maximise achievement. (See section 6).

Output 3.2 Sharing information on SLM

To date the project has reproduced some out of the print material developed by other agencies and put a major effort into supporting Environment Week in 2010 alongside colleagues working on climate change. Radio and TV presenters were taken to Savaii during the week to report back from the pilot projects there, T-shirts were printed and school competitions organised.

I noted that the MNRE website has no up to date information on the project and apparently this was provided to the Capacity Building Section, MNRE some time ago but there are some issues with the management of the website.

It was suggested that TV adverts may be developed using the balance of the funds in this output.

Recommendation: Project team should identify the priority target audience for the final year of the project, the appropriate messages for them, and then the best means of delivery. It

seems to me that farmers, village councils or Government decision-makers could be the priorities.

Outcome 4: Development of medium term investment plan

Work not yet started on this outcome and it is planned for 2011. As indicated in Annex 3 this output has been changed to the development of an Integrated Financing Strategy. Staff received some training on this in 2009 but a follow up is required as there was too much information to absorb. There is provision to involve an international consultant with this work, but the whole activity is in doubt following the development of an UNCCD Strategic Plan and a need to first align NAP's with this. What will happen in the case of Samoa that has just completed her NAP remains to be clarified though it is actually due for review in 2011. It sounds as if the UNCCD Coordinating Unit within MNRE has a lot of work to do first before any work on an investment plan is possible.

Recommendation: A meeting is held soon between the Coordinator, SPREP's Technical Officer and the Principal Land Management Officer responsible for coordinating UNCCD work to decide if this activity is to proceed and, if so, how.

Outcome 5: Adaptive Management & Lessons learnt

This outcome does not appear in the text in the Prodoc but is in the work plan and budget sections as a way to wrap up all the administrative work of the project. Project management and administration have been reviewed earlier so no further assessment is presented here.

5.5 Technical Aspects

It has not been possible to assess the technical aspects of the project in the time allowed. There has been quite a lot of work done including testing pollutants at Vaitoloa, soil and water quality testing at Vaipouli and soil testing at Lano.

Recommendation: Project team should assemble a folder with all technical information collected in the course of the project.

This information seems to largely be held in different agencies partnering the project. However it would be useful to have a central file as insurance against data being lost and to allow assessment of what has been done.

5.6 Opportunities for future work with Universities

Discussions were held with representatives of the National University of Samoa and the local campus of the University of the South Pacific. They are strongly supportive of the project and have

attended some NSC meetings. USP have delivered training on soil characterisation and provided technical inputs to the project. Both are keen to develop opportunities for their students to become involved and there may be opportunities within technical courses or also in a module that teaches how to do research. The Asau resource Centre may be a particular opportunity for students whose home is Savaii. Involving students is excellent capacity building and contributes to project sustainability.

Recommendation: The project team should come up with a list of research needs for the project or research opportunities that could be carried out alongside it and discuss this with the two representatives.

5.7 Financial Management

Financial management always seems to present challenges in projects like this and Samoa's SLM was no exception. Issues were evident within both Government and UNDP systems which required an undue amount of administration time being spent by staff of both organisations. Delays were evident in the processes of procuring funds and reporting.

Government system

The Government system has been summarised in a December 2009 report 'Report on Micro Assessment of Implementing Partner MNRE' by Betham & Co for UNDP. This noted that the 'project funds disbursement process is considered too lengthy'.

I experienced this issue first-hand when the Project Coordinator and Assistant spent a total of over 3 person days trying to secure the tickets we needed to take a vehicle to Savaii for this evaluation. Even then they failed to obtain the necessary purchase order in time and I was required to purchase tickets using my own cash to allow the visit to proceed at all, albeit with a reduced time-frame. A similar scenario was apparently repeated several times over the course of the project and the team occasionally had to obtain significant cash from the businesses they knew in order for key activities to proceed. They could only obtain service from some suppliers by differentiating themselves as the SLM project rather than part of MNRE.

My understanding of the procedure and problem is as follows:

Step 1: Team submits a TY11B procurement form (signed by the Coordinator and Project Manager) to Accounts Division, MNRE

Step 2: MNRE Accounts prepares a TY11A which is submitted to Aid Coordination and Debt Management Division, Ministry of Finance (MOF).

Step 3: The Principal Aid Officer verifies and approves the TY1A after checking project budget and work plan and submits it to Accounts Division, MOF.

Step 4: Accounts Division, MOF prepare Purchase Orders.

Step 5: Project staff uplift purchase orders and take to Shipping Corporation to obtain tickets.

Once work has been carried out the supplier produces an invoice which goes through a similar circulation involving Accounts, MNRE and Aid Coordination and Debt Management Division, MOF before Accounts, MOF issues cheques.

In this case Step 4 proved the problematic one. Accounts Division were not prepared to release any Purchase Orders for the MNRE in the new month (Feb) until the Ministry had cleared all outstanding payments from the previous month, i.e. until they had submitted invoices. This leads to the apparently bizarre and unfair situation of project staff having to find out who in the Ministry had not submitted their invoices, then chase up either these people or their suppliers so that the invoices are forthcoming or Accounts Division, MOF are sufficiently re-assured that they are coming in. It appeared that a letter from Accounts, MNRE confirming the invoices were on their way was going to be sufficient to satisfy Accounts Division, MOF, but then at the last minute there was a further unspecified problem for which they needed input from the Principal Aid Officer. While it is clear that MOF need controls to ensure that Government Agencies pay for services in a timely way, it seems that some improvements need to be made. The possibility of differentiating between aid-funded projects and those funded out of the Government's core budget was discussed but this is contrary to current policy.

The problem was confounded in this example by the Shipping Corporation treating the Ministries each as single clients rather than considering separate projects within them differently. If a Ministry as a whole owes the Corporation more than \$2000 it will not issue any further tickets until this is reduced/paid off, whether or not a project has funds and no debt. The project team has to chase around to ensure other sections pay the Corporation before it can do its work. Two project activities have been cancelled in the past as a result of these difficulties and the team have also had to use their own personal funds at times.

I had insufficient time to review the financial transactions of the project in any detail but was pleased to note that an audit will take place shortly. I hope that the auditor is able to recommend improvements to financial systems including addressing the specific issue described.

UNDP system

UNDP has been trialling the FACE system for some time. This seems generally well received initially but recent modifications have made more work requiring an interchange of several emails for no apparent gain from the project side. UNDP staff acknowledged that there had been a number of changes and they proposed some more training shortly.

One issue that Ministry of Finance had is that the FACE form does not allow for commitments to be reflected on it whereas the Ministry works with a cash accounting system. UNDP cannot make an advance for the next quarter if 80% of the funds in the previous one have not been spent. Staff say they have found a way of adding committed funds to the FACE form so that they can be included in the assessment of the 80% and they need to work this through with the project team.

Reporting

Overall it seemed that project staff could never meet UNDP deadlines for financial reporting on a quarterly basis, nor supply an annual work plan (AWP) for the next year prior to the end of the previous one. It was noted that AWP's have to go to GEF HQ for endorsement so any delays can hold up the distribution of funds. There were ongoing problems of incorrect coding. I hear this in several evaluations and cannot see why this should be the case if UNDP staff provide adequate training – though staff turnover can be a factor.

Recommendation: Encourage the forthcoming audit to address the issues raised here and seek responses from the Government to the recommendations in the Betham report.

Evaluate whether the huge work required through quarterly reporting is justified and consider the savings possible by moving to a system based on thirds.

5.8 Management by UNDP

Staff changes at UNDP have created some issues for this project and more particularly for this evaluation. A combination of restructuring and the departures of key staff meant that the first part of this consultancy was coordinated by an Intern who left following the visit to Samoa, and its conclusion is in the hands of an Intern who has only been in the UNDP MCO for two weeks or so! I was informed that interns do not normally have any role managing projects or consultants and are largely expected to help project staff with administrative work and to observe the work of the agency.

The result for this consultancy has been that it has been hard to obtain information and reports from UNDP and timely guidance of the issues/lessons learned that particularly needed to be addressed in the evaluation. It is also unclear what feedback will be obtained on this draft evaluation with key players no longer in the office.

More importantly, the project is not currently receiving the management inputs that it would normally expect from UNDP. Despite their best efforts the interns do not have the project history or the experience to effectively play the Project Officer role. It is understood that this vacancy will be filled shortly though there will clearly be a time for the new officer to come up to speed and become effective. This could be a risk for the project which is two months into its vital last year when there is still a lot of work to do.

The issue is now looked at in more detail. Firstly the Assistant Regional Representative (Environment & Climate Change) (ARR-ECC), who had overall responsibility for the SLM programme in the countries covered from the Apia office left in February 2010. This position could not be filled despite being advertised twice and I was informed that the low salary offered meant that there were no suitable candidates. Some coverage was provided by a UNDP Officer from Iran with an environment portfolio background from March to July. The ARR-ECC position has since been disestablished during re-structuring and the role will shortly be taken up as part of two positions, a Coordinator (Programme/Operations) and a Technical Specialist (Environment/Climate Change). These positions may be filled shortly.

Secondly, the Project Officer with day to day responsibility for Samoa's SLM project left at the end of 2010 and the Programme Associate who supported the financial side left in February 2011.

Recommendations:

Staff should be encouraged to maintain better project documentation. There is a system of common servers where presumably reports are meant to be lodged but this appeared not to have been well used. We also searched for reports on the laptop of the previous Project Officer which yielded some but not all.

Better transfer of information between departing and replacement staff is needed. This is a challenge for all organisations. Ideally there is an overlap whereby replacements are recruited before the incumbent leaves. The requirement for the latter to give adequate notice is clearly meant to help with this but it is rarely possible. Good filing of information helps in an interim situation when someone else has to take temporary control of a project – as in this case. Then it may be possible to bring the previous incumbent back for a day or two of induction when the new person starts.

Salary reviews should extend to more agencies.

It seems that in this case that there has been a salary review, including the position that could not be filled, but this did not consider some agencies (e.g. SPREP) that are effectively competing for staff in the same market. It sounds as if consideration should be given to widening such reviews if recruitment is a consistent problem at some levels.

An effective regime of permanent staff should be put in place as soon as possible to support in-country environment projects.

Staff are clearly working on this as best they can and new positions are being filled. Higher level reviews and restructuring requirements have intervened but it is hoped that these will bring about the advances they are clearly designed to do.

Relationships between the UNDP staff directly involved in the project and the project team have apparently been excellent. Clearly it has been helpful to the project team to be based in the same town as UNDP and there was close cooperation on reporting and planning. UNDP project staff have to maintain a tricky balance between assisting a project team and ensuring that they are delivering on the agreed project and in general do this very well. However a contentious issue like the expenditure on the seawall could perhaps have been referred to higher levels in the agency for input.

5.9 Regional Support

UNDP did try to set up a regional working group to support SLM projects from the outset but this did not develop as hoped and only a few agencies contributed. The most significant support for Samoa's project has come from SPREP who has been represented at several NSC meetings. This

support, particularly from the Environmental Officer will be particularly important in the final year of the project to determine activities in Monitoring and Evaluation and Financing Plan outputs.

The Coordinator has enjoyed email contact with other Coordinators in the region and discussion of common issues when they have participated in several workshops.

The subject of a Global Support Unit did not come up in any discussions and it does not appear to have been of much if any relevance to this project. In a previous evaluation I noted that The Global Prodoc refers to the establishment of a Global Project Coordination Unit in South Africa to oversee the execution of the project for 3-4 years (subsequently called a Global Support Unit (GSU)). Its responsibilities included:

- Prepare and implement the knowledge management component of the project, including regional workshops, exchanges, networking and dissemination
- Supervise and arrange for portfolio-wide monitoring, evaluation and lessons learnt, including development of a harmonized set of “impact indicators” for use by each MSP to allow portfolio-wide monitoring.

The Prodoc refers to the GSU which would provide services to countries from its global budget. It was to compile requests from participating countries and develop a work plan/strategy based on available funding, to provide services needed, and list the types of services it could offer. It seems that the GSU did not provide any support to Samoa and this may have been a timing issue with the Unit largely ceasing operation before this project had progressed very far.

6 Work Plan for final year

Initial reviews of the work plan for the project’s remaining 10 months suggest that there be more activities than can be completed in this time. There was no suggestion of seeking a further extension so the plan needs to be reviewed and modified into something achievable. It is worth noting that national elections are due to take place in March which may cause some disruption of activities and perhaps some change of direction if a new Minister is appointed as a result.

Recommendation: Project team and UNDP to review the 2011 work plan in detail and put proposed changes to the April meeting of the NSC for discussion and endorsement.

I consider that the only way to do this is to take each proposed activity and dissect it into a series of tasks, then spread these tasks out across the months identifying how long they are expected to take. Once you know how much time and resources each activity will take it becomes possible to prioritise them to produce an achievable plan. For example, take the recommendation to complete a detailed TOR for the Asau Resource Centre. This is not a quick, simple task. It requires some policy-type decisions, some analysis of building costs, drafting of a document, discussions on this, modifications to it, and finally sending to different agencies for signing. It should be possible to work out how many months this would take and how much time the Project Coordinator and other project partners will need to spend to make it happen.

Alongside the project outputs, the time spent reporting each quarter, organising and writing up steering Committee meetings, dealing with Audit and Terminal Evaluation needs to be accounted for in the table.

There is clearly an opportunity to build on this project and to complete any outstanding activities in the GEF-PAS 5 SLM project which has a framework accepted as a PIF.

7 Risk Management

Risk management was not addressed in detail in the project document such that the UNDP-GEF risk management system was not adequately applied. It was also not addressed in the Inception Report. Annex F, the document’s Logical Framework lists ‘Critical assumptions/Risks’ but no measures to address these.

Recommendation: Ensure all project documents contain a risk management section where risks are identified, ranked and measures to mitigate them identified.

Table: Assessment against risks identified in Prodoc

Outcome	Risks Identified	Assessment
Outcome 1: Completion of NAPS (through Co-financing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued political support for integrating SLM into national development planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support there but remains to be seen how SLM reflected in next SDS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds are mobilized Stakeholder commitment to SLM maintained Continued political support from key decision makers and planners. Key planners and policy makers will continue to see the advantages of using SLM economics for planning and policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Done Commitment has been there but variable Support has been there
Outcome 2: Capacities Developed for Sustainable Land Management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gov. Samoa remains committed to SLM success. Sufficient communications infrastructure is available in order to successfully implement SLM Adequate funds are mobilized and continued for SLM support beyond the SLM MSP project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support has been there Structures currently exist (Steering Committee & Technical Groups) but need to be maintained. Too early to assess. Samoa has decided to concentrate its GEF-5 funding on Land Degradation so this should bring in significant resources
Outcome 3: Mainstreaming of SLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The various institutions will be willing to collaborate on integrated approaches to sustainable land management and to sharing access to land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration is evident in the field in Savaii and to early to say whether this has been institutionalised. Information systems still

	<p>information systems developed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and the key institutions involved will commit the resources needed to maintain SLM beyond the life of the project. • The SLM monitoring and evaluation systems are being developed. 	<p>being developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to tell but see earlier comment on GEF-5 • Some baselines collected but long-term issue
<p>Outcome 4: Medium Term Investment Plan and its Resource Mobilization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and the key institutions involved will commit the resources needed to maintain SLM beyond the life of the project based on monitoring and evaluation systems that are developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to tell and work not yet started on this output but see earlier comment on GEF-5

The following risk matrix was developed during this consultancy to identify possible risks for the remaining 10 months of the project:

Table: Risk matrix for final year of project:

RISK	RISK RATING*	RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES
<p>There is insufficient national capacity to manage project</p> <p><i>Project currently has a strong management team though the position within the Ministry taking on the project management role is currently vacant. Risks might only arise if the new appointee has differing views on managing the project or if one of the current team leaves.</i></p>	L	<p>The issue needs to be kept under review. Maintaining the strong recording and reporting systems would be important for a transition in the unlikely event of project team changes.</p>
<p>Lack of cross-sectoral communication and coordination between agencies</p>	L	<p>Continue to provide strong support to Steering Committee and Technical Implementation Groups.</p>

RISK	RISK RATING*	RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES
<p>Political environment changes to a less favourable one.</p> <p><i>Some minor disruption to the project is likely with the national election occurring on 3-4th March and no work those days. No major change in direction seems likely though a change in Minister of MNRE could bring some difference in approach. Senior Ministry staff may have additional work while the new administration settles in.</i></p>	M	Ensure a realistic work plan for final year, keep under review and modify if required.
Project activities are disrupted by natural disasters.	L	The flexibility exists to revise work plans in response to any such events.

*Risk Rating – H (High Risk), M (Medium Risk), and L (Low Risk)

8 Monitoring & Evaluation

There are several Monitoring and Evaluation elements within the project and its reporting.

Firstly there were the Key Performance Impact Indicators (KPI's) in the Logical Framework in the project document. These operate at the Outcome level and had not been used by the project team until this evaluation requested this. Their analysis is attached as Annex 4.

Within the APR form is a questionnaire (following page) with very general measures of capacity building for example (weak, average, strong) which appear very subjective and largely meaningless. In theory there should be baseline measures of individuals' capacity established, then change measured against these, but this would require significant work. I would suggest that one measure that should be taken at Government level is the turnover of staff. This would involve recording all staff who had received training and then identifying after intervals, e.g. 1 year, 3 years, how many are still in a position to use the skills or knowledge that they had picked up.

Of course the key target for the project is those making decisions about managing land, whether village councils setting village rules or farmers managing different crops. I understand that some of the monitoring being established through the PRAIS system may include measures of land use. Individual assessments of farmers' capacity (understanding of SLM practices) and actions (use of good practices or poor practices from an SLM viewpoint) is the only real way of judging the success of this project and should have been built into the original design. Some attempt to assess this should be part of the Terminal Assessment for the Asau pilot project.

PIMS Number, Project Title and Country		PIMS: Title: Samoa's Capacity Building and Mainstreaming of SLM Country: SAMOA	
Implementation Status		Monitoring & Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Before Inception <input type="checkbox"/> At Inception <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 st Year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 nd Year		<input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd Year <input type="checkbox"/> 4 th Year <input type="checkbox"/> Completion	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Term Review Completed When:		<input type="checkbox"/> Final Evaluation Completed When:	
SLM Capacity Development	NAP Elaboration	SLM Mainstreaming	
Project Developed? <input type="checkbox"/> National Policy Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> National Institutional Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Local Policy Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Local Institutional Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals Capacity (farmers, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> NGO Capacity Others:	NAP Elaboration Done? <input type="checkbox"/> NAP Drafted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAP Adopted When: Government Support? <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sufficient <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> More than Sufficient	Attended DIFS Workshop? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No IFS Elaboration Done? <input type="checkbox"/> IFS Drafted <input type="checkbox"/> IFS Adopted When: SLM Mainstreamed? Line-Ministries/Sectors <input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture/Forestry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector	Government Support? <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sufficient <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> More than Sufficient Stakeholder Interest Increased? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Transport/Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Social Development <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Others: <input type="checkbox"/> International Donor
Capacity on SLM at Project Start? National Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Local Capacity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Strong	Linkages with other Global Environmental Conventions Strategies/Plans Made? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NBSAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 nd Nat'l Comm. to UNFCCC Strong linkages with WaSSP and POWPA	Financial Flow to SLM Increased? <input type="checkbox"/> 0% <input type="checkbox"/> 1~5% <input type="checkbox"/> 6~ 15% <input type="checkbox"/> 16~ 30% <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30% Mostly from: <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Sources <input type="checkbox"/> External Sources <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative Sources	Project Contributed to Policy Reform? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Which policy: SLM field-Tested? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, planned when: SLM Land Coverage Increased? Before Project ____ha. / ____% of total land area After Project Intervention ____ha. / ____% of total land area
Capacity on SLM after intervention? National Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong Local Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong		Indigenous SLM Knowledge Mainstreamed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, into which sector(s): Gender Mainstreamed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, into which sector(s):	Land Productivity Increased? Average Yield Increase due to Project Intervention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0% <input type="checkbox"/> 1~5% <input type="checkbox"/> 6~ 15% <input type="checkbox"/> 16~ 30% <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30%

9 Terminal Evaluation

There was a key aspect of the project that I was unable to evaluate during this consultancy, the extent to which the project has been successful in changing peoples' behaviour. In some cases it was too early to make this assessment, e.g. the Resource Centre at Asau is not yet operational. It also requires meetings with those receiving information from the project which are time-consuming and challenging to do and not possible in the time allowed.

I would encourage the Terminal Evaluation to address this issue. This could include consultations with farmers at Asau to see what value they have obtained from the Resource Centre, discussions with villagers of the Vaipouli catchment to hear what they have learned about catchment management, etc. Evaluating this would help to identify priorities and methodologies for future SLM work including the proposed GEF-5 project, recognising that changing behaviour does not happen overnight.

8 Acknowledgements

Great support has been provided to this consultancy. I am particularly grateful to the Project Coordinator Natasha Kolose and Project Assistance Annie Mauga for their hard work and hospitality. Interns Pietro Pulcher and Laura Parrot of UNDP have conscientiously managed the difficult task of supporting this consultancy when they have had limited involvement in the project. So'oalo Tito Alatimu was an excellent host for the field trip on Savaii. Finally many thanks to all who took the time to meet with me and share their experiences of the project and ideas for the future.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Documents reviewed:

Annual Performance Reviews (APR's) 2008/09, 2009/10 (draft only)

Annual work plans 2008-2011

Forestry Management Act 2011

Lano Technical Assessment Report (TAR)

National MSP Annual Project Review Form [date awaited]

Project Inception Report February 2008

Progress Reports to Steering Committee (7)

Quarterly Progress Reports (13)

Report on Micro Assessment of Implementing Partner MNRE – Betham & Co for UNDP. 2009

Samoa's National Action Plan (NAP), UNCCD Convention 2006.

SLM Expenditures Database

SLM Project Document

Steering Committee minutes: 30/1/08, 14/8/08, 7/10/08, 11/12/08, 6/2/09, 28/9/09, 1/3/10, 6/10/10, 26/1/11[draft only]

Vaipouli Watershed Management Plan 2010

Annex 2: Schedule of meetings in Samoa

Tues 1 Feb

Natasha Kolose, Project Coordinator (PSLMO, MNRE) and Annie Mauga, Senior Project Assistant (MNRE)

Pietro Pulcher, Intern (acting Project Associate), UNDP

Tepa Suaesi, Environmental Officer, SPREP

Wed 2 Feb

Fa'ainoino Laulala, PLDO, MNRE

Steve Brown, GEF Adviser, MNRE

Thursday 3 Feb

Faainu Latu, Lecturer Environmental Sciences, National University of Samoa

Lita Lamafana, Principal Officer, Ministry of Finance

Aukuso Leavasa, Tolusina Pouli, Principal Officers, Forestry Division

Ioane Malaki, Tutor, Agricultural Engineering, University of South Pacific

Friday 4 Feb

Meia Sua, Senior Internal Affairs Officer

Sala Josephine Stowers, Assistant CEO Legal, MNRE

Taufao Taufao, Trevor Saaga, Programme Associates, UNDP

Raymond Voigt, Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations (SUNGO)

Tues/Wed 8-9 Feb

Savaii visit – Lano, Vaipouli and Asau sites and meetings with So'oalo Tito Alatimu, PFO Forestry Division and Tu'ua Saipela Komiti, Senior Crops Officer, Agriculture Department.

Thurs 10 Feb

Patea Setefano, CEO Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (formerly ACEO –LMD)

Faleafaga Toni Tipamaa, Assistant CEO Environment & Conservation, MNRE

Georgina Bonin, Assistant Regional Representative Programmes, UNDP

Mon 21 February

Fotuitaua Yvette Kerlake, Principal Officer, Water Resources Division

Meeting at UNDP – Sanaka Samarasinha, Acting Regional Representative, Laura Parrott, Intern, Taufao Taufao, Project Support Unit, Jenny Jorgenson, Intern.

Tues 22 February

Meeting with project team and stakeholders

Wed 23 February

Meeting with UNDP, project team and stakeholders

Annex 3: Project Coordinator TOR from advertisement for the position.



Malo o Samoa

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Private Bag, Apia, SAMOA
address all correspondence to the

Please

Website: [Http://www.mnre.gov.ws](http://www.mnre.gov.ws)

Email: info@mnre.gov.ws

Chief Executive Officer

VACANCY: PRINCIPAL SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT OFFICER (PSLMO)

Suitable qualified candidates are invited to apply for the above-stated position at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).

Background

The Government of Samoa has received funds through the UNDP/GEF to assist the Government of Samoa to build national capacities for sustainable land management. Land degradation is an ecological problem that manifests itself both at a local level by affecting the economic well being of people, and at a global level by undermining the integrity, stability functions and services of eco-systems. The project, implemented in partnership by UNDP and the Government of Samoa through the MNRE, aims at halting and, where possible, reversing land degradation through the promotion and adoption of Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The main objective is to develop individual, institutional and systemic capacity to improve planning and implementation of efforts to address land degradation and to promote the mainstreaming of SLM into national and sectoral plans and policies.

An important part of this project is the recruitment of a Project Manager to be based in the Executing Agency (i.e. MNRE) to provide oversight and supervision of the implementation of the project. In this regard, the MNRE's Chief Executive Officer will recruit a Project Manager to be responsible for carrying out the following tasks.

The PSLMO will be responsible for the implementation of the project, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, consultants and sub-contractors. The PSLMO will be fully accountable to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MNRE and to the Project Executive Group (PEG) for the satisfactory execution of the entire project and will be responsible for meeting government obligations under the project and under the national execution modality. The PSLMO will be the head of the Project Management Unit (PMU) which will have operational and financial autonomy, including the authority to select and sub-contract specific activities or components to local consultants and local institutions. The PSLMO shall perform a liaison role with the Government of Samoa (GoS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all stakeholders involved with the project.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Overall management and technical coordination of the project;
2. Supervise and coordinate the production of project outputs as per the project document;
3. Mobilize all project inputs in accordance with UNDP procedures for nationally executed projects;
4. Finalize all Terms of Reference for consultants and sub-contractors;
5. Supervise and coordinate the work of project staff, consultants and sub-contractors;

6. Work closely with project partners to closely coordinate all the actors involved with achieving Project Outcomes, Outputs and Activities;
7. Prepare a detailed Annual Work Plan for the project;
8. Prepare and revise project work and financial plans as required by the GoS and UNDP;
9. Manage the procurement of goods and services under UNDP guidelines and oversight of contracts;
10. Ensure proper management of funds consistent with UNDP requirements, budget planning and control;
11. Establish project monitoring and reporting;
12. Arrange for audit of all project accounts for each fiscal year;
13. Prepare and ensure timely submission of all reports required by UNDP including a National Medium-Sized Project Annual Project Review Form, Inception Report, Quarterly Progress Reports, Project Terminal Report and other technical reports;
14. Disseminate project reports to all relevant stakeholders including the PEG and respond to queries from concerned stakeholders;
15. Oversee the exchange and sharing of experiences and lessons learnt with relevant national and international projects on conservation and development;
16. Undertake any other activities that may be assigned by the PEG.

Selection Criteria

1. Graduate Degree and preferably a Postgraduate Degree in natural resources management or other related academic and profession qualifications with at least 5 years of relevant experience;
2. Proven extensive experience and technical ability to manage a large project and sound technical knowledge in fields related to Sustainable Land Management, participatory approaches and/or environmental economics;
3. Proven ability to communicate with various levels of project stakeholder groups, including senior government officials, business executives, farmers and communities;
4. Ability to effectively coordinate a complex, multi-stakeholder project;
5. Ability to lead, manage and motivate teams of local and international consultants to achieve results;
6. Good capacities for strategic thinking and planning;
7. Excellent communication skills, has had significant experience in community consultations and highly proficient in verbal and written Samoan; and
8. Knowledge of UNDP project implementation procedures, including procurement, disbursements, reporting and monitoring highly desirable.

Annex 4: Extracts of progress report to Steering Committee no. 4:

1. Progress Matrix

EXTRACTED DIRECTLY FROM AWP 2009 (as was endorsed by the NSC in Feb 2009)			PROGRESS REPORT		
Main Activity	Output	Sub-Activities	Progress (January to September 2009)	Targets	Issues
OUTPUT 2.1 ENHANCED CAPACITIES FOR THE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LANDS AND LAND-BASED RESOURCES					
2.1.1 Conduct capacity building trainings on the appropriate uses of land	Identification of Training Needs at the National Level	Identify key stakeholders relevant to administration of lands and land-based resources	The Project Unit commenced a stock-take of the key stakeholders in August 2009. This exercise includes the identification of the relevant organizations, objectives, roles, relevant legislation, policies and stakeholder interests.	This exercise is in its final stages and is expected to be completed by October 2009.	We are currently looking at the NCSA Report and having stakeholders reconfirm these for us. In addition, there are gaps of the NCSA that are being incorporated.
		Establish TIG	Yet to be identified	To be undertaken in the final week of October	Currently debating whether a large group is necessary or a few to collect information from all relevant stakeholders
		Identify and prioritize training needs at the national level	To be undertaken by the TIG	Exercise completed in December	None foreseeable at this stage
	Draft TORs for trainings	Draft TORs for endorsement by NSC	Upon submission by TIG	To be endorsed in December 2009 for development of work plan and implementation to commence in 2010	Yet to be identified

Extracts of text: **2. Project Management & Recommendations**

1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Project Unit continues to operate with the assistance of counterpart staff of the Land Development Section.

From 27-31st July 2009, the Project Coordinator and the Principal Land Development Officer attended a meeting with SLM Project Coordinators from neighboring Pacific countries. This was 'the Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Enhancement Workshop on Designing Integrated Financing Strategies for Sustainable Land Management'.

The main outcome of this workshop was to assist members on designing integrated financing strategies for SLM, formerly known as Medium Term Investment Plans. This is basically a strategy on how countries are going to finance their National Action Programmes (NAP) to combat land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. The process is to remain an output and activity funded under the SLM Project.

At the moment, the Project Unit is working with the Land Development Section on the completion of the NAP before we can action the way forward for this particular activity.

In addition, the Project Unit in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and UNDP had to undergo financial management reforms to enable more efficient financial reporting and budgeting for all projects. This has seen an enhancement in the reporting and financial management processes between the Project Unit and these respective counterparts.

2. CONCLUSION and FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted in this Progress Report, this reporting period has seen a satisfactory implementation of project activities with the invaluable contribution and support from all stakeholders involved. However, the Project Unit would like to highlight the following issues and recommendations for consideration by the NSC;

i. **Project Management**

Issue: Current counterpart staffs are very efficient and helpful, however due to the intense work load and the diversity of the project activities, there is an urgent need for an assistant to be solely devoted to providing administrative assistance to the project management unit.

Recommendation: For the NSC to endorse the submission of a request to the donor for the approval of the recruitment of a project assistant to be recruited for 12 months commencing January 2010.

Implications: Budget reallocations etc. to be managed by the Project Unit, MOF and UNDP

ii. **Vaipouli Project**

Issue: Delays in completion of the rehabilitative works due to difficulties of caging commitment of the District Water Committee

Recommendation: For the NSC to endorse a request for local staff to complete the small portion of unplanted site whilst the TIG works with the DWC on the way forward regarding maintenance of the site.

Implications: Further delays have significant impacts on the schedule of other activities such as the boundary marking, fencing off etc.

Annex 5: Extract of Minutes from 12/8/08 meeting:

4.1.3 ASAU DRYLAND FARMING PROJECT

Natasha: Continued her report on Asau and described the site to be at its initial stage. Explained this pilot area to be the biggest project pilot which targets on the driest land used for farming and in relation to Samoa National Plan.

Presented the team with Asau activities planned as follow:

- *TIG – Technical groups for Asau to be selected and implement.*
- *Identification of piloted farms – Selecting and identifying farmers from within Asau area.*
- *Site-Assessment – includes site-visit and site assessment report.*
- *Implementation Strategy – The project to look at way they could provide to help through other farmers and at the same time gain knowledge and experience the team could also share out to other farmers.*

Meapelo: Asked about the team working with successful farmers and reason for looking at these farmers.

Natasha: Responded that by working with these farmers we will learn from them and through those learning we will also share lessons learnt out to other farmers.

Malaki: Suggested the Asau TIG to be included a representative from RDIS, USP, NUS and several members from the MAF. He had also shown his support in what Meapelo had been said.

Steve: Enquired whether the Project is working with any NGO like “Sustainable Farming” in Australia and Japanese as he was quite sure they will love to get involved. He also offered to present the team with copies of Information required.

Emele: Asked on Asau project and how large of the work.

Natasha: Answered that the team had not sort them out since it is just planned.

Emele: Emphasized the role of the Crops Division in the pending activities under the Asau Project.

Natasha: Agreed on what had been said and stated that there would be more members selected from MAF as Asau TIG.

Meia: Suggested for the Project to look again of where to direct our hope since then we selected Asau being successful farmers and yet Asau has the biggest taamu ever on the market. This was confirmed during their farmers’ site-visit.

Chairperson: Supported the opinion and advised the team to consider the issue.

Suluimalo: Suggested to include the Farmers Association into the team.

Raymond: Added to include also the “PI”

Malaki: Commented that after selecting the Asau TIG, will be the selecting of the area.

Malagamalii: Responded that the area selected was already done by the PMU during their last meeting.

Meapelo: In addition stated PMU to select and state good reason for village selected.

4.1.4 OTHER PROJECTS

Natasha: To sum up on her reports, she raised some issues as stated below:

- *SLM & Climate Change – to be quite clear with each other's task to avoid duplication of each others' activities.*
- *Development of monitoring system for existing Projects*
- *NAP – Dissemination is already approved by Cabinet but had not been distributed.*

Chairperson: Gave thanks on behalf of the team for the well-presented reports and asked the team for any additional suggestions.

Frank: Commented Samoa as obviously well ahead of other pacific countries but insisted on the importance of "Alignment with the Indicator" to specify output with an intention that at the end of the day our specific outputs link to the Framework.

Natasha: Apologised as sometimes we got carry away with our plans and forgot to link them to logical frameworks.

Meapelo: In response had shown his surprise seeing the project to be successfully achieved a lot of activities without logical frameworks.

DECISION:

- ✓ **PROGRESS REPORT ENDORSED BY COMMITTEE**

Annex 6: Initial assessment of achievement against project KPI's – supplied by Project Coordinator.

PROJECT DOCUMENT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ASSESSMENT

OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE IMPACT INDICATORS	STATUS
1. Completion of NAPS	NAP approved by Cabinet	Completed
	Best practices and guidelines for SLM are broadly disseminated and used for development planning, zoning and agricultural extensions	<p>PUMA currently does not have zoning plans in Samoa except for a portion of the Vaitele industrial zone. However, the Sustainable Management Plans under the Act is one of the major planning tools which can be on a national, regional, district, village or site specific level to guide and ensure that all developments are in line with SLM principles. The CIM Plans, which covers the whole of Samoa, district by district, are tentative SMP's and we are in the process of revising, updating and reviewing them before they are official SMP documents. Development plans are also another planning tool that the Board/Agency can impose upon any applicant to provide in support of an application to ensure that a development uses land in a sustainable manner, but only at a site specific level. In the absence of SMP's, the development consent process requires assessments of applications to consider section 46 of the Act which includes compliance with other relevant legislations, strategic plans, policy statements, standards or guidelines, which is where specific SLM principles can be incorporated. Also the referral system under section 44 gives the opportunity for SLM principles to be reflected in the DC process and ultimately included as part of the conditions of consent once the Board/Agency grants it. Preliminary discussions with PUMA suggest that the following activities will be included as the main focus under Output 2.1;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in the preparation of a SLM policy or guideline document (or this can be broken down into the specific activities such as reclamation policy/guideline, cut and fill guideline, land elevation policy/guideline, etc. land use or protection plan/policy,...) • Training of local contractors on Samoa Codes of Env'tal Practice and other relevant policies and guidelines (ie. SLM guidelines

OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE IMPACT INDICATORS	STATUS
		etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of local staff on SLM principles, technologies and methods and promote awareness of current SLM policies/guidelines that are already in place in Samoa
2. Capacities developed for SLM	The staffs of MNRE and MAF both have the capacity to implement SLM practices and train others in SLM	AWP 2011 focuses on building the capacity of forestry and agriculture extension workers to deliver effective trainings for the local promotion of permaculture, organic farming, composting etc. This will involve the services of key NGOs such as METI and WIBDI, and will also be facilitated through the newly-established SLM Resource Training Centre, Asau.
	Community based capacities are enhanced through SLM pilots that are established in key sites throughout Samoa	Vaipouli – Effective capacity building through demonstration activities and on-site trainings with local aumaga for the proper replanting of the affected watershed area. However 2011 will look at strategies to strengthen commitment and also address the maintenance of the site during this vulnerable stage. Asau – AWP 2011.
	Best forestry management and reforestation guidelines are established by MNRE	Addressed under the recent Forestry Management Act.
	SLM Networks established at regional, national and local levels	There is an existing regional network between SLM project coordinators (via email) whereby coordinators share lessons learnt or discuss outcomes of regional meetings etc. It is envisaged that through the M&E system development process, national networks will be established and strengthened.
	Sustainable agricultural practices and guidelines prepared by MAF	To be confirmed
3. Mainstreaming of SLM	SLM integrated into national education curricula	Yet to be addressed.
	Appropriate legislation reviewed to strengthen the inclusion of SLM issues	Key output of AWP 2011. Legal Division of MNRE is currently drafting a Terms of Reference for the drafting of the Land Management Bill.
	SLM Public Awareness campaign completed	Major awareness campaign during the 2010 National Environment Week commemoration based on the theme ‘Sustainable land management to enhance climate change resilience’. Targeted 16

OUTCOMES	KEY PERFORMANCE IMPACT INDICATORS	STATUS
		villages in Savaii through school art competitions, speech competitions, farmers displays, traditional entertainment based on the theme, as well as a tree planting activity.
	SLM strategies are integrated into SDS, National Plans and Policies	To be confirmed
	A clearly defined, transparent mechanism will be in place for other government and civil society institutions to gain access to information from the SLM-related land information systems	MNRE website currently undergoing construction to update information to be made available to the public.
	SLM M&E systems are operational for agricultural, forest lands and watershed areas and operational costs are covered by non-project sources	M & E system for land management currently being developed by the SLM Project Unit, Land Development Section (UNCCD Coordinating Unit) and SPREP.
4. Medium Term Investment Plan	Mid-term Investment Plan is developed	AWP 2011 is focused on the development of the MTI (Integrated Financing Strategy). However this is largely dependent on the realignment of the NAP which is a separate process for which the UNCCD Coordinating Unit is responsible for.
	Necessary resources are mobilized	Dependant on above

Annex 7: Terms of Reference



UNDP/GEF Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Samoa

Applications are invited for the following consultancy at the UNDP Multi-Country Office at Matautu-uta, Samoa.

Terms of Reference for Mid-Term Evaluation

Title: Consultancy for a UNDP/GEF Mid-Term Project Evaluation

Duration of Contract: 16 working days (spread over five weeks)

Contract starting date: 24th January 2011

Duty station: Samoa

Mode of Application: All candidates must apply through the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa. Applications may be sent via email to registry.ws@undp.org. All applications should include an updated curriculum vitae or resume and a proposed fees assessment.

For all enquiries, please contact Mr. Meapelo Maiiai at email meapelo.maiiai@undp.org or Ms. Diana at diana.roma@undp.org.

Application deadline: 25th November 2010

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Standard UNDP/GEF M&E requirements

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and

iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators - or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects in Samoa), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

Project Background

The extent of the land degradation problem in Samoa has not been ascertained in any detailed study. However, unsustainable agricultural practices and deforestation are identified in the Samoa's First National Report to UNCCD and the GEF-funded report under the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) programme for Samoa. The CDI report is an initial attempt by Samoa to conduct a preliminary assessment of land degradation and to identify potential causes.

Deforestation in the form of forest clearance to allow for agricultural expansion and logging has been identified as one of the two main forces behind the spread of degraded land areas. In addition, increased development of infrastructure and the strive for improved socio-economic statuses of individual families have lead to increased exploitation of land-based aggregate materials and/or mining activities of scoria materials for construction purposes.

At the beginning of the decade deforestation was identified as one of the key environment and development issues in the country (NEMS, 1993). Timber production and agriculture remained the main consideration for the utilization of the remaining indigenous rainforest and the development of exotic forest plantations at the beginning of the last decade. However, with the impact of cyclones and the rising public concern with the degrading consequences of forest clearance, this development focus was challenged and the direction of the Government's forest development programme was refined in order to reflect the dominating environmental considerations of the times. Towards the end of the decade, the focus of forest development shifted from reforestation to watershed management, community forestry and sustainable indigenous forest utilization. The Government's reforestation activities were closed down in all leased village lands (customary owned lands) except for the maintenance of established plantations on Government lands in Savaii and vegetative replanting on two of the country's major water catchments. At which time, a proposal was under consideration for a re-organisation of the Government's agencies with major responsibilities in forestry conservation and development in order to improve their coordination and optimize their use of available resources.

The rate of forest and woodland clearance for agricultural purposes including firewood collection and infrastructural development is alarming, with an estimated 4,000 ha per year of forest been cleared primarily for agriculture. The loss of indigenous forest has diverse impacts on the cultural, natural resource ecosystems and endemic species. Deforestation also has notable severe impacts on

water catchment areas, soil stability and sustainable livelihoods of rural communities. The main challenge in addressing forest clearance was dealing with the village communities, which controlled the remaining merchantable forest areas of the country.

Unsustainable agriculture is found on both main islands and the root causes are found primarily in the land tenure system and the marginal financial viability of agriculture. Eighty one (81%) percent of the landholdings are customarily owned and the uses of which cannot by law be brought under any significant control. The landholder naturally has the freedom by right and discretion to whatever type of uses and practices on his/her land. Almost all agricultural activities for sustenance are done on customary lands and by small farmers. Large tracts of customary lands are also leased to business locals for large scale commercial farms either livestock or crops (or mix). Lack of collateral security for customary lands leaves little incentive to invest in sustainable practices, especially major investments such as terracing and soil rehabilitation through structural mitigation of upland areas and steep lands. Socio-economic factors are also identified as having consequently inhibited the sustainable management of land in Samoa

Many of the root causes of land degradation were identified during a problem analysis exercise undertaken during a national NCSA stocktaking workshop held 21-23 September 2005. It was found that traditional methods of agriculture are highlighted as the key to sustainable agriculture over mechanical means and are therefore greatly encouraged. Annex H as attached provides detailed findings of the UNCCD technical working group discussions with regards to limited capacity as to the root causes of land degradation.

Natural factors are also largely involved in exacerbating the problem of land degradation. Climate variations in the form of constant changes in prevailing climatic conditions such as increased temperature and chronic rainfall deficit and droughts as well as to a minor extent key invasive species have all the same added severity to land degradation. Often this leads to the loss of soil fertility and the subsequent limits to land productivity. Long droughts make the land more susceptible to incidents of bush fires, which often destroyed forest areas particularly in Savai'i. Also increased frequency of intense weather incidents (e.g. cyclones, tropical storms, and intense rainfall) have caused erosion of coastal and flood prone areas throughout the country.

Vulnerability to Climate Change and Variability Factors

The islands can be extremely defenseless against the devastating onset of natural disasters, including cyclones, tidal waves, sea level rise and volcanic eruptions. Generating huge waves, torrential rains, and winds of up to 200km an hour, a big cyclone can wipe out an entire ecosystem in a few hours. The results of cyclone from the aftermath assessments show that many native trees underwent massive defoliation by strong winds, a significant number of forest trees uprooted and many forest birds have declined in number to the extent that some bird species have decimated.

The Agricultural and Forestry sectors are especially vulnerable to climate variability factors. Agriculture in Samoa had been subjected to seasonal climate variation that had been so unpredictable. Experience from the past decades, the key noticeable climate hazards that would impose greater impact on Samoa's agricultural development are floods, drought, pest and diseases and tropical cyclones. There is little doubt that drought and tropical cyclones have had the largest impact at the grassroots level as evidenced by the reduced supply in local markets of the main

produce during drought, and an overall shortage caused by widespread indiscriminant cyclone damages. Whereas cyclones often occur during the wet season, drought conditions generally come about during the dry season of the year, May to October, with the normally drier areas of the northwest of coasts of Savaii and Upolu moving to a heightened state of vulnerability at the onset of an event.

The Forest sector on the other hand also experience significant vulnerability to climate factors. Being that forests are natural regulators of amounts of carbon-dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere and acts as sinks as is they function to absorb CO₂ from the air, a complete sweep of a forest ecosystem can be considered a great loss to reduction of emissions at the local scale and/or overall global warming. Droughts are also phenomenal in their role primarily as forest extinguishers by incidents of fire spread. The droughts in 1993 and 1998 brought extreme dryness to the already dry parts of the country, west region of Savaii and forest fires at the time in Asau, Savaii in both years. The recent forest fire of 2000 in Aopo Savaii cleared an area exceeding 100sq.km (MNRE 2003).

Project objectives

The main objective is to strengthen local and national capacity for Sustainable Land Management (SLM), including mainstreaming into national development strategies and policies, improving the quality of project design and implementation, and ensuring that all relevant stakeholder views are reflected and integrated into the process. Key activities will include completion of a National Action Plan (NAP) under the UNCCD, capacity building, strengthening legislative and policy frameworks and the development of a Medium Term Investment Plan and its Resource Mobilization.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

This Mid-term Evaluation will be coordinated by the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa, the Project Management Support Unit with the support of the GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bangkok. The Mid-Term Evaluation will determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term.

- The Mid-term Evaluation serves to document lessons learnt and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

1. To monitor and, particularly, evaluate results and impacts as per the logical framework reflected in the project document;
2. To promote accountability for resources use as per approved workplan budget(s);
3. To document, provide feedback on and disseminate lessons learned; and
4. To provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements.

3. SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that

might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring.

The scope of the evaluation will:

- Assess relevance and effectiveness of the project's strategy and approaches for the achievement of the project objectives;
- Assess performance of the project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of producing the expected outputs;
- Assess the quality and timeliness of inputs, the reporting and monitoring system and extent to which these have been effective;
- Assess relevance of project management arrangements; identify advantages, bottlenecks and lessons learned with regard to the management arrangements; and
- Provide recommendations to key project stakeholders for follow-up activities.

The Mid-term Evaluation will cover the entire project: this includes GEF and other co-financing funds to the SLM Medium Size Project.

The following aspects will need to be addressed by the Consultant:

Progress towards Results

- *Changes in development conditions.* Assess the progress towards the following, with a focus on the perception of change amongst stakeholders:
 - cost effective and timely delivery of GEF resources to the target country;
 - enhancement of individual and institutional capacities for SLM;
 - systemic capacity building and mainstreaming of SLM principles into development planning;
 - the provision of enhanced technical support via the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and other relevant Government and Non-Government agencies.
- *Measurement of change:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before, during and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project area prior to the start of the project design process.
- *Project strategy:* How and why outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results:
 - Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.
 - Will the outcomes really meet the project objective and is the strategy currently followed the best approach for achieving the project objective? Consider alternatives.
 - Assess adequacy of the log frame and indicators in responding to the GEF strategic priorities and achieving project objective
- *Sustainability:* Based on project progress so far, the current prospects for longer-term impacts and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative feedback on project results

to date, assess the extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example the prospects for: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of/access to financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities, adequate follow-up support at the (sub-) regional level, etc. Provide tangible measures that can be undertaken to improve prospects of sustainability.

- *Gender perspective*: Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing and applying project interventions. How are gender considerations mainstreamed into project interventions? Suggest measures to strengthen the project's gender approach.

Project's Adaptive Management Framework

(a) Monitoring Systems

- Assess if the monitoring tools currently being used generate adequate information for project evaluation:
 - Do they provide the necessary relevant information?
 - Do they involve key partners?
 - Are they efficient?
 - Are additional tools required?
- Assess the adequacy/relevance of baseline data. If reconstruction is required this should follow a participatory process.
- Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements.
- Apply the GEF Tracking Tool (all elements) and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool. If the Tracking Tool has not been previously applied, provide a comparison against the estimated baseline.

(b) Risk Management

- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted
- Assess the project's risk identification and management systems:
 - Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
 - How can the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

(c) Work Planning

- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and suggest any changes required
 - Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content
 - What impact will the possible retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?

- Assess the use of routinely updated workplans.
- Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities
- Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning.
- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

(d) Reporting

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Underlying Factors

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project

UNDP Contribution

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider:
 - Field visits
 - Project Executive Committee
 - Global Advisory Committee (TOR, follow-up and analysis)
 - PIR preparation and follow-up
 - GEF guidance
- Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide, especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework.
- Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance to the project management.

Partnership Strategy

- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
 - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
 - Using already existing data and statistics
 - Analysing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships between UNDP and other counterparts, with particular reference to:
 - Contracts and/or MoUs with relevant regional institutions
 - The development of partnerships with any other organizations
- Assess how stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary.
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms.

4. PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION AND DELIVERABLES

The Consultant should review and assess the issues identified in the previous section. The Mid-Term evaluation report should include findings, assessment of performance, lessons learned, recommendations, description of best practices, and an "action list" in a certain area of particular importance for the project.

The following list is indicative of the products required, not an exhaustive list. The final outputs will be agreed between the Project Management Unit and the selected consultant during the first few days of the mission.

1. Undertake an in depth review of baseline information, inception report and all technical reports providing a technical evaluation on the relevance of these documents, highlighting their pertinent aspects and gaps in knowledge, and providing technical improvements to achieve objectives.
2. Review of Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), Project Financial Reports (QFRs) and elaborate project activity status and present improvements needed for the working plan and reporting scheme.
3. Review the monitoring process and all project indicators appraising the relevance and applicability of each one.
4. Using the most appropriate indicators, measure the relevance and cost efficiency of each project activity providing clear analysis of the project progress toward set objectives, and if necessary provide the most effective route and activities towards results.
5. Update risk management table and provide risk management responses for the rest of the project implementation.
6. Assess project sustainability and how benefits will arise after it has come to an end.
7. Interview Project Steering Committee members, and other stakeholders and Technical Advisory Committee, to assess the partnership strategy and review the co-financing process giving recommendations that will help facilitating the implementation of the project.

5. DELIVERABLES

All deliverables of the mission will be produced in English and will be presented as follows:

1. A mission plan two days after the start of the mission
2. A draft evaluation report to be reviewed by UNDP and key stakeholders
3. A final evaluation report with Executive Summary (after UNDP comments) 7 days following the end of the mission.
4. Evaluation brief for UNDP Programme Staff including a power point presentation on the last day of the evaluation.

The structure and content of the report (see Annexe 3) should meet the requirements of the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. The length of the Report should not exceed 30 pages in total (excluding the annexes).

6. METHODOLOGY OR EVALUATION APPROACH

A suggested outline of an evaluation approach is provided below; however it should be made clear That final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations among the Programme Unit, the evaluators and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives within the limitations of budget, time and extant data. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards. They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining period of project duration.

The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The Evaluation will be carried out by the team through:

- (i) **Documentation review** (desk study); the list of documentation to be reviewed is included as an Annex to the TORs. All documents will be provided in advance by the UNDP and Project Management Unit.
- (ii) **Interviews** will be held with project representative (Steering Committee members, Technical Working Committee) from the following organizations and persons as a minimum:
 - **Aid Coordination Unit within the Ministry of Finance** (Coordinating Agency);
 - **Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment** (National Project Management Unit);
 - **UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa; and**
 - **Others**

Additional interviews should be carried out with other project beneficiaries and stakeholders (a list of the project stakeholders is included in the Project Document).

- (iii) **Field visits** must be made in Samoa.

7. EVALUATOR

One international evaluator has been budgeted for this evaluation. The evaluator is required to combine international calibre evaluation expertise, the latest thinking in sustainable land management and Regional experience.

Evaluator Qualities should include:

- Recent experience with Result-Based Management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Experience applying objectively verifiable indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Recent knowledge of the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures;
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to natural resource management projects;
- Recognized and demonstrated expertise in SLM;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported land management projects; and
- Excellent English communication skills (oral, written and presentation).

The evaluator must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluator who has had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to an evaluator who is associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in policy-making process and/or delivery of the project. Any previous association with the project or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms as it does to individual evaluator.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

The evaluator will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

8. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Management arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with the contracted individual or consultancy agency. The consultant in collaboration with UNDP is the main operational point for the evaluation responsible for liaising with the project team to set up the stakeholder interviews, arranges the field visits and co-ordinate with other counterparts. UNDP will contract the evaluator and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements for the evaluation team.

Although the final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP before being made public, the UNDP/GEF Evaluation Policy is clear: the evaluation function should be structurally independent from operational management and decision-making functions in the organization. The evaluation team will be free from undue influence and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making. UNDP management will not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. In the case of unresolved difference of opinions between any of the parties, UNDP may request the evaluation team to set out the differences in an annex to the final report.

Time frame

The total duration of this assignment is 16 working days between the period of 24th January and 24th February 2011. The time of the evaluation will spread over a period of 5 weeks. With one week gap after the field visit and the preparation of a summary. The evaluator is expected to work five days a week. A schedule of activities is set out below.

Resources, logistical support and deadlines

- **Desk Review home based (2 days):** the evaluator will need to (1) review documents, (i.e. Project document, Project Implementation Report (PIRs), progress reports, financial reports, Global Support Unit links), obtain necessary non-project background or supporting documents, (2) Design a detailed mission plan (including the methods for data collection and analysis).
Deliverable: Evaluation methodology and mission plan (deadline 25rd January 2011)
- **Mission in Samoa (9 days):** Will consist of (but not limited to): (1) arrange transportation and meetings/interviews in collaboration with UNDP MCO in Samoa and the Project Management Unit, (2) meeting and carrying out the required interviews with the various project stakeholders, (3) Visit project site in Samoa. *(deadline 10th February 2011)*
- **UNDP Office based (1 day):** elaborate a initial draft mid-term evaluation report and presentation on mission findings.
Deliverable: A draft mission report (deadline 11th February)
- **UNDP Office based (1 day):** prepare a summary and analysis of collected data including recommendations to achieve project objectives more efficiently. *(deadline 14th February 2011)*
- **UNDP Office based: (3 days):** (1) Draft mid-term evaluation review by the Project Manager/ UNDP, (2) discuss and integrate Project Manager/UNDP comments into the MTE report, (3) finalise mid-term evaluation report
Deliverable: hard and soft copy of the final mid-term evaluation report (deadline: 24th February 2011)