TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project
“[Project Title]”

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNEP PIMS ID:</th>
<th>Expected Accomplishment(s):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-programme:</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP approval date:</td>
<td>PoW Output(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEF project ID:</td>
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<td>Focal Area(s):</td>
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<td>GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:</td>
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<td>Coverage - Region(s):</td>
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<td>Actual date:</td>
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<td>GEF Allocation:</td>
<td>GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:</td>
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<td>PDF GEF cost:</td>
<td>PDF co-financing:</td>
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<td>No. of revisions:</td>
<td>Date of last revision:</td>
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<td>Mid-term review/evaluation (planned date):</td>
<td>Mid-term review/evaluation (actual date):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of last Steering Committee meeting:</td>
<td>Terminal Evaluation (actual date): (where applicable)</td>
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2. Project rationale

1. [Describe project context and justification]

3. Project objectives and components

2. [Present the project goal and objectives, components and outputs as per the Project Document. Use tables as appropriate.]

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1 TOR template version of June 6 2015
Legend: Grey = Info to be added
4. Executing Arrangements

3. [Present GEF Implementing Agency and Executing Agencies. Specify UNEP unit responsible for project implementation and project execution partners. Briefly describe role and composition of management and supervision structures of the project. Use table or diagram as appropriate.]

5. Project Cost and Financing

4. [Present total estimated project cost at design, broken down per component and per funding source. Use tables as appropriate. Present most recent figures on disbursement.]

6. Implementation Issues

5. [Describe any important issues mentioned by TM/PM during pre-evaluation briefing, important revisions to logframe or funds allocations, risks mentioned in PIRs during project implementation etc.]

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

6. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy\(^3\) and the UNEP Programme Manual\(^4\), the Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "[Project Title]" is undertaken approximately half way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The MTE will assess project performance to date (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the likelihood of the project achieving its intended outcomes and impacts, including their sustainability.

7. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and [main project partners].

8. It will focus on the following sets of key questions, based on the project’s intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:

   (a) [List 5-6 key evaluation questions]

2. Overall Approach and Methods

9. The Mid-term Evaluation of the Project will be conducted by independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager and the Sub-programme Coordinators of the [relevant UNEP Sub-programmes].

10. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.

11. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

   (a) A desk review of:
   
   • Relevant background documentation, inter alia [list];
   • Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
   • Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
   • Project outputs: [list];
   • Evaluations/reviews of similar projects


(b) Interviews (individual or in group) with:

- UNEP Task Manager
- Project management team
- UNEP Fund Management Officer;
- Project partners, including [list];
- Relevant resource persons;

(c) Surveys [provide details]
(d) Field visits [provide details]
(e) Other data collection tools [provide details]

3. Key Evaluation principles

12. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

13. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped in five categories: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned result, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; and (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

14. Ratings. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Annex 3 provides guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

15. Baselines and counterfactuals. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project intervention, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions, trends and counterfactuals in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. It also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions, trends or counterfactuals is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

16. The “Why?” Question. As this is a Mid-term Evaluation particular attention should be given to identifying implementation challenges and risks to achieving the expected project objectives and sustainability. Therefore, the “Why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category F – see below). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere review of “where things stand” at the time of evaluation.

17. A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

18. Communicating evaluation results. Once the consultant(s) has obtained evaluation findings, lessons and results, the Evaluation Office will share the findings and lessons with the key stakeholders. Evaluation results should be communicated to the key stakeholders in a brief and concise manner that encapsulates the evaluation exercise in its entirety. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and preferences regarding the report. The Evaluation Manager will plan with the consultant(s) which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some or
all of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

4. Evaluation criteria

A. Strategic relevance

19. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with global, regional and national environmental issues and needs. The evaluation will assess whether the project was in-line with the GEF [name] focal area’s strategic priorities and operational programme(s).

20. The evaluation will also assess the project’s relevance in relation to UNEP’s mandate and its alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP’s programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP’s thematic priorities, known as Subprogrammes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes [known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs)] of the Subprogrammes. The evaluation will assess whether the project makes a tangible/plausible contribution to any of the EAs specified in the MTS [dates]. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described.

21. The evaluation should assess the project’s alignment / compliance with UNEP’s policies and strategies. The evaluation should provide a brief narrative of the following:

(a) Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP). The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.

(b) Gender balance. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Are the project intended results contributing to the realization of international GE (Gender Equality) norms and agreements as reflected in the UNEP Gender Policy and Strategy, as well as to regional, national and local strategies to advance HR & GE?

(c) Human rights based approach (HRBA) and inclusion of indigenous peoples issues, needs and concerns. Ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on HRBA. Ascertain if the project is in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and pursued the concept of free, prior and informed consent.

(d) South-South Cooperation. This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

(e) Safeguards. Whether the project has adequately considered environmental, social and economic risks and established whether they were vigilantly monitored. Was the safeguard management instrument completed and were UNEP ESES requirements complied with?

22. Based on an analysis of project stakeholders, the evaluation should assess the relevance of the project intervention to key stakeholder groups.

B. Achievement of Outputs

23. The evaluation will assess, for each component, the projects’ success in producing the programmed outputs (products and services delivered by the project itself) and milestones as per the ProDocs and any modifications/revisions later on during project implementation, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.

24. Briefly explain the reasons behind the success (or failure) of the project in producing its different outputs and meeting expected quality standards, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results). Were key stakeholders appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs?

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C. Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

25. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project’s objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

26. The Theory of Change (ToC) of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (long term changes in environmental benefits and living conditions). The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called ‘intermediate states’. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the major pathways; i.e. factors that affect whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). The ToC also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes.

27. The evaluation will reconstruct the ToC of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The evaluator will be expected to discuss the reconstructed TOC with the stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain the causal pathways identified and the validity of impact drivers and assumptions described in the TOC. This exercise will also enable the consultant to address some of the key evaluation questions and make adjustments to the TOC as appropriate (the ToC of the intervention may have been modified / adapted from the original design during project implementation).

28. The assessment of effectiveness will be structured in three sub-sections:

   (a) Evaluation of the achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs. For this project, the main question will be to what extent the project has contributed to [list the immediate outcomes]. Additional questions would be to what extent the project [list any additional questions that relate to key results].

   (b) Assessment of the likelihood of impact using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach\(^6\). The evaluation will assess to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute, to [intermediate states], and the likelihood that those changes in turn lead to positive changes in the natural resource base, benefits derived from the environment and human well-being. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead to unintended negative effects (project documentation relating to Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards).

   (c) Evaluation of the achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes using the project’s own results statements as presented in the Project Document\(^7\). This sub-section will refer back where applicable to the preceding sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project’s success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F. Most commonly, the overall objective is a higher level result to which the project is intended to contribute. The section will describe the actual or likely contribution of the project to the objective.

   (d) The evaluation should, where possible, disaggregate outcomes and impacts for the key project stakeholders. It should also assess the extent to which HR and GE were integrated in the Theory of Change and results framework of the intervention and to what degree participating institutions/organizations changed their policies or practices thereby leading to the fulfilment of HR and GE principles (e.g. new services, greater responsiveness, resource re-allocation, etc.)

D. Sustainability and replication

29. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the

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\(^6\) Guidance material on Theory of Change and the ROtI approach is available from the Evaluation Office.

\(^7\) Or any subsequent formally approved revision of the project document or logical framework.
project but that may condition the sustainability of benefits. The evaluation will ascertain that the project has put in place an appropriate exit strategy and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The reconstructed ToC will assist in the evaluation of sustainability, as the drivers and assumptions required to achieve higher-level results are often similar to the factors affecting sustainability of these changes.

30. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

(a) **Socio-political sustainability.** Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to add as relevant? Did the project conduct ‘succession planning’ and implement this during the life of the project? Was capacity building conducted for key stakeholders? Did the intervention activities aim to promote (and did they promote) positive sustainable changes in attitudes, behaviours and power relations between the different stakeholders? To what extent has the integration of HR and GE led to an increase in the likelihood of sustainability of project results?

(b) **Financial resources.** To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on financial resources? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources will be or will become available to use capacities built by the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?

(c) **Institutional framework.** To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources, goods or services?

(d) **Environmental sustainability.** Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled?

31. **Catalytic role and replication.** The catalytic role of UNEP interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP also aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

(a) catalyzed behavioural changes in terms of use and application, by the relevant stakeholders, of capacities developed;

(b) provided incentives (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;

(c) contributed to institutional changes, for instance institutional uptake of project-demonstrated technologies, practices or management approaches;

(d) contributed to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy);

(e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments, private sector, donors etc.;

(f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (“champions”) to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

32. **Replication** is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and determine to what extent actual replication has already occurred, or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

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8 Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the national budget, public and private sectors, development assistance etc.
E. Efficiency

33. The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its (severely constrained) secured budget and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which HR and GE were allocated specific and adequate budget in relation to the results achieved.

34. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of or build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. For instance, [insert relevant examples for the project being evaluated].

F. Factors and processes affecting project performance

35. Preparation and readiness. This criterion focuses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders adequately identified and were they sufficiently involved in project development and ground truthing e.g. of proposed timeframe and budget? Were the project’s objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.? Were any design weaknesses mentioned in the Project Review Committee minutes at the time of project approval adequately addressed?

36. Project implementation and management. This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project’s adaptation to changing conditions and responses to changing risks including safeguard issues (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

(a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
(b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
(c) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
(d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the UNEP Task Manager and project steering bodies including [list].
(e) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems.

37. Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships. The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP projects and programmes, external stakeholders and partners. The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing both project partners and target users (such as [list]) of project products. The TOC and stakeholder analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathways from activities to achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states towards impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, (2) consultation with and between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

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9 Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or ‘stake’ in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.
(a) the approach(es) and mechanisms used to identify and engage stakeholders (within and outside UNEP) in project design and at critical stages of project implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project’s objectives and the stakeholders’ motivations and capacities?

(b) How was the overall collaboration between different functional units of UNEP involved in the project? What coordination mechanisms were in place? Were the incentives for internal collaboration in UNEP adequate?

(c) Was the level of involvement of the Regional, Liaison and Out-posted Offices in project design, planning, decision-making and implementation of activities appropriate?

(d) Has the project made full use of opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes including opportunities not mentioned in the Project Document? Have complementarities been sought, synergies been optimized and duplications avoided?

(e) What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the project? This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report.

(f) To what extent has the project been able to take up opportunities for joint activities, pooling of resources and mutual learning with other organizations and networks? In particular, how useful are partnership mechanisms and initiatives such as [insert relevant examples] to build stronger coherence and collaboration between participating organisations?

(g) How did the relationship between the project and the collaborating partners (institutions and individual experts) develop? Which benefits stemmed from their involvement for project performance, for UNEP and for the stakeholders and partners themselves? Do the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in environmental decision making?

38. Communication and public awareness. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project’s objective, progress, outcomes and lessons. This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report. Did the project identify and make use of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders? Did the project provide feedback channels?

39. Country ownership and driven-ness. The evaluation will assess the degree and effectiveness of involvement of government / public sector agencies in the project, in particular those involved in project execution and those participating in [insert whatever relevant e.g. project Steering Committee, partnership arrangements]?

(a) To what extent have Governments assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the project?

(b) How and how well did the project stimulate country ownership of project outputs and outcomes?

(c) [Any other project-specific questions]

40. Financial planning and management. Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project’s lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

(a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;

(b) Assess other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;

(c) Present the extent to which co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).

10 [If the ProDoc mentions any opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes, present these here in the footnote]
(d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project’s ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO’s, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

41. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Determine whether the measures taken were adequate.

42. **Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make.

43. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision, guidance and technical support provided by the different supervising/supporting bodies including:

   (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
   (b) The realism and candour of project reporting and the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
   (c) How well did the different guidance and backstopping bodies play their role and how well did the guidance and backstopping mechanisms work? What were the strengths in guidance and backstopping and what were the limiting factors?

44. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will assess how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

   (a) **M&E Design.** The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
      - Arrangements for monitoring: Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the time frame for various M&E activities specified? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate?
      - How well was the project logical framework (original and possible updates) designed as a planning and monitoring instrument?
      - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
      - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable? For instance, was there adequate baseline information on pre-existing accessible information on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options for the different target audiences? Was there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts etc. to determine their training and technical support needs?
      - To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring? Which stakeholders (from groups identified in the inception report) were involved? If any stakeholders were excluded, what was the reason for this? Was sufficient information collected on specific indicators to measure progress on HR and GE (including sex-disaggregated data)?
      - Did the project appropriately plan to monitor risks associated with Environmental Economic and Social Safeguards?
      - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
- Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

(b) **M&E Plan Implementation.** The evaluation will verify that:
- the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
- PIR reports were prepared (the realism of the Task Manager’s assessments will be reviewed)
- Half-yearly Progress & Financial Reports were complete and accurate;
- Risk monitoring (including safeguard issues) was regularly documented
- the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

### G. The Consultants’ Team

45. For this evaluation, the evaluation team will consist of a Team Leader and one Supporting Consultant. Details about the specific roles and responsibilities of the team members are presented in Annex 1 of these TORs. The Team Leader should have X years of technical / evaluation experience, including of evaluation large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a broad understanding of large-scale, consultative assessment processes and factors influencing use of assessments and/or scientific research for decision-making. The Supporting Consultant will have a solid environmental education and professional experience; adequate monitoring and evaluation experience; and experience in managing partnerships, knowledge management and communication.

46. The Team Leader will coordinate data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the main report for the evaluation, with substantive contributions by the Supporting Consultant. Both consultants will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

47. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultants certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units.

### H. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

48. The evaluation team will prepare an **inception report** (see Annex 2(a) of TORs for Inception Report outline) containing a thorough review of the project context, project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

49. It is expected that a large portion of the desk review will be conducted during the inception phase. It will be important to acquire a good understanding of the project context, design and process at this stage. The review of design quality will cover the following aspects (see Annex 7 for the detailed project design assessment matrix):

- Strategic relevance of the project
- Preparation and readiness;
- Financial planning;
- M&E design;
- Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes;
- Sustainability considerations and measures planned to promote replication and up-scaling.

50. The inception report will present a draft, desk-based reconstructed Theory of Change of the project. It is vital to reconstruct the ToC before most of the data collection (review of progress reports, in-depth interviews, surveys etc.) is done, because the ToC will define which direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions of the project need to be assessed and measured – based on which indicators – to allow adequate data collection for the evaluation of project effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability.

51. The inception report will also include a stakeholder analysis identifying key stakeholders, networks and channels of communication. This information should be gathered from the Project document and discussion with the project team. See annex 2 for template.

52. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the overall evaluation approach. It will specify for each evaluation question under the various criteria what the respective indicators and data sources will be. The evaluation
framework should summarize the information available from project documentation against each of the main evaluation parameters. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection, verification and analysis should be specified. Evaluations/reviews of other large assessments can provide ideas about the most appropriate evaluation methods to be used.

53. Effective communication strategies help stakeholders understand the results and use the information for organisational learning and improvement. While the evaluation is expected to result in a comprehensive document, content is not always best shared in a long and detailed report; this is best presented in a synthesised form using any of a variety of creative and innovative methods. The evaluator is encouraged to make use of multimedia formats in the gathering of information e.g. video, photos, sound recordings. Together with the full report, the evaluator will be expected to produce a 2-page summary of key findings and lessons. A template for this has been provided in Annex 2.

54. The inception report will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process, including a draft programme for the country visit and tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed.

55. The inception report will be submitted for review and approval by the Evaluation Office before the any further data collection and analysis is undertaken.

56. **[Optional]** When data collection and analysis has almost been completed, the evaluation team will prepare a short note on preliminary findings and recommendations for discussion with the project team and the Evaluation Reference Group. The purpose of the note is to allow the evaluation team to receive guidance on the relevance and validity of the main findings emerging from the evaluation.

57. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 40 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 2. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

58. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation team will submit a zero draft report to the UNEP EO and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EO will share this first draft report with the Task Manager, who will alert the EO in case the report would contain any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Office will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular [list] for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. It is also very important that stakeholders provide feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the evaluation team for consideration in preparing the final draft report, along with its own views.

59. The evaluation team will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The team will prepare a response to comments, listing those comments not or only partially accepted by them that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated in the final report. They will explain why those comments have not or only partially been accepted, providing evidence as required. This response to comments will be shared by the EO with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

60. **Submission of the final evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by Email to the Head of the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will finalize the report and share it with the interested Divisions and Sub-programme Coordinators in UNEP. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office website www.unep.org/ceu.

61. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a quality assessment of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in Annex 3.

62. The UNEP Evaluation Office will assess the ratings in the final evaluation report based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and UNEP Evaluation Office on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The UNEP Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.
63. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a Recommendations Implementation Plan in the format of a table to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. After reception of the Recommendations Implementation Plan, the Task Manager is expected to complete it and return it to the EO within one month. (S)he is expected to update the plan every six months until the end of the tracking period. As this is a Mid-term Evaluation, speedy implementation of the recommendations is key and the period over which recommendation implementation will be tracked is therefore limited to one year, with two update points at 6 and 12 months after completion of the implementation plan.

I. Logistical arrangements

64. This Mid-term Evaluation will be undertaken by two independent evaluation consultants contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultants will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants’ individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

J. Schedule of the evaluation

65. Table 7 below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 7. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception Mission = 2 days (Location(s))</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inception Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Mission = 1 week (Location(s))</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone interviews, surveys etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note on preliminary findings and recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero draft report</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Report shared with UNEP Task Manager</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Report shared with project team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Report shared with stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## List of Annexes

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<th>Document</th>
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<td>Annex 1</td>
<td>Consultant-specific Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2</td>
<td>Annotated Table of Contents of the main evaluation deliverables</td>
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<td>Annex 3</td>
<td>Evaluation Ratings</td>
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<td>Project costs and co-financing tables</td>
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<td>Template for the assessment of the quality of project design</td>
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<td>Annex 8</td>
<td>Introduction to Theory of Change / Impact pathways, the ROtI Method and the ROtI Results Score sheet</td>
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<td>Annex 9</td>
<td>Stakeholder Analysis for the Evaluation Inception Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annex 10</td>
<td>Template for 2 page bulletin summarising project results and key lessons</td>
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</tbody>
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