



UN Environment

Final

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project: “Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan (LDCF-1 project)” (LDL-5060-2724-4C87)



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Evaluation Office of UN Environment

January

2017

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to thank Ahmad Jamshed Khosbeen, Andrew Scanlon, and the entire UN Environment Afghanistan country team for their support for the evaluation; for the open, frank and stimulating discussions, excellent planning and management of the mission logistics in a challenging context, and for their warm hospitality. Likewise, we would like to thank the representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic Afghanistan, in particular the staff of National Environment Protection Agency, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and Ministry of Energy and Water and the provincial offices of NEPA in Bamyan and Badakhshan for the highly useful and interesting discussions and support for the mission. We would also like to thank all other stakeholders met.

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List of acronyms & abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
AgroMET	Agro-Meteorology Programme
AMA	Afghan Meteorological Authority
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
APAN	Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network
ASERD	Afghanistan Sustainable Energy for Rural Development
BORDA	Bremen Overseas Research & Development Association
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDC	Community Development Council
CLEW	Climate Early Warning
COAM	The Conservation Organisation for Afghan Mountain Areas
COP	Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAIL	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)
DEPI	Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (UNEP)
DEW	Provincial Department of Energy and Water (MEW)
DfID	Department for International Development
DP	Development Partner
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRD	Provincial Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)
ESES	Environmental, social and economic safeguards
EWS	Early Warning System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FMO	Fund Management Officer
GAN	Global Adaptation Network
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information Systems

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IMS	Information Management System
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund (GEF)
LDCF-1	Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan project
LEARN	Local Environment Advocacy for Resilience and Nature
Logframe	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy (UNEP)
NABDP	National Area-Based Development Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
NURI	Nili Urban Resilience Initiative
OMAID	Opportunities for Mountain Area Integrated Development
OP	Operational Programme (GEF)
PCDMB	Post conflict and Disasters Management Branch (UNEP DEPI)
PIR	Project Implementation Review (UNEP)
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
PoW	Programme of Work (UNEP)
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAMA	Rehabilitation of the Afghan Meteorological Authority
RGEO	Rural Green Environmental Organization
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund (GEF)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Indicators)
SPEAK	Strengthening Professional Environmental Advocacy and Knowledge
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRACAD	Strengthening the Resilience of Afghanistan's Vulnerable Communities against Disasters
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TEACH	Technical Environmental Advocacy in Curriculum and Higher Education
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Educational Training
UMOJA	UN's financial and admin management system
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
US\$	United States Dollar
WRM	Water Resources Management
WUA	Water User Association

Figure 1: General Map of Afghanistan



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Topographic_maps_of_Afghanistan#/media/File:Afghanistan_physical_en.png

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID:	n/a	IMIS number:	LDL-5060-2724-4C87
Sub-programme:	Climate Change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	1(a)
UNEP approval date:	9 April 2013	PoW Output(s):	
GEF project ID:	4227	Project Type:	Full sized-Project
GEF OP #:	n/a	Focal Area(s):	Climate Change Adaptation
GEF approval date:	17 October 2012	GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	CCA1, CCA2
Expected Start Date:	10 April 2013	Actual start date:	3 May 2013
Planned completion date:	2 May 2017	Actual completion date:	Ongoing
Planned project budget at approval:	USD\$ 19,790,000	Total expenditures reported as of [date]:	US\$ 15,286,739
GEF Allocation:	US\$ 5,390,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2015:	US\$ 2,386,739
PPG GEF cost:	US\$ 100,000	PPG co-financing:	
Expected MSP/FSP co-financing:	US\$ 14,400,000	Secured MSP/FSP co-financing:	US\$ 13,400,000
First Disbursement:	7 May 2013 (first internal sub-allotment)	Date of financial closure:	Implementation still ongoing
No. of revisions:	1 (budget revision)	Date of last revision:	27 June 2014
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	18 January 2016		
Mid-term review/evaluation (planned date):	29 July to 10 August 2016	Mid-term review/evaluation (actual date):	25 Aug to 9 Sept 2016
Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	n/a		

Executive summary

Evaluation background and methodology

This Mid-Term Evaluation covers the implementation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded *Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in Afghanistan* project (the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)-1 project) in the period May 2013 – September 2016. The project is implemented by the UN Environment (UNEP) and executed by Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) with execution support from the UN Environment Post conflict and disasters management branch (PCDMB). The Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out to: a) assess project performance (relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), b) assess the likelihood of attaining the intended outcomes and impact and their sustainability, and c) capture lessons and provide recommendations for the remaining implementation period. The Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out in the period 14 June – 30 November 2016.

The Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out in accordance with UN Environment's Evaluation Policy and the methodology comprised the following elements: a) initial discussions in Nairobi with UN Environment staff, b) analysis of the project design and elaboration of the project's Theory of Change as the framework guiding the evaluation, c) a review of relevant documentation, d) a two-week mission to Afghanistan and meeting with stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels, e) follow-up Skype interviews with the UN Environment staff in Geneva and Nairobi.

Summary of the main evaluation findings

A. Strategic relevance:

Afghanistan's rural communities are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, due to the prolonged conflict development priorities have been reconstruction, peace-building and state-building, so climate change has only received proper attention in the past five years. The project is the first full-sized GEF climate change project with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA), and is thus contributing to building the capacity of the Government to address climate change and supporting the implementation of the adaptation priorities outlined in Afghanistan's National Adaptation Programme of Action. Hence, it is well suited for GEF LDCF funding. The project is fully aligned with UN Environment's strategies and Programmes of Work for 2010-2017, especially in relation to climate change adaptation (i.e. strengthening the ability to integrate CCA in policy frameworks and development planning at both national and subnational level and promoting ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and building climate resilience), but also in relation to disaster and conflict, ecosystems management (particularly in regards to mountain ecosystems), and environmental governance.

B. Achievement of outputs:

Most outputs under Component 1 (climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information) are on track and likely to be delivered, except the piloting of early warning systems. Many, but not all outputs, under Component 2 (climate change adaptation and response strategies) are likely to be delivered within the existing project timeframe (completion by May 2017). The National Climate Change Committee has been revitalised and national climate change policy development has been supported, most notable is the preparation of the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, the engagement of the project in the integration of climate change in, water, agriculture, and disaster prevention sector policies and strategies has been somewhat modest (limited to providing inputs/recommendations to the development of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock's (MAIL) NRM strategy). The delivery of the outputs under Component 3 (pilot climate change adaptation projects) is well on track in Bamyan and Daikundi Provinces where valley and village management plans have been developed and a range of physical infrastructure and vegetation planting activities for enhanced resilience, risk reduction and livelihoods diversification have been implemented. However, implementation in Balkh and Badakhshan Provinces is still at an early stage, and no community-level activities have been implemented. Many, but not all outputs under Component 4 (learning and knowledge management) are likely to be achieved. Several knowledge products have been produced and disseminated. Several training courses have been developed and carried out, but some training packages are yet to be developed. The main gap in Component 4 is the detailed elaboration of the planned resource mobilisation strategy for replication.

Overall, the quality of the outputs is good and there are examples of stakeholders putting the skills imparted into use in their work. However, several outputs are very unlikely to be fully delivered before the current project completion date and number of planned activities are unlikely to be completed in the current project timeframe. Therefore, Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency and the UN Environment are planning to request a two-year extension.

C. Effectiveness (attainment of project objectives and results):

The project has increased monitoring and forecasting capacities. However, while enhanced, the capacity to integrate climate change adaptation in planning is still not fully in place and needs more attention. There is now an increased capacity with Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to promote climate change adaptation measures and communities to implement adaptive action in Bamyan and Daikundi, albeit unevenly and with need of further strengthening, but this is unlikely to be achieved in Balkh and Badakhshan by the current completion date. The integration of climate change risk into policies, plans and programmes has only been achieved to a moderate extent; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change related climate change policy framework has been strengthened, but the influence on integration of climate change into development and sectoral policies is limited. It is very unlikely that the intended outcomes will be fully attained by the current completion date.

It should be kept in mind that climate change is a new topic in Afghanistan and at the same time, the Afghan context is a highly difficult one to operate in. Climate change capacity development is a longer-term endeavour, which would need further donor support. The project is a first mover on climate change adaptation in Afghanistan and intended the outcomes feed into longer-term processes, so while it is laying the foundation, it is too early to assess whether it will lead to the intended impact. Localised, small-scale early positive environmental changes and enhanced resilience are already emerging in target communities in Bamyan and Daikundi, but it is uncertain whether this will be achieved in Balkh and Badakhshan.

D. Sustainability and replication:

The project has focused on supporting existing policy processes (such as revitalisation of the National Climate Change Committee and the preparation of Afghanistan's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution), the project partners are operating within established institutional mandates and capacity development is at the centre-stage of the project. The policy framework in Afghanistan is supportive of the project, but more work is required for the integration of climate change adaptation into sector policies/strategies and work plans to enhance the likelihood of continued involvement of sector ministries. The project focuses on low-cost ecosystem based solutions communities can maintain, and communities already see livelihoods and environmental benefits, which inspires continuation. A major constraint for the sustainability is the scarcity of financial resources, which poses a real challenge to the maintenance of equipment and the ability of the partners of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to follow up after the project. The project is engaged in fund-raising, but mainly through the provision of recommendations for various project proposals, which do not always directly aim at deepening the LDCF-1 project's results (e.g. climate change projects developed by other agencies). The anticipated extension of the completion date would significantly enhance the ability to ensure post-project sustainability.

Catalytic role and replication: The project has catalysed some policy changes, most notably in relation to Afghanistan's overall climate change policy framework. The project has demonstrated the value of inter-ministerial cooperation on climate change adaptation at the provincial level. The support for curriculum development contributes to creating a cadre of professionals with a good grasp of climate change adaptation. Project lessons have informed upcoming least developed countries fund projects; the upcoming Least Developed Countries Fund-3 project (LDCF-3 project) will replicate the project, and the non-governmental organisations in the "Strengthening the Resilience of Afghanistan's Vulnerable Communities against Disasters" (SRACAD) consortium will be trained to replicate the project in the communities they work in.

E. Efficiency:

The financial statements are not broken down into components and activities, thus making it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness in the implementation of the activities. The planned activities, expected outputs and

geographical coverage appear overly optimistic vis-à-vis the budget. Synergies are often achieved with joint activities with other initiatives, such as the climate-proofing of infrastructure constructed under the National Solidarity Programme. Implementation is significantly delayed, due to factors often outside the control of the project, such as security incidents, presidential elections, and the transition to the new administrative system “UMOJA”. UN Environment reporting requirements and processes and a mismatch between the previous and current administrative systems (IMS/UMOJA) and UN Environment’s global environment facility templates are also a source of delays. Staff constraints at UN Environment and the National Environmental Protection Authority are also causing delays, especially at the provincial level.

F. Factors affecting project performance:

Overall, the project design is coherent, but the project was overambitious in its geographical coverage, number of activities and intended outcomes and outputs, when considering the novelty of the topic and approach, the staff resources available to UN Environment, the capacities of the National Environmental Protection Authority (NEPA) and other implementing partners, the challenging Afghan context, and the timeline of the project.

The roles of the partners in the implementation is generally clear and well aligned with their institutional mandates. Capacity constraints affect their ability to engage, but the very purpose of the project is to enhance their capacities. The project is formally executed by the National Environmental Protection Authority, but day-to-day implementation is primarily handled by UN Environment. UN Environment staff are qualified, but limited staff resources and a limited presence at the provincial level is a major constraint, which especially affects Component 3 implementation.

UN Environment, the National Environmental Protection Authority and the project are engaged in several partnerships with other organisations for specific activities at both national and provincial levels in addition to the main implementing partners. These partnerships enhance the project’s capacity to deliver, but the large number of partnerships also require significant coordination. Stakeholders are significantly involved in the implementation, and each institution is responsible for implementation of activities within their mandates. Communities are directly involved in the development of village plans and the identification and implementation of pilot interventions – the community contribution is always at least 10% but often higher. Women are involved in some activities, but often not in the planning. Only few stakeholders have a broad understanding of the project concept and the ecosystem based approach to adaptation – it appears mainly understood by a few senior level stakeholders.

UN Environment Afghanistan has a knowledge management unit and strategy, and standardised approaches. Several knowledge products of good quality have been produced under the project and disseminated to a broad range of people. Good results have been achieved in terms of raising environmental and climate change awareness, but low visibility of the project remains a challenge. This does not seem to relate to major shortcomings in the approach to knowledge management, but to the novelty and complexity of the topic.

There is a clear ownership at the highest level in the National Environmental Protection Authority, as the project is the main project helping the National Environmental Protection Authority with engaging in climate change adaptation. At the provincial level, the National Environmental Protection Authority is also supportive, but the level of engagement also depends on the capacity of the Provincial Director. However, the project is still mainly driven forward by UN Environment due to the National Environmental Protection Authority’s capacity constraints. The other key partners also show commitment, albeit to varying degrees.

By end 2015, spending of the GEF grant was at 44%, while 66% of the implementation period had elapsed. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development of Afghanistan (MRRD) reports that the entire committed co-funding from the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) has been provided. Furthermore, the National Environmental Protection Authority (NEPA) reports that 50% of their in-kind contribution had been provided by end 2014. The minor contributions from the Agro-Meteorology Programme (AgroMET) and the Rehabilitation of the Afghan Meteorological Authority (RAMA) projects did not materialise. The reported co-funding provided stood at US\$12,900,000 by end 2015.

Financial management is handled by UN Environment in accordance with UN Environment’s controls for internally executed GEF projects. However, the UN’s UMOJA administrative system does not easily provide the financial information required in the format for GEF projects, and as result the financial reporting and approval internally in UN Environment is problematic and causing delays in disbursements. Staff constraints exacerbate the delays.

The monitoring indicators are “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented and time-bound) but are output indicators and do not capture change. The indicators are not tracked systematically. The monitoring is carried out by the UN Environment team, with no real involvement of NEPA or the partners.

Rating of project performance

Overall, the project is rated “satisfactory”. Table 2 provides a summary of the ratings of the different evaluation criteria.

Table 2: Summary of Evaluation Ratings

Criterion	Overall Rating
A. Strategic relevance	Highly satisfactory
B. Achievement of outputs	Moderately satisfactory
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results	Moderately satisfactory
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change	Moderately satisfactory
2. Likelihood of impact using “ROtI” approach	Likely
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document	Moderately satisfactory
D. Sustainability of outcomes	Moderately likely
1. Socio-political sustainability	Likely
2. Financial resources	Moderately likely
3. Institutional framework	Likely
4. Environmental sustainability	Highly likely
5. Catalytic role and replication	Highly satisfactory
E. Efficiency	Moderately satisfactory
F. Factors affecting project performance	Satisfactory
1. Preparation and readiness	Satisfactory
2. Project implementation and management	Satisfactory
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships	Satisfactory
4. Communication and public awareness	Highly satisfactory
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Satisfactory
6. Financial planning and management	Moderately satisfactory
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	Satisfactory
8. Monitoring and evaluation	Moderately unsatisfactory
<i>i. M&E design</i>	<i>Moderately satisfactory</i>
<i>ii. M&E plan implementation</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Overall project rating	Satisfactory

Summary of recommendations and lessons learned

The following is an overview of the recommendations of the MTE (the detailed recommendations are presented in chapter 4.2):

Recommendation #1	Map ongoing sector policy and reform processes, and identify windows of opportunity to engage and promote the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation at the sector level. Engage in a few particularly promising sector policy processes.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #2	Consider reducing the number of different activity types.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #3	Engage in the development of comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy, which considers a range of funding options.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #4	Extend the completion date by one or two years, depending on the budget.
Priority level:	1 – Critical
Recommendation #5	Prioritise in the work plans and budgeting for Component 1 the provincial level piloting of early warning systems.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #6	Prioritise in the work plans and budgeting for Component 2: a) sector level planning, and b) provincial level planning.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #7	Develop a strategy for a gradual transition, handover and withdrawal of UN Environment.
Priority level:	2 – Important
Recommendation #8	Pilot in Bamyan the integration of the project work plan into the annual work plans of NEPA, DRRD, and DAIL.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #9	Develop and implement “training of trainers” courses for relevant professionals from other organisations.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #10	Develop a Theory of Change and revise and restructure the results framework.
Priority level:	2 – Important
Recommendation #11	Develop a 3-5 year UN Environment Afghanistan master plan that: a) defines the overall strategic objectives and components for UN Environment’s engagement, b) defines how each project contributes, and c) maps areas of synergy between the projects.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #12	Prioritise the partners and partnerships, and focus on the most important ones for project delivery.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #13	Further enhance the involvement of women.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #14	Endeavour to further train GoIRA staff, implementing partners and communities on

	the project concept and approach, and on creating a shared vision of the project.
Priority level:	2 – Important
Recommendation #15	Explore the feasibility of engaging students in community-level facilitation and data gathering.
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Recommendation #16	Improve the financial reporting process. Recruit a clerk to assist with the financial reporting for the LDCF-1 and LDCF-3 projects.
Priority level:	2 – Important
Recommendation #17	Strengthen the M&E to capture outcomes and provide useful data for project management. Engage an international M&E and Learning Officer.
Priority level:	2 – Important

The following is an overview of the main lessons that have been learned from the project's successes as well challenges (the detailed lessons are presented in chapter 4.3):

Lesson # 1:	The field/pilot components of projects that are “first movers” engaging on the promotion of new concepts and approaches in LDCs should first be tested and refined in one or two project sites. This will help ensuring that implementation capacities are not overstretched and that there is enough time and resources to adequately engage, build capacity, test options, and generate results and lessons.
Lesson # 2:	When UN Environment is providing direct executing assistance due to low national capacity, there is a difficult balance to strike between engaging enough to ensure that activities are implemented in a timely manner and with sufficient quality, while avoiding to become overly “hands-on” and leaving too little responsibility to the national stakeholders to assume full ownership. A transition strategy with gradual handover should be implemented from the onset of the project, and the potential need for mobilising post-project support should be integrated in the strategy.
Lesson # 3:	In fragile states and volatile contexts such as in Afghanistan, the situation is unpredictable and several factors can significantly delay or stall implementation and jeopardize the achievement outputs and outcomes. It is important to consider this from design and build in flexibility to adapt to a changing context – and be aware that significantly more time may be needed than in non-fragile states. Project designs should be realistic and ambition should be managed – e.g. in terms of the range of activities, the scope of outcomes, and geographical coverage.
Lesson # 4:	It takes time in Afghanistan to create awareness and a good understanding of complex new concepts and approaches, and to develop sufficient capacity for independent implementation of these – even if the capacity development, knowledge management and communication outputs are successfully delivered at a good quality. Hence, projects aiming at this should contribute to more long term processes and not be seen as stand-alone interventions – and expectations as to what can be achieved should be realistic.
Lesson # 5:	Strict fiduciary controls and reporting requirements are important, but since UNEP's UMOJA system and GEF financial reporting requirements are not aligned, reporting can become a challenge and cause significant delays in disbursements, which in turn can negatively affect the implementation and achievement of the intended outputs and outcomes. Staff constraints at various levels can further exacerbate this issue. In such cases, priority should be given to aligning financial systems, controls and reporting – and ensuring that there is a shared understanding and agreed standards.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Subject and scope of the evaluation

1. This mid-term evaluation (MTE) covers the implementation of the *Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in Afghanistan* project (LDCF-1 project) in the period May 2013 – September 2016. The project is funded by the GEF LDCF, implemented by UNEP, and executed by Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) with execution support from UNEP Post conflict and Disasters Management Branch (PCDCMB) and the UNEP country office in Afghanistan.
2. This MTE was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the UNEP Evaluation Policy¹ and the UNEP Programme Manual². It analyses whether project implementation is on track, identifies the main challenges and provides recommendations on how to address these challenges. The MTE assesses the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the project, as well as the likelihood of it achieving its intended outcomes and impacts and their longer term sustainability.
3. The MTE was carried out in the period 14 June – 30 November 2016, see the table below. The MTE team interviewed national level stakeholders in Kabul and visited the provinces of Bamyán and Badakhshan.

Table 3: MTE schedule

Milestone	Deadline
Meetings with UNEP evaluation manager and project task manager in Nairobi	14 Jun
Skype meeting with UNEP evaluation manager and UNEP Afghanistan Country Manager	24 Jun
Draft Inception Report	19 Aug
Final Inception Report	24 Aug
Evaluation Mission to Afghanistan	25 Aug – 10 Sep
Zero draft report	5 Oct
Draft Report shared with UNEP Task Manager and UNEP Country Manager	15 Oct
Draft Report shared with stakeholders	30 Nov
Final Report	30 Nov

1.2 Evaluation objectives

4. The MTE 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 partners³. The MTE identifies lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. Moreover, tangible recommendations are provided for enhancing the remaining project implementation and the likelihood of achieving the intended results, outcomes, and impacts.
5. UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation's (DEPI) Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) requested the UNEP Evaluation Office to commission an independent MTE since it is the first full-scale Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) project in Afghanistan. The MTE was guided by a number of evaluation questions falling under the evaluation questions under the six evaluation criteria specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR):
 - Strategic relevance
 - Achievement of outputs
 - Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results

¹ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

² http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf

³ MTE ToR

- Sustainability and replication
- Efficiency
- Factors and processes affecting project performance

1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology

6. The MTE was carried out by an independent international evaluation consultant and a national supporting consultant (brief résumés of the consultants are presented in annex VIII).
7. The intervention logic in the project document (ProDoc) and the results framework was carefully scrutinised to establish the project's theory of change (ToC). The ToC was assessed for consistency and a "reconstructed" ToC was elaborated to ensure that there was a consistent and clear conceptual understanding of the project impact pathways (the reconstructed ToC is presented in chapter 2.8). Based on the reconstructed ToC and the ToR, a set of evaluation questions was elaborated to guide the MTE (see chapter 1.4).
8. A desk review of available project and context-related documentation was carried out. GEF, UNEP and Afghan policy and strategy documents were used to assess the relevance of the project. Project related documentation; including progress reports (e.g. project implementation reviews (PIRs)), Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting minutes, monitoring sheets, and various project outputs and publications were used to assess implementation progress, project management, results and the likelihood of attaining the intended outcomes and impacts. Annex IV provides a full list of the documentation reviewed.
9. A mission to Afghanistan was carried out; where stakeholders were interviewed. Project sites were visited in Bamyan and Badakhshan, where community and implementing partners from local government and civil society were interviewed, and visual inspections were made of a range of field activities. Progress and results in other project sites was assessed on the basis of progress documentation and interviews with UNEP staff and implementing partners and provincial NEPA staff. Moreover, distance (Skype) interviews were held with stakeholders in Nairobi, Geneva and Afghanistan. A broad range of stakeholders were interviewed, incl. UNEP staff in Afghanistan, Geneva and Nairobi, staff from key Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) agencies at national and provincial levels (incl. the National Environmental Protection Authority (NEPA), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)), other partner institutions (incl. universities and NGOs), and community members. It was attempted to interview key staff involved in project implementation at national and sub-national from all the main implementing partners, as well as community members directly involved in project implementation members (e.g. community development councils and community environment officers), as well as other community-members, when possible. Both male and female community members were interviewed (when possible, women were interviewed separately) to ensure that the MTE was gender-sensitive and captured the perspectives of both women and men. Annex III provides detailed information about the people interviewed.
10. The combination of the desk review of a range of documents and gathering of views from a range of stakeholders enabled verification and triangulation of information, and helped reducing information gaps.
11. Limitations: While it was sought as much as possible to gather a broad range of data, evidenced and views to ensure that adequate data was available to obtain a nuanced and detailed understanding of the project, the MTE was affected by some limitations. Firstly, due to time constraints and also limited availability of some stakeholders, it was not possible to meet all implementing partners or visit all project sites and communities during the mission (e.g. Balkh Province could not be visited, and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Afghan Meteorological Authority (AMA), and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) staff were not met). Security concerns further exacerbated this; for example, due to UN's security protocol, the team could not visit Daikundi Province as originally intended. Due to cultural norms, the male international evaluation consultant could not always interview community women, but to reduce the implications of this, the female national consultant carried out additional interviews with women.

1.4 Main evaluation criteria and questions

12. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, project performance was assessed in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project; and their sustainability. In order to assess project performance and determine outcomes and impacts, the evaluation focused on a set of evaluation questions (each supported by number of indicators) under the six evaluation criteria (see chapter 1.2). The main questions were:
- 1) Strategic relevance: responsiveness to UNEP, GEF and GoIRA policies, strategies and priorities. Also gender sensitivity and social inclusiveness.
 - 2) Achievement of outputs: output quality and utility and progress on output delivery.
 - 3) Effectiveness: likelihood of attainment of project objectives, outcomes and planned results, such as: GoIRA capacity to address climate risk, reduced climate vulnerability.
 - 4) Sustainability and replication: presence of GoIRA ownership and leadership, implementation of a project exit strategy, and early signs of upscaling and replication.
 - 5) Efficiency: the timeliness of implementation, adherence to project budget, and complementarity with ongoing processes.
 - 6) Factors and processes affecting project performance: appropriateness of project design and management setup, stakeholder participation, project outreach, and quality of project monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Context

13. Being one of the poorest countries in the world, Afghanistan is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to a combination of geographic, climate, socio-economic and security related factors. The majority of the population is poor and 79% of the Afghan population depends on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods and are thus dependent on the country's natural resource base and their food security and incomes are directly influenced by the weather. The climate in the country is generally arid and thus, agriculture is already prone to the impacts of drought. Moreover, large parts of the country are mountainous, which on one hand means that many farmers benefit from irrigation fed by rivers getting their water from glaciers and spring snow-melt in the high altitudes, but at the same time, they are vulnerable to floods. The impacts of climate change are already felt, with an increase in both frequency and intensity of droughts as well as floods as a result of increased glacier melting. It is predicted that extreme weather events and drought will further increase as a result of global warming – changes which are likely to have an adverse effect on both natural ecosystems and agricultural systems; thereby threatening the livelihoods and food security of the rural population.⁴
14. A number of factors are further exacerbating the impacts of climate change as well as inhibiting the adaptive capacity of rural Afghans. Decades of instability and conflict has seriously hampered economic and social development in Afghanistan. While significant efforts have been made to reconstruct Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the governance and institutional structures and capacities remain weak; and hence unable to effectively build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Poverty, continuous insecurity, and widespread land degradation and deforestation due to unsustainable use of natural resources all significantly contribute to the vulnerability to climate change. As highlighted in Afghanistan's NAPA, water is a primary concern. The continuous insecurity and the presence of anti-government elements and the resulting restricted movement is a major challenge for development projects.⁵

⁴ ProDoc

⁵ ProDoc

2.2 Project Objectives and Components

2.2.1 Rationale

15. The UNEP project *Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in Afghanistan* aims to enhance the resilience to the impacts of climate change of rural communities and the economy more largely. The project seeks to strengthen institutional capacity in Afghanistan to facilitate climate change adaptation planning and protection for communities, ecosystems, and economic development, in line with the adaptation priorities outlined in Afghanistan's NAPA process.
16. Specifically, the project addresses national institutional capacity constraints vis-à-vis adaptation planning and protection for communities and ecosystems, as well as integrating climate change adaptation in development planning. In addition to building institutional planning capacity at the national level, the project demonstrates tangible adaptation options/measures in different ecosystems at the local level in four selected provinces (Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Daikundi). The focus of these pilot projects is on maintaining agricultural productivity and water flows and enhancing the resilience to climate change through an ecosystem management approach, by rehabilitating the functionality of degraded ecosystems. The pilot projects aim at demonstrating appropriate climate change adaptation (CCA) measures.

2.2.2 Objectives

17. The project's overall goal is "to increase the resilience of Afghanistan's society and economy to the effects of climate change and to enhance the capacity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to undertake effective planning on climate change adaptation".
18. Its objective is "to increase resilience of vulnerable communities and build capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk".

2.2.3 Components

19. The project aims to ensure that planners are able to develop robust adaptation and response policies and strategies, based on evidence, knowledge, and tangible experiences. Hence, the project comprises four components:
 - Component 1. Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information. This component aims to increase the national and provincial level capacity to gather and analyse climate change (CC) risk related data and information to enable forecasting, the establishment of early warning systems, and mapping of priority districts vis-à-vis CC vulnerability. The component thereby informs GoIRA and enhanced the ability to develop adaptation plans by GoIRA. Thus, the component seeks to enhance the capacity of staff at NEPA, AMA ANDMA, MAIL, and MEW.
 - Component 2. Climate change adaptation and response strategies. The component focuses on supporting GoIRA at national level in developing CCA policies, strategies and programmes as well as the integration/mainstreaming CCA into relevant sector policies and plans. Thus, the component seeks to enhance the capacity of staff at NEPA, MRRD, MAIL, and MEW. It also aims at enhancing inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation, e.g. through revitalising the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC).
 - Component 3. Practices for water resources and watershed management piloted and tested in selected project sites. This component tests ecosystem-based approaches to CCA and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in different types of landscapes. The component thus focuses on the development of planning at the provincial/landscape and local (e.g. valley and community) levels. Tangible CCA and risk reduction measures based on the priorities identified in the plans are implemented. All relevant stakeholders are involved in capacity-building activities as well as the implementation of CCA measures: NEPA, Provincial Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD – MRRD), Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL – MAIL), Provincial Department of Energy and Water (DEW – MEW), and community institutions and members. The component covers four provinces: Bamyan, Daikundi, Balkh and Badakhshan. Rural, peri-urban and urban sites are covered.

- Component 4. Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices. This component focuses on knowledge management, information access, and awareness creation. The experiences and lesson of the project are communicated and disseminated to relevant stakeholders and the wider public in Afghanistan through a range of knowledge products, events and activities – and the lessons are also communicated regionally and globally. At the same time, the component aims at bringing experiences from other countries in the Central Asia and Himalaya-Hindu Kush regions to Afghan stakeholders.

20. The project's overall logical framework is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Project Logical Framework

Components	Outputs	Outcomes
C1: Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information	1.1: Improved tools to assess, monitor, predict and interpret CC risks and associated training course development and delivery 1.2: Tested model and operating procedures for a national EWS system for collection, analysis, and distribution of information on CC risks to water resources at the national and community levels 1.3: Technical and policy briefs for policy makers on CC risks	O1: Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of CC-induced risks to water
C2: Climate change adaptation and response strategies	2.1: Tools and methodology for identification, evaluation and mainstreaming of CCA measures 2.2: Tools and training material for inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for CC risk and adaptation integration (NCCC) 2.3: Policy options to include CC risk and CCA measures for sectoral policies and plans developed and proposed 2.4: Capacities developed to implement the national CCA strategy and climate proofed sectoral plans	O2: CC risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes
C3: Practices for water resources and watershed management piloted and tested in selected project sites	3.1: Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in the irrigated agricultural sector through cost efficient water infrastructure and irrigation technologies (Badakhshan) 3.2: Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in the dryland agricultural sector through drought-resilient crops, water harvesting and catchment restoration measures (Balkh, Badakhshan) 3.3: Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in rural peri-urban communities through restoration of aquatic zones (Daikundi) 3.4: Creation and institutional strengthening of water management associations by training members on integrated water resources management and ecosystem based adaptation (Bamyan)	O3: Reduced CC vulnerability in project sites through local institutional capacity building and concrete interventions for improved water use
C4: Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices	4.1: Project lessons captured in, and disseminated through a project specific website, GAN and APAN 4.2: Project knowledge shared with other countries in the region 4.3: Project knowledge for national flood and drought prevention incorporated into training approaches and materials 4.4: Awareness raising delivered on CC-induced risks to water resources and CCA for local communities and national policymakers 4.5: Resource mobilisation strategy for replication of project lessons and demonstrations in other locations of Afghanistan	O4: Increased (access to) knowledge of good practices to increase resilience to CC risks to water resources

2.3 Target areas/groups

21. The project targets a broad range of stakeholders. Central to all project components are key GoIRA ministries and agencies: NEPA (National Environmental Protection Agency as the project executing agency and designated Government Institution for climate change, as well as key ministries for rural development

and water resources, i.e. MRRD (Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development), MAIL (Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock) and MEW (Ministry of Energy and Water). The provincial level departments of the above institutions are also targeted, especially under Component 3. AMA (Afghan Meteorological Authority) and ANDMA (Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority) are also targeted in relation to Component 1 (data, modelling, forecasting, and early warning). Moreover, Kabul University and University of Bamyan are engaged in relation to Component 1 and in relation to creating Afghan capacity to train future professionals and government staff on CCA. NGOs and rural communities are engaged in the implementation of Component 3 at the community level (capacity development, local plans and preparedness, and CCA measures). A detailed mapping of the stakeholders, their capacities and their roles, interests, and influence in relation to the project is presented in Annex X.

22. Components 1, 2 and 4 work at the national level. Capacity development activities of these components target the central level (e.g. GoIRA staff in Kabul) but also provincial level GoIRA staff from the four provinces covered by the project (Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Daikundi) participate in trainings. Component 3, works specifically in the four project provinces, both in terms of enhancing the capacity of provincial level authorities, but also in terms of local level activities with selected communities in selected districts (Bamyan District in Bamyan; Kishim, Tagab-e-Kishim, Ishkashim, and Faizabad Districts in Badakhshan; Nili District in Daikundi; Dehdadi and Balkh Districts in Balkh).

2.4 Milestones in Project Design and Implementation

23. Table 5: below presents the milestones and key dates in project design and implementation.

Table 5: Milestones and key dates in project design and implementation

Milestones	Completion dates
GEF approval date	17 Oct2012
UNEP approval date	9 Apr 2013
Start date	3 May 2013
Budget revised	Mar 2014
National CC Committee (NCCC) reactivated and meeting	2015 onwards
Contributions made to INDC	2015-2016
Eco-Tech Handbook	Q3 2016
Pilot demonstrations implemented in four provinces	2015 onwards
MTE mission	25 Aug – 9 Sept 2016
CC Governance Report	Q4 2016
Climate Change Atlas	Q4 2016
Climate Early Warning Guide (CLEW GUIDE)	Q2 2017
NRM 5-year Strategy	2016 onwards
Early Warning system piloted	Q2 2017 onwards
Training tools incorporated in national public service training curricula	Q4 2017 onwards
Completion date	2 May 2017
Financial closure	2 Nov 2017

2.5 Implementation Arrangements and Project Partners

24. As the implementation agency, UNEP is responsible for ensuring that GEF policies and criteria are adhered to and that the LDCF-1 project meets its objectives and achieve the expected outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. The UNEP project task manager is responsible for project supervision on behalf of the

Director of GEF. UNEP is also expected to ensure timelines, quality and fiduciary standards in project delivery. NEPA is the executing agency for the project, and thus holds the direct responsibility for the execution. However, Afghanistan is a fragile state and after decades of conflict, the government capacity is generally low compared to other LDCs. NEPA has thus requested UNEP to provide project execution support; this is done by the UNEP Country Office, which reports to the UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in Geneva.

25. Implementation is overseen by a Project Steering Committee (PSC), which is chaired by the NEPA Director General and comprises UNEP and high-level representatives from MAIL, MRRD, MEW, ANDMA and AMA.
26. The project is formally executed by NEPA, but NEPA has requested UNEP to assist with the execution. As such, UNEP handles the financial management, contracting, recruitment and supervision of consultants and the overall day-to-day implementation of the project, albeit in cooperation and coordination with NEPA. To facilitate the overall NEPA-UNEP cooperation, NEPA has provided UNEP with an office at NEPA's headquarters; UNEP staff use these facilities part time.
27. To facilitate the day-to-day implementation, each of the partner institutions represented in the PSC have an appointed focal point for the project, albeit not full-time. NEPA, as the executing agency has a focal point in Kabul as well as in Bamyan, Daikundi, and Balkh.
28. In UNEP Afghanistan, the team leader for the Metrics and Climate Science Unit (MAPS) is project-manager for the project and responsible for the day-to-day coordination and project management. Moreover, staff from different units are responsible for different tasks under the project (e.g. knowledge management or provincial level activities), including a provincial staff member based in Bamyan. The project manager spends a significant proportion of his time on the project, but none of the UNEP staff work full time on the project. Moreover, international and national consultants are engaged to provide specific technical inputs; an important example is the international Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), who is responsible for the technical inputs and training on climate modelling.

2.6 Project Financing

29. The total project cost is US\$ 19,790,000.⁶ Of this amount US\$ 5,390,000 is provided by the GEF Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF) co-financed (grants) and US\$ 14,400,000 is provided as cofunding by the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP), the Agro-Meteorology Programme (AgroMET) and the Rehabilitation of the Afghan Meteorological Authority (RAMA) project with a total contribution of US\$ 13.8m and an in-kind contribution from NEPA of US\$ 1m (see the table below). However, RAMA was never implemented and AgroMET ended in 2013, so their contributions never materialised. NABDP and NSP will be closed by end 2016, but NSP will be followed by the Citizen's Charter programme, which will provide a continuation of the baseline project functions and cofunding provided by NSP till now. Similarly, the Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme, a follow-up project to NABDP has been initiated (supported by UNDP).
30. By end 2015 US\$ 2,386,739 had been sub-allocated to the project, spent and reported on in the project financial statements (see the table below), and a request for a disbursement of US\$ 2,335,081 for 2016 had been made on 9 March 2016; leaving a remaining US\$ 668,180 unrequested balance of the GEF grant.
31. UNEP Afghanistan, NEPA and MRRD estimate the cofinancing realised by 30 June 2016 at US\$ 12,900,000⁷.

Table 6: Project budget and expenditure summary⁸

Particulars	Budget Amount (US\$)	Expenditure by 31 Dec 2015	Percentage spent
Cost to Environment Fund	US\$ 5,390,000	US\$ 2,386,739	44%
Counterpart Contribution:	US\$ 14,400,000	US\$ 12,900,000	90%

⁶ ProDoc

⁷ Draft 2016 PIR and letters from MRRD and NEPA

⁸ ProDoc, financial reports/allotment requests, PIRs, letters from MRRD and NEPA

- National Solidarity Programme (NSP)	US\$ 10,000,000	US\$ 10,000,000	100%
- National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP)	US\$2,400,000	US\$ 2,400,000	100%
- NEPA	US\$ 1,000,000	US\$ 500,000 (31 Dec 2014)	50%
- Agro-Meteorology Programme (AgroMET)	US\$ 600,000	0	0%
- Rehabilitation of the Afghan Meteorological Authority project (RAMA)	US\$ 400,000	0	0%
Total Cost of the Project	US\$ 19,790,000	US\$ 15,286,739	77%

2.7 Changes in design during implementation

32. No changes have been made to the project design and the activities, outputs, and outcomes in the results framework. Some indicators and targets were revised in the Baseline Assessment Report (September 2014). A budget revision was approved in June 2014, as UNEP and GEF changed their fiscal years to follow the calendar year. A request has been made for a 2-year no-cost extension and a second budget revision will be made in this connection.

2.8 Reconstructed Theory of Change of the Project

33. The intervention logic in the Project Document and the results framework was carefully scrutinised to establish the project's theory of change (ToC). The ToC was assessed for consistency and a "reconstructed" ToC was elaborated to ensure that there is a consistent and clear conceptual understanding of the project impact pathways. The reconstructed ToC presented in the figure at the end of this chapter. Changes in phrasing from the faithful ToC (i.e. the project's results framework) to the reconstructed ToC and new additions are written in blue. The table in Annex E provides a full overview of the outcomes, intermediate state and impact and changes from the faithful to the reconstructed ToC.
34. The intervention logic and the causal links from activities to outputs presented in the Project Document and results framework are coherent, and thus remain unchanged in the reconstructed ToC (see figure 2). The activities level is not covered under the ROTI methodology, which focuses on results. Moreover, the activities are too numerous to include in the ToC diagram.
35. The results framework identifies several assumptions and some risks at the objective/intermediate state and outcome levels. Some of these assumptions can be influenced by the project or by UNEP and would thus under the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROTI) methodology be classified as impact drivers; in the reconstructed ToC, the assumptions have been rearranged accordingly. All of the assumptions and impact drivers are valid and relevant, but there are also some assumptions and impact drivers that have not been identified in the results framework; these have been added in the reconstructed ToC. Moreover, the risks have been reformulated as assumptions (the positive state/absence of the risk factor) to keep the ToC in line with the ROTI methodology, which does not separate risks.
36. Outputs to outcomes: the outputs outlined in the Project Document are logical and coherent. They are expected to lead to tangible outcomes for each of the four components; i.e. in relation to: 1) improving CC monitoring and forecasting, 2) integration of CC risks in sector policies and plans, 3) piloting community CCA/vulnerability reduction options, and 4) knowledge access and experience sharing (see also chapter 2). However, while the four outcomes defined in the Project Document and results framework in principle are relevant, outcome 3 (*reduced CC vulnerability in project sites through local institutional capacity building and concrete interventions for improved water use*) is in reality an intermediate result, and has thus been moved. Moreover, some direct outcomes of the four components were not identified in the results framework and have thus been added. See the table immediately below for a full overview and explanation of the original and reconstructed outcomes. The most significant change is that all the immediate component outcomes are now related to enhanced capacity and access to knowledge; which in turn are leading to a derived higher-level outcome, that CC risks are integrated into sectoral policies, plans and programmes.

Table 7: Project outcomes

	Faithful	Reconstructed	Explanation
1	O1: Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of CC-induced risks to water		This outcome is appropriate and left unchanged
2	O2: CC risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes		This is an outcome of the project, but at a derived/higher level than the other outcomes, as it is a result of application of the other outcomes of the project (capacities and knowledge) – hence a second outcome level has been added to the ToC
		Enhanced capacity of GoIRA, to undertake effective sectoral planning on CCA	This was stated as the project goal, but it is a direct outcome of the activities under component 2, and has thus been moved
3	O3: Reduced CC vulnerability in project sites through local institutional capacity building and concrete interventions for improved water use		This outcome has been moved to the intermediate state, as it is a tangible change on the ground and a result of complex process, to which the project significantly contributes, but which also depends on other factors
		Enhanced capacity of GoIRA to promote appropriate CCA measures (extension)	This has been added as it is a direct outcome of the engagement of GoIRA in pilot activity implementation
		Enhanced capacity of target communities to implement CCA measures in agriculture, WRM, and ecosystem management	This has been added as it is a direct outcome of the engagement of communities in pilot activity implementation
4	O4: Increased (access to) knowledge of good practices to increase resilience to CC risks to water resources		“Access to” has been added, since the component mainly focuses on knowledge sharing, not knowledge generation
		Enhanced sharing of experiences between countries	This has been added, since two outputs focus on disseminating project results outside Afghanistan

37. The results framework identifies a number of assumptions and risks at the output-to-outcome level. These are generally valid, albeit some are more important than others. The main ones have been taken forward in the reconstructed ToC. Three of them relate to component 3, and are prerequisite for the piloting to be successful; i.e.: local political support for project implementation is strong (and thus enabling effective participation of local government and communities), security in project sites remains acceptable (so that project staff and implementing partners can work in the project sites), and no major climate events (floods, droughts) disrupt implementation (i.e. destroy the infrastructure constructed and crops and trees planted, or render it impossible to access the project area for prolonged periods). Moreover, one assumption for component 1 is in reality an impact driver, which the project has some control over; i.e. that technical expertise and equipment is available for achieving this rather technical and equipment demanding outcome.
38. Furthermore, the results framework has identified an important assumption, which is relevant at the lower outcome-to-higher outcome level (CC in policies and plans); namely that GoIRA actually is committed to incorporating CCA into its policy documents as a priority. An impact driver at this level is also identified in the results framework; that the project priority sites are representative and can actually be used to demonstrate the benefits of CCA measures, which are appropriate for other parts of Afghanistan.
39. Outcomes to intermediate state to impact: the project objective (intermediate state) and goal (impact) are virtually identical, both presenting a combination of a) enhanced resilience, and b) improved institutional

capacity. However, the enhanced capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk is rather an immediate outcome of the project (which will help enabling enhanced resilience), whereas the increased resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change is an impact as it entails tangible changes on the ground. Moreover, as mentioned above, the reduced vulnerability in project sites is an intermediate state (or an immediate small-scale impact), which in turn can be upscaled and replicated and thereby lead to long-term improvements in the state of the environment and benefits for rural populations. The pilot projects inform GoIRA's policy, planning and implementation (component 2) and the knowledge management component 4 will help disseminating the lessons – thereby promoting further replication. A new immediate state has been added, namely that the policies, plans and strategies developed with support from the project are effectively implemented by GoIRA, as this is required for the policies to lead to tangible impacts. A third intermediate state has been identified specifically for the regional and global dissemination of outputs and outcome from component 4; namely that the project's approaches are replicated in other countries.

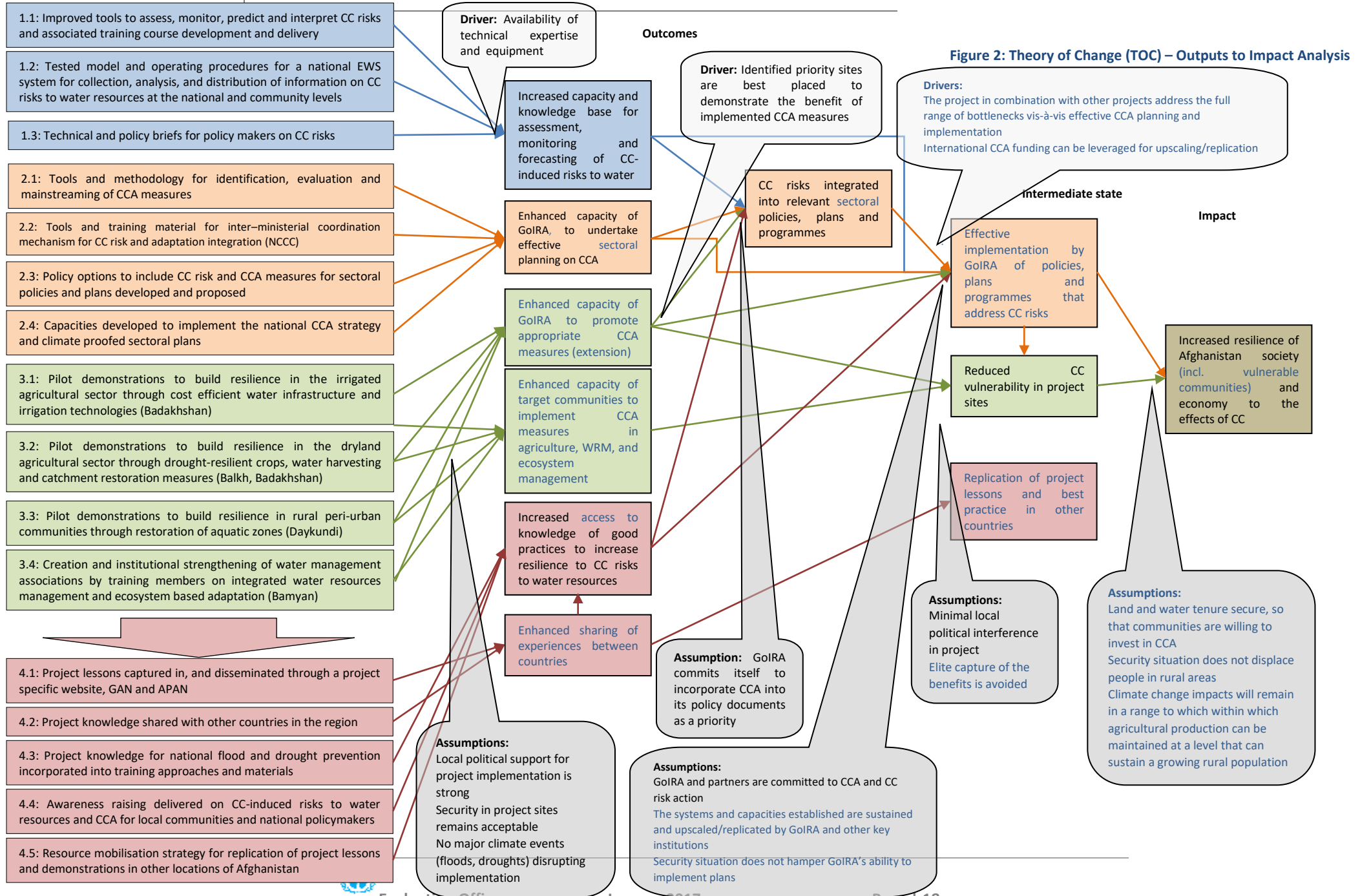
Table 8: Intermediate state and impact

Faithful	Reconstructed	Explanation
Intermediate state		
Objective: Increased resilience of vulnerable communities and built capacity of local and national institutions to address CC risk		<p>This intermediate state and the impact in the ProDoc are virtually identical and have thus been merged.</p> <p>It is a dual statement, where the enhanced capacity in reality is a direct outcome of the project, and it has thus been shifted to the outcome level.</p> <p>The increased resilience of communities is an impact and has thus been shifted to the impact level.</p>
	Effective implementation by GoIRA of policies, plans and programmes that address CC risks	This intermediate state has been introduced since the policies, plans and programmes developed need to be implemented in order to have an impact.
	Reduced CC vulnerability in project sites	See the project outcome table above re. this movement of the original outcome 3. It is a tangible on-the-ground result, i.e. a small-scale immediate impact and a contribution to reaching the intended larger and more long term impact of the project.
	Replication of project lessons and best practice in other countries	<p>This is not a key focus of the project since it is outside Afghanistan, but it is nonetheless an intermediate state which the projects knowledge management and dissemination component is anticipated to contribute to.</p> <p>However, the intention with the projects was mainly to bring lessons from other countries to Afghanistan rather than vice-versa.</p>
Impact		
Goal: Increased resilience of Afghanistan society and economy to the effects of CC and enhanced capacity of GoIRA to undertake effective planning on CCA	Increased resilience of Afghanistan society (incl. vulnerable communities) and economy to the effects of CC	<p>See above explanation regarding the intermediate state from the Project Document.</p> <p>The impact level has been modified to only contain the actual impact (impact is defined in UNEP terminology as a lasting change that benefits people and improves the state of the environment).</p>

40. The higher level outcome (CC integrated in policies, plans and programmes), as well as the lower level outcomes of enhanced planning capacity, enhanced CC extension capacity, improved access to CC

monitoring data and forecasts, an enhanced access to knowledge on good practice are all important building blocks that contribute to ensuring the intermediate state that GoIRA can implement its CCA policies and programmes. However, some factors outside the control of the project (assumptions) have to be in place for this to happen: GoIRA has to be truly committed at both political and technical levels to CCA, GoIRA has to make sure that the capacities and systems put in place by the project are sustained, upscaled and replicated so that it can reach out to several parts of the country, and the security has to be good enough so that GoIRA can actually operate in the rural areas, e.g. to provide extension services to communities. Moreover, financing is required, but this the project and UNEP can to a certain extent address by helping GoIRA in accessing large-scale international CC funding (e.g. from the Green Climate Fund). Moreover, as the project cannot cover the whole country and Afghanistan will still be affected by significant capacity constraints, there is a need to ensure that the project in combination with other projects (whether by UNEP or other development partners) address the whole range of bottlenecks so that there are no unaddressed factors that prevent the realisation of the full potential benefits of the project outcomes. The project and UNEP can influence this, e.g. through other UNEP projects, and through close coordination and joint activities with other development partners.

41. The intermediate state of reduced CC vulnerability in projects is achieved through the two outcomes of component three (piloting), where the enhanced capacities of both GoIRA extension services and communities themselves will enable the communities to implement adaptive measures, which reduce their vulnerability. However, there are two important preconditions (assumptions) for this; firstly, that the local political elites do not interfere with the process, and secondly, that the local elites do not capture the project benefits at the expense of more vulnerable community members.
42. The two intermediate states of effective policy and programme implementation by GoIRA and the reduced vulnerability in specific project sites both contribute to achieving the hoped for large-scale end impact: *Increased resilience of Afghanistan society (incl. vulnerable communities) and economy to the effects of CC.* The reduced vulnerability at project sites is a direct contribution to this, plus there could potentially be spontaneous replication, where communities and community members learn from each other. At a larger scale, effective implementation by GoIRA can stimulate adaptation in other rural areas across Afghanistan. However, there are some factors (assumptions) that need to be in place for this transformation to take place. Land and water tenure needs to be sufficiently secure, so that communities are willing to invest in CCA measures; if farmers are uncertain about whether they can keep their land and access water for an extended period, then they are unlikely to invest their limited resources in something where the benefits will mainly appear in the medium or even longer term. A related issue is security, i.e. that armed conflict does not displace people from their land. Finally, while the impact of climate change is very likely to gradually increase over the coming decades; climatic conditions should not become so severe that agricultural production becomes impossible or unstable beyond the level of that adaptation measures can cope with.
43. A third intermediate state (that the project's approaches are replicated in other countries) is not directly linked to the main objective of the project, which focuses on building CC resilience in Afghanistan. Moreover, the project can at the most inspire other countries, which in turn would need their own projects to take it forward. The UNEP Afghanistan team has confirmed that the intention of the regional/international knowledge management activities are to bring international experiences to Afghanistan, whereas replication of the project's approaches in other countries is not an objective of the project. Hence, this intermediate state will not be further assessed by the MTE.



3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Strategic Relevance

3.1.1 Alignment with UNEP's strategy, policies and mandate

44. UNEP strategies: While not specified explicitly in the Project Document, the project contributes to a number of UNEP objectives, priorities and sub-programmes under the Medium-Term Strategies (MTS) and Programmes of Work (PoW), for the 2010-2013 and 2014-2017 periods. This is especially in relation to climate change (CC) where the project directly responds to the climate change resilience and climate change adaptation (CCA) aspects; such as strengthening the ability to integrate CCA in policy frameworks and development planning at both national and subnational level and promoting ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation and building climate resilience. Moreover, the project also responds to aspects of disaster and conflict (i.e. climate related disaster risk reduction (DRR) and environmental rehabilitation), ecosystem management (i.e. ecosystem services, integrating ecosystem based approaches in development planning and implementation, and mountain ecosystem restoration) and environmental governance (i.e. climate mainstreaming and supporting Afghanistan's participation in international processes under UNFCCC).
45. Bali Strategic Plan: There is no description of the project's link to the Bali Strategic Plan. However, government capacity building at both central and sub-national levels vis-à-vis CCA, water and ecosystem management is central to the project. Moreover, the project promotes the use of appropriate and improved technology; both in terms of: a) enhancing the data-gathering and analytical capacity by strengthening the climate data collection and the use of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) to model and forecasts, and to identify risk locations; and b) introducing locally appropriate technologies and approaches to adaptation and risk reduction; e.g. agricultural diversification, physical infrastructure to counter the impacts of flash floods (e.g. check dams, eco-weirs, protection walls) and landslides and avalanches (e.g. terracing, tree planting).
46. South-South cooperation: South-South sharing is promoted by component 4 (Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices), especially with countries in the Central Asia and Hindu Kush-Himalaya regions.
47. Gender and human rights based approach: The project aims at including women e.g. in the activities at the community level, but gender is a particularly complex and sensitive issue in Afghanistan, and gender could be addressed more systematically by the project (see the section on stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships under chapter 3.6). The project does not have an explicit human rights based focus, but community actions are always initiated with community consultations to ensure free, prior and informed consent indeed, the communities themselves identify key adaptation priorities.

3.1.2 Alignment with GEF focal areas and strategic priorities

48. GEF-5 (2010) and GEF-6 (2014) have a stronger focus on CC mitigation than on CCA, whereas adaptation is mainly covered as part of the Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy. However, the GEF is also managing the Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) under the UNFCCC, which explicitly focuses on CCA in least developed countries (LDCs) and the preparation and implementation of their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). The project is funded by the LDCF, and is the first full-scale GEF adaptation project in Afghanistan. It responds directly to all three LDCF/SCCF objectives, i.e.: a) reducing vulnerability of people, livelihoods, physical assets and natural systems to CC, b) strengthening institutional and technical CCA capacities, and c) integrating CCA in policies, plans, and processes.

3.1.3 Relevance to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs

49. As described in chapter 2.1, Afghanistan and especially its rural communities are exceptionally vulnerable to the impacts of CC, even compared to other LDCs. However, due to the prolonged conflict and the focus

on state-building, peace-building and reconstruction, CC has not been given much attention until a few years ago, although Afghanistan ratified UNFCCC in 2002 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. NEPA's Climate Change Division was established in 2012. The LDCF-1 project is the first major climate change project in the country, and is thus contributing to making CC more prominent on the national agenda and enhancing the capacity of GoIRA to address this emerging challenge. The project specifically aims at supporting the implementation of Afghanistan's NAPA, so the departure point of the project is the adaptation priorities outlined in the NAPA i.e. "improved terracing, agroforestry and agro-silvo pastoral systems", "climate-related research and early warning systems", "improved food security" and "rangeland management". The project supports the NAPA implementation at the national level in terms of improving the forecasting, policy and planning capacity, as well as at the sub-national level (in four provinces) through enhancing the planning, extension and local implementation capacities.

50. While not a major focus of the project, it has also supported GoIRA in engaging in international UNFCCC processes, e.g. by contributing to the preparation of the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) and increasing the proactive participation (increasing capacity, funding travel costs of additional delegates) of GoIRA in COP-21 in Paris (2015).
51. The project document provides a comprehensive description of the context and analysis of the main climate change related challenges faced by Afghanistan, both in terms of the physical, economic and social impacts of the projected climate change. Moreover, a strong linkage between general environmental/ecosystem degradation and climate change vulnerability is described. The project document also identifies major capacity constraints at all levels (government and communities) as a major impediment to climate change adaptation in Afghanistan. Hence the project aims at addressing two main problems: 1) *climate change in Afghanistan will severely impact the water sector as well as key sectors that depend on regular water supply*; and 2) *rural communities and all levels of authority presently lack the climate change knowledge, technical capacity, management capacity and physical and financial resources to overcome and withstand the impacts of climate change*. The preferred response to these problems are identified: a) *Institutional capacity in Afghanistan is strengthened to facilitate effective adaptation planning and protection of rural communities, ecosystems and development against climate change*; b) *Community and local capacity is strengthened to successfully respond to climate change*; and c) *Ecosystems are restored and sustainably managed to deliver the full range of ecosystem services they are capable of delivering in the face of climate variability and change*. However, five barriers are found to hamper the implementation of the preferred solutions: Limited awareness of climate change and adaptation, lack of climate-related data including early warning systems, poor policy enforcement, lack of planning capacity, and lack of financial resources. The project specifically aims at overcoming these barriers by improving the capacities of national and local (government) institutions and pilot communities, by enhancing knowledge and awareness, and by facilitating the establishment of an early warning system. This intention is clearly reflected in the components and outputs of the project design, which aims at: enhancing risk assessment and forecasting, planning and strategy development, piloting adaptive measures in selected landscapes and villages, and enhancing awareness and knowledge. Moreover, the project aims at enhancing the capacity to access funding.

The overall rating for project relevance is "highly satisfactory".

3.2 Achievement of outputs

52. Table 9 at the end of this chapter provides a detailed overview of the current status of the project's outputs and an assessment of the likelihood of their full delivery by the end of the current project completion date (2 May 2017). The following sections provide an overall assessment of the progress of key elements per component.

3.2.1 Component 1: Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information

53. The outputs under Component 1 are mostly well on track and likely to be delivered by the project completion date. Tools for assessment, monitoring and climate risk assessment have been identified and introduced; training courses have been developed; GoIRA staff from different agencies and other stakeholders (from academia and NGOs) have been trained in the use of the tools; and vulnerability maps

and projections for national and sub-national levels have been produced. The project has produced the first models and vulnerability maps (covering the water and agriculture sectors) downscaled specifically for Afghanistan.

54. Overall, the quality of the trainings provided for technical staff from the participating ministries and agencies at central and provincial level, academia and other and of the products is very good; all stakeholders and participants have been very appreciative of them as expressed interviews and a sample of training feedback forms checked. Some interviewed training participants (from MEW and MRRD) provided tangible examples of how they used the additional geographic information system (GIS) skills imparted in their ongoing work.
55. The only major output which is very unlikely to be completed is the piloting of early warning systems (EWS) at the provincial level; only limited progress has been made on these. Moreover, while relationships have been established with a number of regional institutions and programmes outside Afghanistan, these links appear to be somewhat superficial and no real regional partnerships with tangible cooperation appear to have been established.

3.2.2 Component 2: Climate change adaptation and response strategies

56. While good progress has generally been made towards the outputs under Component 2, some gaps remain and the outputs are unlikely to be fully delivered by the project completion date.
57. The various assessments under this component have been carried out. The National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) has been revitalised and is meeting regularly, and its members have been supported with awareness raising and capacity development activities regarding the integration of CCA in policies and plans. Moreover, a number of training courses has been provided to GoIRA staff at central and provincial levels, e.g. on the mainstreaming of CCA into development plans (e.g. the "SPEAK Climate" courses). Training participants find that these trainings have been useful and enhanced their knowledge of CC significantly. A significant aspect of the training courses provided by the project, is that they are not one-day workshops, but more comprehensive trainings, sometimes carried out as two blocks. This approach in line with the request from the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to donors that trainings should be part of a process and not be ad-hoc stand-alone events. However, while capacities in terms of and enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change and possible policy measures have been enhanced, they still remain uneven and in many places low, and further capacity development support will be needed by GoIRA after the project completion date.
58. An Eco-Tech Handbook (50% funded by the project) has been drafted but is yet to be finalised. The toolkit for identification, evaluation, and mainstreaming of CCA measures has yet to be finalised; a first draft has been prepared but the content is still to be further developed. Moreover, the intended training course on MEA negotiation is unlikely to be fully completed and conducted before the project completion date.
59. The project has supported the development of important UNFCCC-related policy documents, i.e. Afghanistan's INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution) and BUR (Biennial Update Report). Moreover, the project has provided inputs to the UNDP supported finalisation of the National CC Strategy, National CC Finance Strategy, and National CC Action Plan. Support was also provided to the participation of GoIRA representatives in UNFCCC COP21 in Paris in 2015.
60. However, the intended output to provide policy options for integration of CCA measures in sector policies and plans in the water, agriculture, and disaster and conflict prevention sectors has only been partly delivered upon; the only sector-specific policy area to which the project has provided advice is MAIL's NRM Strategy and Action Plan. However, the target set by the project was only to influence one sectoral policy or strategy, which was met; but this target seems insufficient vis-à-vis the stated sectoral coverage of the output. To effectively influence policy, it is important to engage at the right time and use available windows of opportunities, i.e. when a policy-formulation or reform process is ongoing. One such window currently exists in relation to the ongoing preparation of the MRRD-led Citizen's Charter, which will be implemented by a number of sector ministries, including MAIL and MEW. The Citizen's Charter is a major programme, which will replace the NSP. Another potential window is the ongoing preparation of the Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme, which will replace the NABDP.

3.2.3 Component 3: Practices for water resources and watershed management piloted and tested in selected project sites

61. Overall, the outputs for Component 3 will not be fully delivered by the project completion date, although there are significant differences in the level of progress between the four target provinces.
62. Implementation in Balkh and Badakhshan is still at an early stage. Partnerships have been formed with provincial government (especially NEPA) and other implementing partners (ICARDA, NGOs), trainings have been provided to provincial GoIRA staff, and project sites have been selected. Some, but not all community plans have been developed. However, no community-level activities have yet been implemented, but their implementation in accordance with the project design is still scheduled to take place.
63. Good progress has been made in Bamyan and Daikundi, where implementation of field activities at the community level is well underway; communities have been mobilised, trainings have been conducted for provincial-level GoIRA staff, Community Development Councils (CDCs) and community members, village management plans developed and a range of physical activities for resilience, risk reduction and livelihoods diversification have been implemented and are still under implementation (e.g. tree planting, terracing, village gardens, eco-weirs, check dams, protection walls). In total 16 of the 28 CDCs targeted by the project have been provided with flood and drought management investments), all of these 16 CDCs are in Daikundi and Bamyan. UNEP already had a well-established presence and partnership with NEPA in Bamyan and to some extent in Daikundi prior to the project, which has facilitated implementation. The 2016 PIR reports the following level of progress in the two provinces:
- **Daikundi:** Detailed landscape-level, valley-level and village-level management plans have been developed with five CDCs. Around 10 check-dams and three water reservoirs have been built. Moreover, 7-15 low cost water barriers and catchment structures, including terracing aimed at mitigating flood, drought, and avalanches have been established. 12 trainings have been delivered.
 - **Bamyan:** Landscape (Koh-e-Baba Alpine and Highlands Rangelands), valley and village-level plans developed with 15 communities up to now and signed agreements are in place with all. 234 check-dams and one water reservoir have been built. Over 500,000 trees for slope protection, around 34,000 fruit trees, and over 250,000 riparian trees have been planted. 55 terraces have been established and around 18 hectares of rangelands have been rehabilitated. 70 trainings have been delivered.
64. As can be seen from the above, the range of activities in Bamyan has been particularly comprehensive, whereas the scope in terms of the range of activities and number of communities in Daikundi has been smaller. Moreover, other activity-types not listed in the PIR or reflected in the Project Document and results framework have been implemented in Bamyan, with inputs from the project, such as planting of vegetable gardens, installation of solar panels, installation of improved cook stoves, establishment of a trail connecting the valleys in the Koh-e-Baba landscapes, installation of eco-sanitation and human waste recycling at a school.
65. Interviews with community-members, and provincial-level GoIRA staff in Bamyan showed that good results have been achieved and there is an appreciation of the project. Communities already report some early benefits of the enhanced skills (e.g. in relation to horticulture), the physical activities, and the livelihoods diversification (see chapter 3.3 on effectiveness). Provincial NEPA staff report an increased capacity and understanding of CC, which they use in their day-to-day work in relation to environmental awareness creation. However, it is also clear that there are still major capacity constraints to address and that the conceptual understanding of the project's objectives, philosophy and ecosystem based approach to adaptation is uneven among stakeholders in Bamyan – in particular, but not only, among community women (see the *stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships* section in chapter 3.6).
66. Hence, the range of activities and number of locations is very broad and possibly overly so, when considering a) the limited budget available for piloting per province, b) the timeline of the project, and c) the on-the-ground implementation capacity of UNEP, NEPA and the other partners (see chapter 3.5 on efficiency and chapter 3.6 on factors affecting performance). It seems that less scattering of efforts and perhaps also covering fewer valleys and CDCs could have allowed for a deeper engagement in the pilot communities. For the same reasons, covering four provinces also appears overly ambitious – two

provinces would have been a more appropriate number considering the resources and capacities available.

3.2.4 Component 4: Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices

67. Some outputs under Component 4 are likely to be fully delivered by the project completion date, but others are unlikely to be achieved.
68. UNEP office in Afghanistan has established an internal knowledge management unit. This unit has developed a knowledge management strategy, and a highly structured approach to knowledge management has been established, including standard procedures and checklists for the development and dissemination of CCA-related knowledge products (e.g. guidelines, assessments, fact sheets, briefs, folders, posters), and standardised structures/module types for training courses. The products are generally of a good quality and with an appealing graphical layout. Several knowledge and communication products have been produced, targeting a broad range of audiences, such as policy-makers, government and other technical staff, communities, and the general public. A range of channels are used for dissemination (including the UNEP website, various UN outreach channels, and Facebook). The development of the www.ecobase.af website hosted by NEPA is scheduled for completion by end 2016. The project has throughout 2016 supported NEPA's provincial office in the preparation of environmental quarterly reports.
69. Three types of training packages are envisaged by UNEP Afghanistan: SPEAK for professionals in the public and private sectors and civil society, TEACH for university and high school lecturers and students, and LEARN for the community level. The SPEAK format and five SPEAK courses have been developed, mainly, but not exclusively, under the LDCF-1 project. Course handbooks and materials have been developed so that the courses can be replicated by other entities. TEACH is under development, but both TEACH and LEARN are unlikely to be ready by the project completion date.
70. The LDCF team is supporting Kabul University in the development of the curricula for the Environmental Sciences Faculty; this process is quite advanced in relation to the curriculum and syllabus for the disaster management classes; this includes a short practicum at NEPA, ANDMA or UNEP. The project is also planning to assist the Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Institute of Afghanistan and Save the Children/Ministry of Education in including CC into the school curriculum, but this work is unlikely to fully materialise before the project completion date.
71. UNEP Afghanistan and NEPA staff have participated in several regional and international events, which has enabled them to share knowledge and establish contacts. An info note on regional networks has been prepared. A list of regional CC contacts in other countries in the region has been completed, but its value added appears limited and it has so far not been used. The project has co-organised some national workshops and conferences as well as several awareness-raising events. All these events had an environmental focus, but the CCA angle appears to have more prominent in some than in others.
72. Output 4.5 under Component 4 is an outlier and not truly a knowledge management outputs; the development of a resource mobilisation strategy for replication. The project has on an ad-hoc manner contributed with inputs to the elaboration to a number of project designs and proposals by UNEP as well as other institutions. Moreover, some training has been provided to NEPA staff on proposal writing. However, none of the ongoing or planned activities under this output directly address the elaboration of a resource mobilisation strategy, although the project is reportedly providing inputs to the National CC Finance Strategy, which is being developed with UNDP support.

3.2.5 Overall progress against outputs

73. As described in the sections above, several outputs cannot be fully delivered before the current project completion date (there is less than a year left before project completion); achievement of the outputs under Component 3 are particularly challenging in this sense. NEPA and UNEP Afghanistan is planning to request a two-year (no-cost) extension of the project completion date. If such an extension is granted, then there should be sufficient time to complete the remaining outputs, provided the remaining budget is sufficient (see chapter 3.6.6 on financial planning and management).

74. It is noted that the project has significantly exceeded its targets regarding the number of participants, but this is not due to an unusually high number of people being trained; rather, the targets set appear overly conservative. According to the PIRs, 84 participants (64 male and 20 female participants, 60+ government staff) have been trained under the different outputs in the July 2015 – June 2016 period, 252 government staff were trained in July 2014 – June 2015, and 169 people (government and local stakeholders) were trained in July 2013-2014.

75. Table 9 below provides a detailed summary of the progress against all the project outputs.

The overall rating on the delivery of the project's outputs is "moderately satisfactory".

Table 9: Summary of the Project's success in producing programmed outputs

Component	Expected Outcome ⁹	Outputs	Original completion date (work plan in Project Document) ¹⁰	Implementation status on 30 June 2016 (1 st quarter, year 4) ¹¹
1. Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information	1. Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment, monitoring, and forecasting of climate change-induced risks to water in Afghanistan	1.1. Improved tools to assess, monitor, predict and interpret climate change related risks and associated training course development and delivery	4 th quarter, year 4	<p>Most activities and products under this output completed:</p> <p>Institutional mapping and training needs assessment, 5-year strategic plan for data network and climate data, trainings on modelling and forecasting, climate models identified and used. Equipment (e.g. computers) has been provided to relevant departments and information of available software has been provided.</p> <p>Other activities almost completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships established with a number of regional institutions and programmes (list of contacts prepared). Comment: real partnerships and tangible cooperation appears not to have been developed – and the utility of the list of regional contacts is unclear and appears limited. Vulnerability maps and climate projections produced. CC atlas still to be produced. <p>Assessment: Output largely achieved and likely to be completed before the current project completion date.</p>
		1.2. A model and standard operating procedures for a national EWS system for the systematic collection, analysis, and distribution of information on climate change-induced risks to water resources at the national and community levels developed, and piloted in the four priority provinces	2 nd quarter, year 3	<p>Assessment of the state of early warning systems (EWS) completed, EWS options analysed and suitable EWS models identified.</p> <p>EWS report compiled but still to be published. EWS Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) under development. Limited progress on the establishment of pilot EWS, equipment not procured yet. <u>Comment: EWS report publishing, SOP, pilot EWS significantly delayed.</u></p> <p>Assessment: Output delayed. EWS report likely to be completed, SOP moderately likely to be completed, and pilot EWS very unlikely to be completed by the current project completion date.</p>

⁹ Outcomes as per the results framework and ProDoc (faithful ToC)

¹⁰ The time indication in the table is according to the project starting and completion dates (May-April), not the financial reporting year (Jan-Dec)

¹¹ Sources: PIR 2014, PIR 2015, PIR 2016 (draft), stakeholder interviews

		1.3. Technical and policy briefs for policy makers on climate change risks to water and other key sectors developed	2 nd quarter, year 4	<p>Project contributed to one policy brief: “<i>Afghan Cities for Life: Respecting the environment for healthy and liveable cities</i>” (with UN- HABITAT). The project also contributed to Afghanistan’s INDC (unforeseen in ProDoc). The project also produced posters (e.g. on the Climate Change Vulnerability Guide) and fact sheets. It is planned to produce further briefs.</p> <p>Training courses designed and carried out: “<i>Environmental Protection and Disaster Management</i>” (for provincial level GoIRA staff), “<i>SPEAK climate: From Science to Action</i>” (curriculum endorsed by Kabul University and the Academy of Science), climate change impacts on the water and agriculture sectors (for provincial level GoIRA staff)</p> <p>Assessment: Planned training courses likely to be completed before the current completion date, but seemingly mainly reaching technical staff rather than policy-makers (although other trainings have reached NCCC members). Policy briefs unlikely to reach intended number (4 briefs) before the current project completion date.</p>
2. Climate change adaptation and response strategies	2. Climate change risks integrated into relevant policies, plans, and programmes.	2.1. Tools and methodology for identification, evaluation, and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation measures in the water sector and other water related/affected sectors developed	4 th quarter, year 4	<p>Assessment of tools and methodologies for the identification, evaluation and mainstreaming of CCA measures completed. CCA toolkit layout developed and a first draft prepared, but contents still to be further developed – will integrate lesson from field activities under component 3. Eco-tech Handbook drafted and under review. <u>Comment: Eco-Tech Handbook significantly delayed.</u></p> <p>Assessment: Toolkit unlikely to be finalised by the current project completion date.</p>
		2.2. Tools and training material targeting the current inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for climate change risk and adaptation integration (NCCC) developed	4 th quarter, year 3	<p>Inter-ministerial knowledge base assessment, overview assessment of relevant laws, policies, strategies, and government partners’ training needs on CC risk assessment, monitoring, prediction and adaptation presented in “<i>Climate Change Governance in Afghanistan</i>” report. Report completed but yet to be published.</p> <p>The project has provided support and awareness raising (workshops, conferences, presentations, training) for National CC Committee (NCCC) members to increase their capacity on CC risks and integration into policies and plans (incl. support for INDC development by NCCC). NCCC members met regularly.</p> <p>Attempts to recruit an international MEA negotiations specialist were unsuccessful, but the UNEP Afghanistan team has drafted a curriculum for a SPEAK MEA negotiations training course. Two conferences on MEAs were held.</p> <p>Assessment: Output delayed. NCCC revitalised but capacity building on MEA negotiations unlikely to be completed and NCCC likely to need more support after the</p>

				current project completion date.
		2.3. Policy options to include climate change risk and adaptation measures for sectoral policies and plans (water, agriculture, and disaster and conflict prevention) developed and proposed	3 rd quarter, year 4	<p>“Climate Change Governance in Afghanistan” report completed, but yet to be published.</p> <p>Climate projections completed and incorporated into the “Climate Change Science Perspectives of Afghanistan” 1st edition. 2nd edition to be completed in 2016 with projections for the water and agriculture sectors. <u>Comment: projections significantly delayed.</u></p> <p>Project has contributed to INDC and BUR and provided inputs to the UNDP-supported finalisation of the National CC Strategy, National CC Finance Strategy, and National CC Action Plan. <u>Comment: CCA strategy activities delayed.</u></p> <p>The project has reportedly provided inputs/recommendations to the development of MAIL’s NRM strategy (not reflected in PIRs) and action plan, but otherwise not influenced sector policies.</p> <p>Assessment: projects developed and national CC plans influenced, but the influence on sectoral policies and planning is somewhat modest and the project is unlikely to significantly influence sector policies and plans before the current project completion date.</p>
		2.4. Capacities developed to implement the national climate change adaptation strategy and climate proofed sectoral plans	3 rd quarter, year 4	<p>Training needs assessments carried out for NEPA, MAIL, MRRD, MEW, ANDMA, AMA at national and provincial levels. Draft “Training Needs Assessment” report prepared. A range of SPEAK training courses developed and trainings carried out for GoIRA staff. NCCC members trained on the importance of the mainstreaming of CCA in development plans.</p> <p>Assessment: CCA implementation capacities have been enhanced, but remain low and more support will be needed after the current project completion date.</p>
3. Practices for water resources and watershed	3. Reduction of climate change vulnerability in the selected project	3.1. Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in the irrigated agricultural sector through cost efficient water infrastructure and irrigation technologies implemented in Badakhshan Province	3 rd quarter, year 4	<p>Partnerships have been initiated and trainings have been provided for partners in Badakhshan, incl. NEPA, Rural Green Environmental Organization (RGEO), Afghanaid, Concern Worldwide, and UN staff. A project office has been established at NEPA’s provincial office and a small grant contract has been signed with RGEO (but implementation yet to begin). Plans have been developed for support for an existing educational urban garden complex in Faizabad. Sites have been identified, but communities are yet to be mobilised. Nonetheless, community officials have been trained on ecosystem based technology and approaches to water supply management and climate-irrigation systems and a workshop on tree plantation has been held at a school.</p>

manag ement piloted and tested in selecte d project sites	sites through local institutio nal capacity building and concrete intervent ions for improve d water use.			<p><u>Comment: field implementation significantly delayed.</u></p> <p>Assessment: Implementation in Badakhshan still at an initial stage and the piloting will at the most have been initiated by the current project completion date.</p>
		3.2 Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in the dryland agricultural sector through drought-resilient crops, water harvesting and catchment restoration measures implemented in Balkh Province and Badakhshan Province	4 rd quarter, year 4	<p>For Badakhshan, see output 3.1 status.</p> <p>In Balkh, partnerships have been established with NEPA and ICARDA (on drought resilient agriculture research) and their staff has been trained on climate-tech. Project sites have been identified, one of the communities has been mobilised and baseline data collected. A plan is under development for Balkh Province. Research has been carried out by ICARDA. Plans are in place to convert the NEPA nursery to a research and education centre. <u>Comment: field implementation significantly delayed, initial meeting carried out in 2014, but no progress was made in 2015.</u></p> <p>Assessment: Implementation in Badakhshan still at an initial stage and the piloting will at the most have been initiated by the current project completion date.</p> <p>Implementation in Balkh is also at an early stage and only limited pilot projects results will be achieved by the current project completion date.</p>
		3.3. Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in rural peri-urban communities through restoration of green space in Daikundi Province	3 rd quarter, year 4	<p>Partnerships with NEPA established in Daikundi and plans developed for NURI (Nili Urban Resilience Initiative). Five community development councils (CDCs) selected, one agreement has been completed and two are under preparation – the three CDC’s have started implementation of field activities. <u>Comment: the latter two agreements are delayed.</u> Village vulnerability maps completed.</p> <p>19000+ trees planted for restoration of degraded wetlands, 15 community gardens established, approx. 10 check-dams and 3 water reservoirs built. <u>Comment: Good progress was made in 2014-2015, but limited progress was made in 2016.</u></p> <p>Multiple trainings and awareness raising events provided for GoIRA officials and communities.</p> <p>Assessment: Implementation in Daikundi has made good progress, but is unlikely to be completed and fully consolidated by the current project completion date.</p>
		3.4. Creation and institutional strengthening of water management associations by training members on integrated	3 rd quarter, year 4	<p>The activities under this output have to a good extent been completed.</p> <p>13 agreements for community-based implementation and pilot of adaptation techniques and technologies have been signed with 15 CDCs in Bamyan.</p>

		water resources management and ecosystem based adaptation in Bamyan District and other pilot areas		<p>Water user associations (WUAs) already existed in 3 out of 4 valleys. LDCF did not as originally intended establish WUAs, but supported MEW in strengthening WUAs with the introduction of NRM principles.</p> <p>Tools have been developed for IWRM and ecosystem management and CCA and included in the “Eco-Tech Handbook”. Multiple trainings and awareness raising events provided for GoIRA officials and communities (e.g. on IWRM, ecosystem management).</p> <p>Several pilot activities for disaster risk reduction, resilience and livelihoods diversification have been implemented, including tree planting, terracing, village gardens, check dams, eco-weirs, protection walls, foot bridges, mountain trails connecting valley, solar panels.</p> <p>Landscape, valley, and community/village management plans have been developed. High resolution GIS modelling and mapping has been carried out in three catchments.</p> <p><u>Comment: The awareness of the landscape, valley and community plans and understanding of the project objectives, approach and philosophy is uneven among stakeholders at the provincial and community levels.</u></p> <p>Assessment: Implementation in Bamyan has made good progress, but while the output may be largely completed by the current project completion date it is unlikely to be fully consolidated.</p>
4. Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices	4. Increased knowledge of good practices on increasing resilience to climate change-induced	4.1. Project lessons captured in, and disseminated through a project specific web site, the Global Adaptation Network (GAN) and the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN)	4 th quarter, year 4	<p>The activities under this output have largely been completed.</p> <p>UNEP Afghanistan has established an internal knowledge management unit and a knowledge management strategy is under development. Numerous knowledge and communication products have been produced, including briefs, fact sheets, folders, posters, elevation models. Several regional and global networks have been contacted and assessed and presented in an info note. These networks, the UNEP website and Facebook are being used to disseminate project lessons. The development of the www.ecobase.af website with NEPA is delayed due to problems with recruiting a website developer, but is currently under development.</p> <p>Assessment: UNEP Afghanistan is very proactive in producing knowledge products and disseminating lessons and the output is very likely to be completed by the current project completion date.</p>
		4.2. Project knowledge shared with other countries in the region facing	4 th quarter, year 4	<p>UNEP Afghanistan and NEPA staff have participated in several regional and international events, which has enabled them to share knowledge and establish contacts. A list of</p>

	risks to water resources	similar climate-induced drought and flooding hazards		<p>potentially relevant CC contacts in other countries in the region has been completed.</p> <p>The project has co-organised two national GIS workshops, a national hydrogeology conference, and a national scientific conference.</p> <p>Assessment: The project has provided opportunities for regional and in-country sharing and the output is likely to be achieved by the current project completion date.</p>
		4.3. Project knowledge for national flood and drought prevention incorporated into training approaches and materials	2 nd quarter, year 4	<p>UNEP Afghanistan has developed an overall training strategy, where the LDCF trainings follow a similar structure and develop training and guidance materials to enable replication. Three types of training packages are envisaged: SPEAK for professionals, TEACH for university lecturers and students, and LEARN for schools. The SPEAK format and five SPEAK courses have been developed, and TEACH is under development.</p> <p>The LDCF team is supporting Kabul University in the development of the curriculum for the Environmental Sciences Faculty.</p> <p>The project will in the future assist Save the Children in their work with the Ministry of Education to include CC into the existing environmental curriculum – an MoU is under development.</p> <p>Assessment: the project output will reach future professionals through the education system, but is less likely to reach a large proportion of the current cadre of civil servants at key ministries.</p>
		4.4. Awareness raising activities on climate change-induced risks to water resources and adaptation for local communities and key national policymakers delivered using appropriate means	4 th quarter, year 4	<p>The project funded or co-funded several awareness raising events for GoIRA staff, communities, students, civil society and others. Moreover, four scientific workshops were held.</p> <p>The planned LEARN training modules will target school children and students. The project will in the future assist the Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Institute of Afghanistan and Save the Children/Ministry of Education in including CC into the school curriculum.</p> <p>Several knowledge materials were produced and disseminated through, UN channels and social media. The project has supported the publication of provincial environmental quarterlies in 2016, which are printed and disseminated, e.g. at learning institutions.</p> <p>Assessment: Some activities under this output are in an early stage and the output will not be fully achieved by the current project completion date.</p>

		4.5 Resource mobilisation strategy developed for replication of project lessons and demonstrations in other locations of Afghanistan.	2 nd quarter, year 4	<p>The project has contributed with inputs to the elaboration to a number of project designs and proposals by UNEP and other institutions (e.g. UNDP, FAO, the World Bank). Training has been provided to NEPA staff on proposal writing. The project is reportedly providing inputs to the National CC Finance Strategy, which is being developed with UNDP support.</p> <p><u>Comment: None of the ongoing or planned activities under this output directly address the elaboration of a resource mobilisation strategy.</u></p> <p>Assessment: The intended activities have to a large extent been implemented, but will not in their own right achieve the intended output of a resource mobilisation strategy.</p>
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3.3 Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results

76. As discussed in section 2.8 (reconstructed ToC), the project seeks to achieve outcomes that in turn are expected to lead towards the achievement of the project's objective/intermediate states and further to contribute to the attainment of its goal/impact. The evaluation of the Project's effectiveness is based on the extent to which the project's outcomes, as defined in the reconstructed ToC, are likely to be achieved. Moreover, the extent to which the outcomes will contribute to the intermediate states and impact identified in the reconstructed ToC as well as the formal objective and goal specified in the ProDoc is assessed.

3.3.1 Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC

Outcome 1: Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of CC-induced risks to water

77. As described in chapter 3.2, most of the outputs aimed at improving the capacity to assess, monitor and forecast CC risks are well on track. Models and scenarios downscaled to the national and subnational levels have been made available, thereby providing useful knowledge and data for informed decision-making and planning. Moreover, training participants all indicate that their skills have been increased and there are already some examples of the skills acquired being put into use, e.g. at MEW. But training participants still have more to learn, especially through applying the skills imparted systematically in their work.

78. However, the EWS piloting is significantly delayed and the extent to which it will be implemented is dependent on whether the project is extended. It is in the view of the MTE a crucial element for achieving Outcome 1, as it is where the skills imparted and tools made available are put into actual use by the stakeholders in a systematic manner and generate further data for informed decision-making.

79. Hence, Outcome 1 is already partly achieved with increased capacities. However, the capacity in Afghanistan to independently carry out assessment, monitoring and forecasting of CC risk is still not fully in place – this will, to a significant extent, depend on the implementation of the pilot EWS. With a project extension, there is likelihood that Outcome 1 will be fully achieved, as the project has necessary driver, “availability of technical expertise and equipment” (see chapter 2.8), has been largely ensured by the project: While it can be difficult to identify qualified experts who are willing to visit Afghanistan, the project has successfully mobilised high standard international expertise for the climate modelling and assessment. Moreover, the engagement with Kabul University will contribute to the enhancement of the national technical resource base. Equipment has also been provided by and information on available software has been given by the project to the participating institutions. Nonetheless, it is likely that further support in this technically sophisticated area will also be needed from future projects – but the project will undoubtedly provide a good foundation.

Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity of GoIRA, to undertake effective sectoral planning on CCA

80. Good progress has been made towards enhancing the knowledge of CC and risks, how CC affects the water and agricultural sectors as well as policy and technical options for CCA. Training participants find that their knowledge has increased significantly. Moreover, the project has through its support and recommendations for the development of national CC policy documents, such as the INDC contributed to the establishment of a national climate change policy framework, which provides a foundation upon which sectoral policies and plans can be elaborated. This has, together with the provision of support for the participation in the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) also enabled GoIRA to engage more substantially in UNFCCC processes in general. Moreover, cross-sector coordination has been enhanced with the revitalisation of the NCCC.

81. However, the project has, only to a more limited extent, engaged directly in sector planning processes (the only example of this is the provision of comments on MAIL's NRM Strategy and Action Plan. Moreover, capacities remain uneven and in many places low (especially at the sub-national level) and it appears unlikely that the stakeholders at this stage are able to effectively integrate CCA in development plans at the sectoral and sub-national levels. The capacity of NEPA to develop CC policies and plans (e.g. under the UNFCCC framework) appears stronger.

82. Hence, Outcome 2 is partly achieved with an increased understanding of the impacts of climate change, adaptation needs and policy options, but the capacity to integrate CCA in planning is still not fully in place. Outcome 2 may be achieved if the project is extended, but more attention would need to be given to sector planning.

Outcome 3a: Enhanced capacity of GoIRA to promote appropriate CCA measures (extension)

83. In Balkh and Badakhshan field implementation is yet to start, so while some training has been provided to GoIRA staff in these provinces, their capacity has not been significantly enhanced. The situation is different in Daikundi and Badakhshan, where implementation has progressed considerably, and staff from NEPA, MRRD, MAIL and MEW (mainly in Daikundi) have been involved in the capacity building, provision of extension services/advice, and physical implementation of project activities within their respective roles and mandates. This experience, in combination with the trainings and advice they have received from UNEP has given them practical experience with how CCA links to their mandates and how it can be implemented in their respective sectors. NEPA staff interviewed in Bamyan indicate that they now include the CC knowledge they have gained in their community environmental awareness raising activities. Moreover, the project demonstrates how CCA measures undertaken in one sector (in particular ecosystem based approaches to adaptation) can be cost-effective means to climate/hazard-proof investments in other sectors (e.g. that uphill tree planting and rangeland rehabilitation under the auspices of MAIL/DAIL can protect physical infrastructure constructed by MRRD/DRRD or MEW/DEW against damage from avalanches). However, it is the impression of the MTE team from interaction with provincial GoIRA staff that the conceptual understanding of landscape planning and ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation remains uneven and that some mainly regard the project as a means to obtain funding for the implementation of physical activities.

84. Hence, Outcome 3a is partly achieved. It is largely achieved in Bamyan and Daikundi with increased capacities, but with a need to strengthen the conceptual understanding of CCA and the added value of ecosystem-based approaches. The outcome can only be achieved Balkh and Badakhshan if the project is extended by two years; one year would be insufficient for achieving the outcome in these provinces, as very little progress has been made.

Outcome 3b: Enhanced capacity of target communities to implement CCA measures in agriculture, WRM, and ecosystem management

85. Work with communities in Balkh and Badakhshan is yet to commence. In Bamyan and Daikundi, CDCs and communities have been provided with training and extension advice, they have been directly involved in the development of vulnerability assessment and village plan development, including the identification and prioritisation of adaptation interventions. To the extent possible/appropriate, the communities have been engaged in the implementation of adaptation measures, such as tree planting, community garden establishment, and provision of labour and materials for infrastructure. Both men and women have been involved in the implementation.

86. However, it is the impression of the MTE from interaction with community members in Bamyan that the conceptual understanding of CC, risk, resilience and adaptation measures is uneven. Some community members (e.g. some CDC heads and community environment officers) display a good conceptual understanding of the project's ecosystem based approach to adaptation, their village plan and of CC risk, resilience and adaptation. However, some other community members (e.g. women) have a much more limited conceptual understanding, and in some cases even a limited awareness of the village plans developed with support from the project. This is not surprising, when considering the novelty of the concepts promoted, that community empowerment is a long-term process whereas the project has only worked for a couple of years in the communities, and that neither UNEP nor NEPA have a strong field level presence (see chapter 3.6.2 on project implementation and management), although UNEP has had a presence in Bamyan for a number of years.

87. Hence, Outcome 3b had been partly achieved. It is partly achieved in Bamyan and Daikundi with increased community capacities, albeit unevenly so and with a need to further strengthen the conceptual understanding of CC and CCA.

88. The outcome can only be achieved Balkh and Badakhshan if the project is extended by two years; one year would be insufficient for achieving the outcome in these provinces, as community empowerment takes

time. Indeed, outcome 3b can probably only be achieved partly in these provinces in two years, considering the experience from Bamyan and that UNEP's presence in Badakhshan and Balkh is new. On the other hand, the scope for engaging in partnerships to capitalise on the long-term field presence of rural development NGOs and capitalising on community capacities already developed is larger than in Bamyan. Moreover, the necessary assumptions (see chapter 2.8) for achieving outcome 3b have so far been sufficiently in place in all four provinces, i.e.: 1) "local political support for the project", 2) "acceptable security in project sites", and 3) "no major climate events (floods, droughts) disrupting implementation". However, the security situation in the upper Kishim Valley has deteriorated significantly in recent months and it may become difficult or even impossible for the project to engage in this part of Badakhshan. In general, in the volatile Afghan context there is always a certain risk that this can change in the future; e.g. natural disasters are quite frequent in Badakhshan, the security situation can suddenly change, as can local political will. Nonetheless, the four provinces covered are among the safest in Afghanistan and the assumptions are likely to remain largely valid, especially in Bamyan and Daikundi.

Outcome 4a: Increased (access to) knowledge of good practices to increase resilience to CC risks to water resources

89. The range of knowledge products, tools and training modules, trainings, conferences, workshops, awareness raising events, websites and social media pages, etc., as well as the support to curriculum development all contribute to enhancing the access to knowledge about CC and options to enhance resilience in Afghanistan. Hence, even some of the outputs under Component 4 may not be fully delivered, the project has already significantly contributed to enhancing the access to knowledge and it could be argued that the Outcome 4a has already been achieved. Nonetheless, if the project is extended and the remaining outputs can be delivered, the achievement of Outcome 4a will be further enhanced.

Outcome 4b: Enhanced sharing of experiences between countries

90. The project has both provided opportunities for Afghan stakeholders to participate in regional and international events and also enhanced the participation of GoIRA in the UNFCCC processes, including the participation in COP21. This has provided Afghans with opportunities to share experiences and establish contacts with peers in other countries. However, real partnerships and tangible cooperation appears not to have been developed – and the utility of the list of regional contacts is unclear and appears limited.

91. As such, Outcome 4b has already been achieved, even if there is potential scope to further enhance the sharing with other countries.

Higher outcome: CC risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes

92. The project has to different degrees engaged in the development of GoIRA policies, plans and programmes, ranging from a significant provision of process support, such as for the elaboration of Afghanistan's INDC, to a more limited engagement in terms of providing technical recommendations, such as for the elaboration of MAIL's NRM Strategy and Action Plan.

93. The project and UNEP's general support for NEPA has led to good results in terms of strengthening the national CC policy documents elaborated under the UNFCCC framework.

94. However, the influence at the sector level to ensure integration of CC risks is more modest and appears to be limited to the above-mentioned MAIL NRM Strategy and Action Plan. See the assessment of the attainment of Outcome 2 above for further detail.

95. Hence, the outcome of ensuring the integration (mainstreaming) of CC risks into relevant policies, plans and programmes is so far only achieved to a moderate extent and an increased attainment would require a stronger engagement at the sector level. The required driver, "identified project sites are best placed to demonstrate the benefit of implemented CCA measures" (see chapter 2.8) is generally in place as the sites both cover a variety of Afghan landscapes, which are also of relevance for other locations. Similarly, the assumption, "GoIRA commits itself to incorporate climate change adaptation into its policy documents as a priority" (see chapter 2.8), has proven valid at the national strategic level (e.g. with the national climate change strategy and the INDC), and at least to a certain extent at the sector level with the participation by MRRD, MEW and MAIL in the project, although the willingness to integrate climate change in sector policies and plans is currently difficult to assess, as the project has so far not significantly engaged in this.

See the assessment of Component 2 in chapter 3.2 for more detail and recommendations on how to enhance the attainment of the higher outcome.

Overall assessment of the attainment of outcomes

96. As can be seen from the assessment of the attainment of the project outcomes, progress has been made and the outcomes have been partly achieved, albeit to various extents and with significant differences between the four target provinces and with some important gaps remaining. However, it is very unlikely that the intended outcomes will be fully attained at the anticipated levels by the current completion date. Indeed, the full attainment of the intended outcomes at the expected level would to a large extent depend on whether the project is extended. Nonetheless, the identified drivers and assumptions required for attaining the outcomes are generally in place, as described above.
97. It should be kept in mind that CC is a new topic in Afghanistan and at the same time, the Afghan context is a highly difficult one to operate in: capacities in Afghanistan are very low even compared to other LDCs after decades of conflict. Moreover, the ongoing conflict and insecurity significantly affects the outreach and ability to implement of all GoIRA, NGOs, and UN entities in the country. Capacity development for a fragile state and LDC like Afghanistan is a longer-term endeavour, and further support will be needed by GoIRA from future projects, especially in the sectors and at the sub-national level.

The rating for overall achievement of outcomes is “moderately satisfactory”.

3.3.2 Likelihood of impact

98. The ROTI approach is used to assess the likelihood of impact by building upon the concepts of the Theory of Change (ToC), see chapter 2.8. As identified in the reconstructed ToC, there are two intermediate states, which need to occur before the final impact can be realised by the project. The project’s direct outcomes contribute to achieving these intermediate states, but it is beyond the project control deliver the intermediate states – a number of other factors need to be in place. The key factors are identified in the reconstructed ToC, some are “drivers” which the project can influence, whereas others are “assumptions” which the project cannot control.

Intermediate state 1: Effective implementation by GoIRA of policies, plans and programmes that address CC risks)

99. Two drivers need to be in place to lead to this intermediate state:
- The project in combination with other projects address the full range of bottlenecks vis-à-vis effective CCA planning and implementation. While the LDCF-1 project is the first full-size GEF project and the first major project to engage in CCA policy and planning, other projects are now engaging in this area. For example, the LDCF-2 project with UNDP is under implementation, and three more LDCF projects are in under development with UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Moreover, DfID will support the establishment of a CC Financing Unit with NEPA. Hence, the LDCF-1 project is not operating in isolation, but part of a larger engagement to enhance GoIRA’s CCA planning and implementation capacity. The LDCF-1 project is informing the other LDCF projects, e.g. UNEP’s LDCF-3 project will replicate the lessons of the LDCF-1 project in two new provinces and also enable UNEP to further develop and refine the results achieved by the LDCF-1 project. This driver has thus been fully addressed by the project.
 - *International CCA funding can be leveraged for upscaling/replication.* As mentioned above, NEPA is establishing a climate finance unit. This unit will for example be the designated focal point for the Green Climate Fund, an international climate financing mechanism of an unprecedented size established under the UNFCCC. The LDCF-1 project supported the development of a number of CC project proposals and is planning to develop and implement a training module on CC fundraising. The LDCF-1 project can further support this process by enhancing the scope of its output 4.5 (climate finance strategy), see chapters 3.2.4 and 3.3.1. This driver has thus been addressed by the project, but with scope for a more systematic/strengthened engagement.
100. The transition from the outcomes to intermediate state 1 also hinges on the presence of three assumptions:

- *GoIRA is committed to CCA and CC risk action.* As described earlier, CC has in recent years gained prominence in Afghanistan, as seen in the proactive engagement in COP21 and the development of CC policies and strategies in response to the country's obligations under UNFCCC. Furthermore, CC funding is an increasing opportunity, whereas other types of donor funding to Afghanistan are dwindling – this reality is likely to generate further interest from GoIRA. Nonetheless, some ministries appear more committed than others.
- *The systems and capacities established are sustained and upscaled/replicated by GoIRA.* The validity of assumption remains to be seen. However, as described above, the LDCF-1 project is an element and a first mover in a larger, more long-term CC engagement in Afghanistan, where other projects are likely to provide further support for the CCA processes initiated by the LDCF-1 project.
- *Security situation does not hamper GoIRA's ability to implement plans.* This assumption partly holds true. GoIRA is still able to implement plans, but a generally deteriorating security situation has led to a gradual reduction in the locations where GoIRA and its international partners can operate. Further reduction is a real risk and a likely scenario, which affects all sectors and all development processes.

Intermediate state 2: Reduced CC vulnerability in project sites

101.No drivers have been identified in the reconstructed ToC for this intermediate state, but at least in Bamyan and Daikundi, the continued presence of UNEP means that UNEP, NEPA and the implementing partners can exert some control over this through the implementation of future projects in the same communities. Moreover, community-members interviewed in Bamyan report that some early livelihoods and resilience-related benefits are emerging, such as an improved and diversified agricultural and horticultural production, improved access to firewood which is also reducing the need to gather firewood on mountain slopes during winter, and reduced occurrences of floods as a result of check dams.

102.However, the transition from the outcomes to intermediate state 2 also hinges on the presence of two assumptions:

- *Minimal local political interference in project.* This assumption appears to hold true; no evidence was found that politicians have interfered with the project to promote their own agendas. However, this is a real risk that will need continuous monitoring in any rural development project.
- *Elite capture of the benefits is avoided.* This assumption also appears to hold true, although the entry point for engagement in any community is through the CDC and village elders. The field activities in the project sites are selected based on an analysis of the physical environment and identification of hazard-prone locations, where the project activities are implemented.

Impact: Increased resilience of Afghanistan society (including vulnerable communities) and economy to the effects of CC

103.As described above, the project is a first mover in a larger, more long-term endeavour by GoIRA and international partners to enhance the resilience of the Afghan economy and communities to the impacts of CC. As such, the LDCF-1 project is laying the groundwork for further policy formulation, institutional capacity building and community-level engagement in Afghanistan.

104.Three macro-level assumptions have been identified for the move from the intermediate states to the intended impact:

- *Land and water tenure secure, so that communities are willing to invest in CCA.* This assumption holds true, at least in the safer locations of Afghanistan. This is evidenced by the LDCF-1 project's experience in Bamyan and Daikundi where communities are willing to engage and invest their own resources in the project activities, as well as by numerous NRM projects across Afghanistan.
- *Security situation does not displace people in rural areas.* This assumption holds true in many, but not all locations in Afghanistan.
- *Climate change impacts will remain in a range to which within which agricultural production can be maintained at a level that can sustain a growing rural population.* So far, this assumption holds true and will for several years. However, in the longer term, this may become a real challenge in several locations.

Overall status of drivers and assumptions

Drivers: Project has engaged proactively in influencing the drivers (addressing bottlenecks and the financing challenge) to ensure they are in place for achieving intermediate state 1 (effective implementation by GoIRA to address climate risk), albeit there is scope for a more systematic approach to address the financing challenge.

Assumptions: The assumptions required for achieving the two intermediate states and the impact are to a reasonable extent, but not fully, in place. GoIRA is becoming increasingly committed to address climate change, but the extent to which GoIRA will sustain, upscale and replicate the systems and capacities delivered is yet to be seen. The assumption that local communities are willing to invest in adaptation measures has proven valid. The security in some parts of the country allows for GoIRA implementation, but other parts of the country are controlled by insurgents, thus preventing implementation – and also causing migration/displacement. There is so far no evidence of local level political interference affecting the results or local elite capture, but there is a certain risk that political interference may change in the future. In the coming years climate change is likely to remain within a range, which allows for sufficient agricultural productivity to sustain rural communities, but may become a real challenge in the longer term.

Rating

105. The ROTI approach requires ratings to be determined for the outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. The rating system is presented in table 10 below and the assessment of the project’s progress towards achieving its intended impacts is presented in table 11 further below.

Table 10: Rating Scale for Outcomes and Progress towards Intermediate States

Outcome Rating	Rating of progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes are unlikely to be delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes are likely to be delivered, but are not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but are unlikely to produce results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes are likely to be delivered, and are designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and are likely produce results, but there is no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes are likely to be delivered, and are designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and are likely to produce results, with a clear indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
Rating of impact on environmental status	
+: projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project’s lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a “+”.	

106. Many of the project’s intended outcomes can only be fully achieved if the project is extended (see chapter 3.3.1). This is particularly true for the attainment of Outcome 3a (*enhanced capacity of GoIRA to promote appropriate CCA measures*) and Outcome 3b (*enhanced capacity of target communities to implement CCA measures in agriculture, WRM, and ecosystem management*) in Balkh and Badakhshan. However, it is also the case for Outcome 2 (*enhanced capacity of GoIRA, to undertake effective sectoral planning on CCA*) and

the higher outcome (*CC risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes*). Outcome 1 (*Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of CC-induced risks to water*) will largely be achieved, although an important piece in the capacity development, the EWS piloting where the capacities imparted are applied, tested and validated, would require a project extension. Outcome 4a (*increased (access to) knowledge of good practices to increase resilience to CC risks to water resources*) and Outcome 4b (*enhanced sharing of experiences between countries*) will largely be achieved. The outcomes are feeding into longer processes, some of which UNEP will continue to support, but a specific handover strategy is not fully in place – and while GoIRA entities have the formal mandate for continuation, they are affected by capacity and financial constraints which are likely to hamper the continuation unless further donor support is secured. Due to this mixed picture, there is no single rating category that accurately reflects the delivery of project outcomes. Hence, the **progress towards outcomes is rated “B”**.

107. The necessary drivers and assumptions to move from the outcomes to the two intermediate states are generally in place. Moreover, several of the project activities and outputs will assist in the transition from the outcomes to the intermediate states, such as capacity development, provision of access to knowledge, ensuring that university curricula will contribute to the development of a cadre of professionals in CCA and risk management. The link from Outcome 3b (*enhanced capacity of target communities to implement CCA measures in agriculture, WRM, and ecosystem management*) to Intermediate State 2 (*reduced CC vulnerability in project sites*) is quite strong and direct. However, for Intermediate State 1 (*effective implementation by GoIRA of policies, plans and programmes that address CC risks*), the project can engage in a more systematic and comprehensive manner in helping GoIRA in a) developing and implementing a strategy for mobilising international (and domestic) CC financing and b) mainstreaming CCA into the agenda for sector policy, planning and implementation. The project is a first mover on CCA in Afghanistan, so while it is laying the foundation, it is too early to assess whether it will lead to the intended long-term impact. Hence, the **progress towards the intermediate states is rated “B”**.

108. At the pilot sites in Bamyan some positive local environmental changes are seen as emerging by communities, such as reduced floods as a result of check dams, regeneration of the natural vegetation in rehabilitated and protected rangelands, and reduced pressure on the natural vegetation as planted trees are beginning to provide firewood. According to provincial NEPA staff, floods in Daikundi have reduced in project sites as result of the dams and check dams constructed, although the MTE team did not retrieve precipitation data for the project site. More positive environmental changes are likely to emerge at the pilot level, as the vegetation restored and trees planted further grow. Hence, **the impact is rated with a “+”**.

Table 11: Overall Likelihood of Achieving Impact

Results rating of project entitled: Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan						
Outcomes	Rating (D – A)	Intermediate states	Rating (D – A)	Impact (GEB)	Rating (+)	Overall

<p>O1: Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of CC-induced risks to water</p> <p>O2: Enhanced capacity of GoIRA, to undertake effective sectoral planning on CCA</p> <p>O3a: Enhanced capacity of GoIRA to promote appropriate CCA measures (extension)</p> <p>O3b: Enhanced capacity of target communities to implement CCA measures in agriculture, WRM, and ecosystem management</p> <p>O4a: Increased (access to) knowledge of good practices to increase resilience to CC risks to water resources</p> <p>O4b: Enhanced sharing of experiences between countries</p> <p>Higher outcome: CC risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes</p>	B	<p>IS1: Effective implementation by GoIRA of policies, plans and programmes that address CC risks</p> <p>IS2: Reduced CC vulnerability in project sites</p>	B	Increased resilience of Afghanistan society (incl. vulnerable communities) and economy to the effects of CC	+	BB+
<p><u>Justification for rating:</u> The project's intended outcomes can only be fully achieved if the project is extended. The outcomes are feeding into longer processes, some of which UNEP will continue to support, but a handover strategy is not fully in place – and while GoIRA entities are affected by capacity and financial constraints which are likely to hamper the continuation if further donor support is not provided. There is no single rating category that accurately reflects the delivery of project outcomes.</p>		<p><u>Justification for rating:</u> Some measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, and are like to produce results, but the measures could be further enhanced.</p>	<p><u>Justification for rating:</u> The project has reportedly achieved some localised improvements in the environmental status in some project sites.</p>			

109. According to the ROTI methodology, the rating obtained is translated onto the usual 6-point rating scale used in UNEP project evaluations, as shown below.

Table 12: 'Overall likelihood of impact achievement' on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD
NB: projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project's lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a "+".					

110. The **aggregate rating is "BB+"** and could therefore, as per the methodology outlined in the 12 above, be rated as "highly likely" to achieve the expected Impact. However, considering that: a) there is some uncertainty regarding the full attainment of the intended outcomes and the available categories do not adequately reflect this, b) the measures implemented to reach Intermediate State 1 could be strengthened, and c) that the positive environmental changes reported so far are localised and small-scale, a "likely" rating for achieving the intended impact appears more prudent.

The rating for the project's likelihood to achieve impact is "likely"

3.3.3 Achievement of the formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document

111. The overall goal of the project is “to increase the resilience of Afghanistan’s society and economy to the effects of climate change and to enhance the capacity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to undertake effective planning on climate change adaptation”. The objective of the project is “to increase resilience of vulnerable communities and build capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk”. As described in 2.9, the project’s goal and objective are virtually identical, and both comprise a combination of a) enhanced resilience of communities, and b) improved institutional capacity, especially of GoIRA. While not clearly spelled out, the difference between the formal goal and objective could be viewed as the goal being at a nation-wide scale and the objective being specifically focused on the communities and institutions directly involved in the project activities and outputs.

Objective: to increase resilience of vulnerable communities and build capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk

112. Increased resilience of vulnerable communities: As already described for Intermediate State 2 which is similar to the community-side of the project’s Objective, the link from Component 3 and Outcome 3b is quite strong and direct, and there are already early examples of an enhanced resilience in the project sites in Bamyan and Daikundi, such as: a) crop diversification and improved crop varieties, which reduce the risk of food insecurity due to drought, and b) identification of risk sites and physical infrastructure reducing the risk of floods and avalanches damaging assets and causing casualties (e.g. houses, fields). The resilience especially in Bamyan is likely to further increase as the planted trees mature and thereby reduce the pressure on natural vegetation (which in turn is a cause of landslides) and become stronger barriers to stop avalanches (see chapter 3.3.2). However, the capacities and understanding of CCA at community-level appears uneven. Moreover, it is less certain whether the community-side of the project objective will be achieved in Balkh and Badakhshan.

113. Built capacity of local and national institutions to address CC risk: Outcome 2 in the reconstructed ToC corresponds to the institutional side of the project’s Objective. As described in Chapter 3.3.1, the project has partly achieved the intended enhancement of the capacities of the institutions in the project. Training participants report that their capacities regarding CC have been strengthened considerably, but capacities remain uneven and in many places low (especially at the sub-national level) and it appears unlikely that the stakeholders at this stage are able to effectively address CC risk in development planning and implementation without further external support.

Goal: to increase the resilience of Afghanistan’s society and economy to the effects of climate change and to enhance the capacity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to undertake effective planning on climate change adaptation

114. Increased resilience of Afghanistan’s society and economy to the effects of CC: The Impact identified in the reconstructed ToC is virtually identical to the enhanced resilience side of the project’s Goal. As described above in Chapter 3.2.2, the project is a first mover in a larger, more long-term endeavour by GoIRA and international partners to enhance the resilience of the Afghan economy and communities to the impacts of CC. As such, the project is laying the groundwork for further policy formulation, institutional capacity building and community-level engagement in Afghanistan.

115. Enhanced capacity of GoIRA Afghanistan to undertake effective planning on CCA: As described above for the institutional capacity-side of the projects’ objective, and also for the Intermediate state (see chapter 3.2.2), the project has increased the capacity of selected GoIRA institutions and staff, developed tools and training modules, and is influencing curricula, and increased the access to CC risk and adaptation-related knowledge of relevance to Afghanistan. Thereby, and as a first-mover, the project is laying the foundation for further extending the CC capacity development to other parts of GoIRA.

The overall rating for the achievement of project goal and objective is “moderately satisfactory”.

3.3.4 Contribution towards UNEP and GEF higher-level results

116. As described in chapter 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, the project and its intended outcomes, intermediate state and impact is very well aligned with the strategic objectives of both UNEP and the GEF Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). As such, the extent to which the project achieves its intended outcomes, intermediate state and impact also determines the extent to which it contributes towards the achievement of the higher-level results outlined in the UNEP Medium-Term Strategies (MTS) and Programmes of Work (PoW) and the GEF LDCF/SCCF Strategy.

117. As described in chapter 3.1.1, the project in particular contributes to CC resilience and adaption aspects of UNEP's strategies, but also to other elements of the strategies. Table 13 below provides an overview of the contribution of the project to the most relevant expected accomplishments of UNEP's strategies for 2010-13 and 2014-17.

Table 13: Contribution toward UNEP's expected accomplishments:

MTS 2010-13 expected accomplishments	MTS 2014-17 expected accomplishments	LDCF-1 project contribution
Objective: Climate change		
Adaptation planning, financing and cost-effective preventative actions are increasingly incorporated into national development processes that are supported by scientific information, integrated climate impact assessments and local climate data	Ecosystem-based and supporting adaptation approaches are implemented and integrated into key sectoral and national development strategies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts	An ecosystem-based approach to adaptation is at the centre of the project. The project contributes to achieving this accomplishment in Afghanistan, but the concept still needs to be further promoted and to be integrated in sector policies (project higher outcome).
Country policymakers and negotiators, civil society and the private sector have access to relevant climate change science and information for decision-making	Objective: Environment under review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced 	The project is contributing to enhancing the access to CC information and knowledge to inform policy-making and planning in Afghanistan. The project is also contributing to an increased capacity to generate and analyse climate related information in Afghanistan (Project outcomes 1 and 4a).
Objective: Disaster and conflict		
States' environmental management contributes to disaster risk reduction and conflict prevention	The capacity of countries to use natural resource and environmental management to prevent and reduce the risk of disasters and conflicts is improved	The project is contributing by enhancing the capacity to reduce risk reduction and resilience at both institutional and community levels. National and provincial government staff capacities have increased, but still need further strengthening to be able to effectively engage. Risk reduction measures have been implemented in pilot communities in Bamyán and Daikundi. (Project outcomes 1, 2, 3a, and 3b)
Objective: Ecosystem management		

Countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes.	Increased use is made of the ecosystem approach in countries, with a view to maintaining ecosystem services and the sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems	The project is promoting an ecosystem-based approach to adaptation and planning and thus contributing to ensuring the Afghanistan in the future will use ecosystem approaches (project outcome 2, higher outcome).
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118. The GEF LDCF has three objectives and the project is contributing to all three:

119. GEF LDCF Objective 1: *To reduce the vulnerability of people, livelihoods, physical assets and natural systems to the adverse effects of climate change.* The pilot projects in Bamyan and Daikundi are directly contributing to this outcome, and there is also scope for achieving similar contributions in Balkh and Badakhshan if the project is extended (project outcome 3b).

120. GEF LDCF Objective 2: *To strengthen institutional and technical capacities for effective climate change adaptation.* This is a central element of the project and it is significantly contributing to this at the national and provincial levels (project outcomes 1, 2, 3a, 4a).

121. GEF LDCF Objective 2: *To integrate climate change adaptation into relevant policies, plans and associated processes.* The project is contributing to this, but a stronger engagement at the sector level would further enhance the contribution (project higher outcome).

3.4 Sustainability and replication

122. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the project funding and assistance has ended. The achievement of sustainability has been taken into consideration in the design of the project and activities. The ProDoc, outlines the following approach to achieving sustainability:

1. Promotion of stakeholder ownership through their involvement in the project design.
2. Latching on to existing interventions (e.g. under NSP and NABDP) and structures.
3. A focus on capacity building (incl. learning-by-doing) to enable stakeholders to continue their engagement after the project.
4. An incremental reduction in the level of international technical advisory and capacitation of national consultants.

123. In the implementation of the project so far, the four sustainability elements above have been implemented to different degrees as described below and in chapters 3.4.1-3.4.3. The Government stakeholder were duly involved in the project design process, but the involvement of other stakeholders in the project design process appears more limited. For Component 3, the field interventions implemented take departure in the priorities outlined in village plans developed with the communities.

124. The project has focused on supporting existing processes rather than starting new ones, examples include the revitalisation of NCCC and the engagement in the INDC formulation.

125. Capacity development at both national and provincial level is at the centre-stage of the project. The “learning-by-doing” is an important element of this. The community level interventions are designed and implemented by the relevant line departments (e.g. DRRD and DEW carry out the detailed designs of infrastructure). The training and advice for communities is done by the respective line departments, with NEPA and UNEP carrying out a coordinating role and training on CC and the ecosystem based approach to adaptation concept. However, the learning-by-doing has not always materialised fully; for example, the EWS piloting is not yet taking place, and this would be a critical opportunity for the stakeholders to apply the skills gained through the training under Component 1. Moreover, it appears that UNEP is sometimes being overly hands-on in the implementation – an example is the support provided for the establishment of a new library at Kabul University’s Environmental Sciences Faculty, where plans for the new library are developed and kept by UNEP, and the Faculty does not even have a copy of the plans – a more appropriate approach would probably have been to let the Faculty lead the library design process with

advisory inputs and procurement assistance from UNEP. The implementation to a large extent is led by UNEP, e.g. most field visits are initiated by UNEP and the communication materials are developed by the UNEP team, seemingly with a limited involvement of NEPA (even if NEPA's logo is always included).

126. A related challenge is that the conceptual understanding of the project, and thus the real buy-in is uneven. The senior-level staff met at NEPA, MRRD and MEW all display clear commitment to the project and the CCA agenda. Some, but far from all, GoIRA staff at the central level have a good understanding of the ecosystem based approach to adaptation taken by the project. At the provincial level, very few have a good conceptual understanding of the project, and the linkages from the planning at village, valley and landscape levels to the physical implementation. Furthermore, the vast majority of people met perceive the project as a UNEP project rather than a NEPA or GoIRA project, so it seems not yet fully perceived by the staff as their own project, which is a challenge for ensuring sustainability.

127. Moreover, as described in previous chapters, there are still some significant capacity constraints that need to be addressed, and thus it is not realistic to assume that the process initiated by a project with a 4-year timeframe can be continued without further external support. This is not surprising, considering that the project in a number of ways is a first mover and that it is engaged in capacity-development process that takes time. It is thus not realistic to expect that the project within its timeframe can achieve full sustainability, a more long-term engagement with follow-up projects is needed. In this sense, it is unfortunate that it has been decided that the LDCF-3 project will focus on two new provinces instead of continuing in the provinces covered by the LDCF-1 project.

128. As for the attainment of outputs, outcomes and impact, an extension of the completion date would significantly enhance the ability of the project to ensure post-project sustainability.

The overall rating for sustainability of outcomes is “moderately likely”.

3.4.1 Socio-political sustainability

129. CC and CCA has in recent years become far more prominent on the political agenda in Afghanistan. The project (and UNEP more broadly) has played an important role in supporting the development of the CC policy-frameworks required under UNFCCC, most notably the INDC, but also the project has contributed to the finalisation of the National CC Strategy, National CC Finance Strategy, and National CC Action Plan. Hence, the policy framework is fully supportive of the results delivered and the processes supported by the project, although more work is required for the integration of CCA into sector policies and strategies, which would further strengthen the likelihood of continued involvement of the sector ministries (MRRD, MAIL, and MEW) at both national and provincial levels.

130. At the community-level, early livelihood-related benefits are already seen in Bamyan and Daikundi. The technologies promoted by the project are generally low-cost, based on locally available materials and technically feasible for the communities to maintain (albeit some of the maintenance of the physical infrastructure would probably require inputs from DDRD or DEW). The focus on ecosystem based adaptation solutions, such as tree planting and rangeland management further enhances the likelihood of sustainability, as these are things that the communities have the capacity to maintain themselves – and since their benefits increase over time as the vegetation grows. The communities have themselves provided often significant contributions to the physical activities, which is a further incentive for the continued maintenance. However, the uneven level of conceptual understanding among community-members could be a limitation.

The rating for socio-political sustainability is “likely”.

3.4.2 Sustainability of Financial Resources

131. A major constraint for the sustainability is the scarcity of financial resources at all levels, which poses a real challenge to the maintenance of equipment provided by the project (e.g. computers for modelling) as well as the ability of GoIRA partners to follow up after the project. Provincial departments depend on the project for fuel to travel to the villages, so without such external support, the communities would, to a large extent, be on their own, although they should be able to continue a number of activities

independently, such as tree planting and horticulture, and even basic maintenance of infrastructure. Hence, there will in the coming years be a need for continued access to external financing.

132. The financing challenge is exacerbated by the fact that donor funding to Afghanistan has dwindled in recent years. The activities under Output 4.5 (financing strategy) are aimed at addressing the important financing challenge, but so far the engagement has to a large extent been support to the elaboration of specific project proposals, which do not necessarily aim at maintaining and further deepening the results and processes of the LDCF-1 project (although some of them clearly do, such as the LDCF-3 project), let alone target the same provinces and communities (e.g. the LDCF-3 project will cover two new provinces). But on the positive side, new, large, international funding opportunities are emerging for CCA, such as the GCF, and NEPA is in the process of mobilising funds from DfID for the establishment of a climate finance unit. In other words, the most likely scenario for Afghanistan is that there in the near future will be access to more, not less, climate financing than previously.

The rating for the financial sustainability is “moderately likely”.

3.4.3 Sustainability of Institutional Frameworks

133. Existing institutional structures and processes are used by the project for delivery, and the project is operating within established institutional mandates. NEPA is mandated to act as focal point and coordination for CC issues, and is thus an appropriate anchor/executing agency for the project. MAIL, MRRD, MEW, ANDMA and AMA are all engaged in the project to lead CCA interventions vis-à-vis their mandates; e.g. in relation to CC forecasting and modelling and EWS. At the provincial level, the project engages MAIL in agriculture and NRM related adaptation measures, MEW in flood-protection measures, and MRRD in relation to interventions to climate-proof infrastructure constructed under NSP. Hence the technical capacity enhancements that the project have achieved generally fall well in line with the tasks and responsibilities of the people trained; as mentioned earlier MEW and DRRD staff trained on modelling and GIS, are staff which work with GIS in the day-to-day work. Provincial DEPA staff report that they have integrated the enhanced CC knowledge in their core environmental awareness work. The CDCs are used as the entry point for engagement with communities, and the community contributions are following the provisions and rules developed under NSP. This integration and alignment with the mandates and ongoing roles of the partners is conducive for continuity and post-project sustainability. Moreover, the support provided to Kabul University for the development of tertiary education programmes will contribute to ensuring that there in the future will be a national pool of skilled professionals in CC and disaster management, which can be recruited by the various institutions for continued work on CCA.

134. However, the project's work plans are not fully integrated into the annual work plans of the relevant provincial departments and thus not in the job descriptions for their staff, which is not fully conducive for post-project follow-up, for the continued use of the skills important, nor for ensuring that the line departments will integrate CCA into their work more broadly. Moreover, in addition to the financial constraints described in Chapter 3.4.2 (financial sustainability), the agencies are affected by severe staff and capacity constraints, especially at the sub-national level.

The rating for the institutional sustainability is “likely”.

3.4.4 Environmental sustainability

135. The project embraces a landscape-based approach, where it aims to restore/enhance ecosystem services and integrity as cost-effective means to reduce vulnerability to climate-related hazards. For example, by restoring rangeland vegetation to enhance water retention and reduce erosion, and thereby reducing the risk of floods and mud-flows, or by planting trees as barriers to prevent avalanches from damaging infrastructure. As such, the project is expected to enhance environmental sustainability. Moreover, physical infrastructure, such as check dams and gabions, has also been put in place to reduce run-off and erosion. As described in Chapter 3.3.2 (likelihood of impact), communities in Bamyan and Daikundi already report positive environmental changes at the local level.

136. Moreover, the project is aiming at improving rural livelihoods and reducing community vulnerability. Hence, the risk of negative environmental and social impacts was deemed negligible, so the project design has not deemed it necessary to implement specific environmental, social and economic safeguards (ESES) or mitigation measures. This assumption appears valid and no negative impacts were observed during the field visit in Bamyan¹². The risk of negative impacts cannot be entirely ruled out, but appears low. UNEP Afghanistan is periodically updating an environmental and social safeguards checklist, which finds that no mitigation measures are required, but the basis upon which these conclusions are drawn are not entirely clear.

137. The activities at the national level are mainly related to capacity and policy and are thus not expected to have a direct environmental impact, but they do have an environmental focus/perspective and are expected to contribute to improved environmental sustainability in a longer perspective.

The rating for the environmental sustainability element is “highly likely”.

3.4.5 Catalytic Role and Replication

Catalytic effect

138. The project has played a catalytic role in some ways. Firstly, the project has contributed some policy changes, most notably in relation to Afghanistan’s overall CC policy framework, but also in relation to NRM policy (see chapter 3.2.5 on progress against outputs) – these changes are likely to catalyse further changes, as the policies now commit GoIRA to engage more comprehensively in CCA. Moreover, the project has demonstrated the value of, and thereby promoted, inter-ministerial cooperation on CCA at the provincial and local levels (e.g. by demonstrating that tree planting and vegetative regeneration can be cost-effective ways to climate-proof and protect infrastructure). It has also contributed to enhancing the cooperation between NEPA and line ministries, thereby helping NEPA to become better at coordinating CC action. The engagement in curriculum development at university and school levels are also important measures that are likely to catalyse change in the future, as it contributes to creating a cadre of future civil servants and Afghan professionals with a good grasp of CC and how to implement adaptive measures. Moreover, the training on fundraising and inputs to the development of project proposals contribute to addressing the critical financing gap and providing new opportunities for climate action in Afghanistan,

Replication

139. The LDCF-1 project lessons and approaches have informed other projects, such as the four new and upcoming LDCF projects in Afghanistan. UNEP and NEPA will, under the LDCF-3 project, replicate the project approaches and experiences in two new provinces. UNEP is a member of the SRACAD (Strengthening the Resilience of Afghanistan’s Vulnerable Communities against Disasters) consortium, which is led by Afghanaid and has Action Aid, Concern Worldwide, and Save the Children as members; where UNEP’s role is to provide a policy dialogue angle and also train the consortium members on the LDCF-1 project approaches for replication in the communities they work with.

140. Component 4 contains several activities dedicated at promoting replication; lessons and best practices of the project are communicated to relevant stakeholders and organisations. Moreover, the trainers’ manuals and course materials for training courses developed by the project are made available for others to replicate the trainings. However, the project has not engaged in “training of trainers”, which could be another useful tool for replication.

The project’s catalytic role and replication is rated as “highly satisfactory”.

¹² It should be noted that negative impacts are more difficult to identify than positives ones, and to rule negative impacts out entirely would have required that the MTE spent considerably longer time in each community.

3.5 Efficiency

3.5.1 Cost efficiencies

141. By the end of 2015, the spending was low compared to the implementation period (see chapter 3.6.6. on financial management). However, project spending is rarely linear, many projects experience exponential spending patterns, with low spending in the beginning, and significantly increased spending in the second half of the implementation period, so low initial spending is not necessarily a major concern in its own right (although it can lead to rushed implementation at the end, potentially at the expense of sustainability).
142. Neither the budget nor the financial statements are output or activity-based (although costed work plans were prepared for 2014 and 2015), and the financial statements are not broken down into components, thus making it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness in the implementation of the activities.
143. Nonetheless, it appears that the planned activities, expected outputs and geographical coverage were overly optimistic vis-à-vis the budget. For example, the total budget for Component 3 is US\$ 2,498,455, corresponding to an average budget per province of US\$ 624,614, so the financial resources are probably being spread too thinly. While UNEP obtained financial synergies with other projects, the LDCF-1 project is one of the larger projects in the portfolio, so there is a limit to how much other projects can be used to fill potential funding gaps at the provincial level. It thus seems that a focus on two provinces would have been more cost-effective, and would also have entailed lower transaction costs.
144. It is important to keep in mind that due to insecurity implementation in Afghanistan is far costlier than in other countries. The security measures needed to protect both national and especially international staff are very expensive, e.g. the need to use armoured vehicles in Kabul and the need for protected compounds for offices and international staff housing, and it is impossible to travel over land so flying, often with helicopter, is the only way to travel from Kabul to the provinces. These significant costs are not fully reflected in the project budget, but also covered by UNEP from other sources.
145. Synergies are often achieved with joint activities with other projects (e.g. UNEP projects) and organisations, such as joint workshops and conferences. A prominent example of synergy is that the project engages in climate-proofing infrastructure constructed under NSP, thereby making NSP actions more cost-effective and sustainable with a comparatively modest investment from the LDCF-1 project. Moreover, the community contributions are significant; they are at least 10% as per NSP/MRRD guidelines, and reportedly there are cases of community contributions as high as 30%.

3.5.2 Timeliness

146. As described in earlier sections, the implementation of a number of project activities has been affected by significant delays. There are several reasons behind the delays, and to a large extent the delays were beyond the control of the project, NEPA, and UNEP Afghanistan.
147. Like any project in Afghanistan, the implementation has been affected by the security situation, which has generally and gradually deteriorated over the years. Sudden security incidents or precautionary measures taken by the security services of UNAMA regularly disrupts activities, e.g. by restricting or prohibiting movements in a given location – and thereby delaying activities. Such delays are impossible to predict and thus very difficult to plan around.
148. Moreover, the presidential elections in 2014 caused several months of delay, due to a mix of security concerns and disruptions to the operations of GoIRA institutions as new ministers were appointed and decisions were postponed, delaying their work plans and planning – and as a result planned visits to the project sites were cancelled. As a result, a planting season was missed and the establishment of nurseries were delayed.
149. A high rate of staff turnover in GoIRA institutions has also affected implementation.
150. Moreover, while the UNEP staff interviewed agree that the new UMOJA financial management system is easier to use and more efficient than the previous IMIS, the all-UN transition from IMIS to UMOJA created

periods of hiatus (May 2015 and November 2015), where disbursement and payments could not be processed.

151. Another factor was that the UNEP and GEF financial years were changed, so the project budgets had to be revised, and to adjust the project had to change from four financial years to five. This both created extra work as an extra annual budget had to be prepared and it also affected the timing of funds being disbursed to the project. As a result, the funding for the first year was reportedly not available to the project in May 2013, but in September 2013, delaying implementation and causing one planting season to be missed.
152. The financial and technical reporting requirements and processes internally in UNEP were also a source of delays. Draft technical reports (PIRs, half-year reports) are submitted from UNEP Afghanistan to the UNEP GEF Unit in Nairobi, and draft financial reports from the UNEP PCDMB office in Geneva. Comments and requests for revisions are then sent back from the UNEP GEF Unit, and the reports are revised. Further funds are only made available once the reports are approved by the UNEP GEF Unit, and this review and approval process takes time and is a source of delays (see chapter 3.5.6 on financial management and 3.5.7 on supervision and backstopping).
153. Staff constraints with UNEP Afghanistan and a limited provincial presence is a challenge for the implementation of Component 3, the component that is most severely affected by delays. Only in Bamyan does UNEP have a provincial presence, although Daikundi is fairly easily covered from Bamyan. It is thus not surprising that these are the two provinces where most progress has been made. NEPA, and especially MAIL, MRRD and MEW do have a provincial level presence and should in principle lead the implementation of field activities. However, they also have staff constraints and in reality their staff rarely go to the project site without UNEP, one major reason reportedly being limited access to fuel. GoIRA partners at the central and provincial level are eager to speed up the implementation of Component 3 and see staff constraints as UNEP's major weakness.
154. A particular challenge in Afghanistan is the pronounced seasonality with cold winter and snowfall, which renders it impossible to implement activities at the field level for several months, especially in the mountainous areas, such as Bamyan. Hence, an otherwise modest delay of a month can sometimes mean that an entire season is missed and that the planned activities can only be implemented in the following year. This factor thus further amplifies the delays caused by the other factors described above.
155. Overall, when considering the security situation, the novelty of CC as a topic and the ecosystem based approach to adaptation in Afghanistan, the institutional and human resource capacities in a country under reconstruction, UNEP Afghanistan's staff resources, and the time it takes to mobilise and empower communities there is a mismatch between the four-year project implementation period and the projects scope, intended results, and objective.

The overall rating for efficiency is “moderately satisfactory”.

3.6 Factors and processes affecting project performance

3.6.1 Preparation and readiness

156. During the inception phase of the MTE, a detailed assessment was done of the project design (see Annex X). Overall, the project design and results framework presented in the Project Document is coherent. However, there were some gaps in the result framework in relation to the indicators: most outcome indicators are in reality output indicators and not suited for capturing outcomes, and at the same time, no indicators were identified specifically for the outputs; these issues were not rectified in the baseline assessment report. The indicators are generally “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and have targets; those that were not “SMART” were revised as part of the baseline assessment report. However, the targets are mainly specified as final targets for the project completion; only very few milestones or intermediate targets were specified for different stages of the implementation (although annual milestones were introduced at the activity level in the annual work plans). Relevant assumptions and risk were identified but not always placed at the appropriate level (see chapter 2.8 on the ToC).

157. Relevant stakeholders and partners were identified for the project, and GoIRA stakeholders were duly involved in the project design, but stakeholders outside government were only involved to a limited extent in the design.
158. As described earlier, several aspects of the project were novel to Afghanistan, e.g. first full-size GEF project, first large project on CCA, and embracing an ecosystem based approach to adaptation, and it is, in general, difficult in the project design to fully predict how the implementation will run, and particularly so in the complex and challenging Afghan context. It is thus not surprising that some shortcomings in the design have been realised during the implementation (as also described in earlier sections).
159. The project was overambitious in its geographical coverage and intended outcomes and outputs, when considering the staff resources available to UNEP, the capacities of NEPA and other implementing partners, the challenging context and the four-year time period of the project; this has meant that available staff resources have been spread over a large area and the frequency of engagement at the provincial level, especially in Badakhshan and Balkh has been insufficient, which appears to be a major reason for the delays in these provinces. The large range of activities in Bamyan also gives an impression of somewhat scattered efforts, without a sufficiently clear linkage between e.g. engagement in adaptation measures at the village level, and other types of engagement, e.g. actions targeting schools and the sewing for income generation for women in Jawkar Valley. Fifty-five activities were also too numerous. Some activities, e.g. under Component 1 are also deemed unrealistic by a central technical expert contracted by the project. UNEP has to a certain extent been able to adapt the implementation to these challenges, e.g. by merging/combining a number of activities, but the results framework and intended results and coverage of the LDCF-1 project have so far not been revised. The lessons from the LDCF-1 project have informed the new LDCF-3 project, which has fewer activities and only covers two provinces.
160. UNEP Afghanistan has also used a programmatic approach with joint activities and synergies with other UNEP projects; this has helped reducing some of the challenges with scope and ambition, but UNEP Afghanistan has not developed an overarching strategy and map, with a clear overall vision and outline of how the different projects specifically contribute to achieving the vision; such a strategic mapping would be useful for understanding the interlinkages between the different projects.

Overall, the project preparation and readiness was “satisfactory”

3.6.2 Project implementation and management

161. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) has met on an annual basis. While this is not frequent, the overall impression is that the PSC provides a reasonable degree of strategic guidance and ensures that the project partners at the higher level are aware of, and generally committed to, the project.
162. The roles of the partners in the implementation is generally clear and well aligned with their institutional mandates. However, capacity constraints affect their ability to engage in the project activities, but at the same time the very purpose of the project is to enhance their technical and planning capacities, so this constraint is not a surprise. It is also due to such constraints that NEPA has requested UNEP to assist with the project execution. Hence, while the project is formally executed by NEPA, the day-to-day implementation is primarily handled by UNEP.
163. UNEP thus has a dual role in the project implementation, both as implementing agency with an oversight, supervision and quality assurance role, and as executing agency which directly manages day-to-day implementation. To keep a clear division between these two roles within UNEP, the GEF Unit at UNEP DEPI (in Nairobi) has the oversight responsibility, whereas UNEP PDCMB (in Geneva), including UNEP Afghanistan has the executing role. However, like the GEF Unit, PDCMB is also part of DEPI. A memo has been prepared, which outlines the division of roles and the responsibilities of the DEPI GEF Unit, PDCMB and also NEPA. The division of roles vis-à-vis supervision (DEPI GEF Unit) and execution assistance (PDCMB and UNEP Afghanistan) is clear, and the MTE team did not observe any shortcomings in maintaining the strict division between the supervisory/quality assurance and day-to-day project implementation roles or any confusion of roles.
164. The matrix structure in UNEP Afghanistan, where staff from different units work on different elements and components of the project works well and the team is well coordinated; the UNEP Afghanistan team is not

very large, so coordination does not seem a major challenge. Moreover, it is the clear impression of the MTE team that the UNEP Afghanistan team comprises very qualified and highly motivated/dedicated national and international staff, who are delivering quality activities and outputs.

165. However, limited staff resources and especially a limited presence at the provincial/field level is a major constraint, which in particular is affecting the pace of implementation of Component 3 and the training of provincial GoIRA staff – the provinces where most progress has been made are those where UNEP has a field presence (Bamyan) and which field staff can easily reach (Daikundi).

166. Another constraint that has affected some of the more technical activities, e.g. the EWS related activities, is the difficulty of attracting and recruiting qualified international experts/consultants, who are willing to travel to Afghanistan due to the security situation. To mitigate this challenge, the project has opted for the recruitment of fewer consultants and instead giving them more tasks than envisaged in the Project Document. This has to some extent helped, but reportedly also created some uncertainty about roles and mandates.

The project's performance in implementation and management is rated "satisfactory".

3.6.3 Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships

Partnerships

167. To enhance the project's capacity to deliver, UNEP and NEPA are engaged in partnerships with other organisations at both national and provincial levels in addition to the main implementing partners (MAIL, MRRD, MEW, ANDMA, AMA). BORDA (Bremen Overseas Research & Development Association), an international NGO has been engaged in the establishment of a wastewater treatment facility at Kabul University, a wastewater treatment facility at the Ecology and Climate Centre in Bamyan, and a school project with the installation of ecosanitation and solar pumped drinking water, also in Bamyan. The project also supported Save the Children in helping the Ministry of Education in including CC into the school curriculum (see Chapter 4.2.3 on Component 4 outputs). Moreover, the project has supported COAM (The Conservation Organisation for Afghan Mountain Areas), a local NGO in Bamyan, which has carried out disaster risk reduction (DRR) trainings, tree planting and livelihoods activities with communities. Similarly, a small grant has recently been provided RGEO (Rural Green Environmental Organization) a local NGO in Badakhshan, which will engage in community mobilisation, training, and field activities. Other partnerships are also in the pipeline in Badakhshan, e.g. on demonstrations in existing gardens in Faizabad and Kishim with international NGOs Afghanaid and Concern Worldwide. The project is also in the process of establishing a practicum for students at Kabul University, where students will gain experience from working at NEPA, ANDMA, or UNEP. Joint workshops and events have also been carried out with other organisations (see Chapter 3.2.4 on Component 4 outputs). In Badakhshan, the project plans to engage in partnership with no less than 15 organisations. ICARDA is engaged in the agriculture-related activities in Balkh (identification of appropriate and resilient plant species and varieties). UNEP Afghanistan is also a member of the SRACAD consortium, where other members will replicate the project's approaches (see chapter 3.45. on replication). However, such a large number of partnerships also come at a cost, as they require a significant coordination effort.

168. Being part of the UN family, UNEP's support is part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the project are also benefitting from partnerships with other UN agencies. Being a UN agency, UNEP has full access to critical UN facilities for operation in Afghanistan, such as UNAMA compounds, security information services, and air travel. At the technical level and more informally, the project has provided recommendations for other LDCF projects implemented by UNDP, FAO and the World Bank. Initial discussions on mutual interests and potential cooperation are also taking place with WPF.

Stakeholder participation

169. Stakeholders are significantly involved in the project implementation. Firstly, the relevant GoIRA institutions were actively involved in the project design, through the participation in a series of workshops. Moreover, trainings take departure in the mandates and work of GoIRA institutions, and use

Afghan examples. Implementation at the community-level is always done together with NEPA, MAIL, MRRD and MEW, who each are responsible for trainings, advice and the implementation of activities within their mandates. The project is supporting existing processes, whenever possible, rather than starting new, parallel ones – for example by engaging in ongoing policy formulation or climate-proofing infrastructure established under NSP.

170. Communities are, through their CDCs, directly involved in community-level activities; such as the development of village plans and the identification and selection of priority pilot interventions. All interventions are done with community contributions as per the rules and provisions of the NSPs, such as labour and materials – the community contribution is always at least 10% of the intervention costs, but reportedly it is often higher. Efforts had been made to ensure that the communities understand that their village plans are part of a larger landscape approach, and some (but not all) CDC members interviewed in Bamyan were well aware of the existence of the Koh-e-Baba landscape plan. Moreover, copies of grant agreements and village progress reports were shared with the communities, but the village progress reports were only shared in English. However, the Koh-e-Baba Landscape Plan were not provided to the communities visited. One village visited did not have its village plan, as the project staff had taken it to Bamyan to type it – the original village plan could have stayed in the village, had the project team instead taken a picture of the plan.
171. Women are involved in some activities, such as tree planting and community gardens. However, the women interviewed had often not been involved in the development of the village plans, and a number of women interviewed in Bamyan had little knowledge of the village plans or of CCA. In Balkh and Daikundi, the initial village engagement was done through public meetings in the mosque, but no meetings were held separately with women. Overall, the project had done efforts to engage women and UNEP would like to enhance this effort in the future. However, while it is difficult to engage women in the Afghan culture, experiences from rural development NGOs is that it is possible to engage them more, e.g. in the consultations in relation to the village plan development. Considering that disaster affects men, women, children and vulnerable households differently, such enhanced involvement is pertinent. One limitation in this regard is that most of the UNEP and GoIRA staff are male.
172. Generally speaking, only few stakeholders have a broad understanding of the project objective, concept and its ecosystem based approach to adaptation – indeed, it seems that the project concept is mainly understood by a few stakeholders at the senior level. This is not surprising, when considering that the project represents a new thinking in Afghanistan, so it takes a continuous effort to cultivate a shared vision among stakeholders. But a shared vision could help building a stronger understanding of the project belonging to GoIRA (NEPA and the partners) rather than a UNEP project (see chapter 3.4 on sustainability).

Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships is rated satisfactory.

3.6.4 Communication and public awareness

173. Overall UNEP Afghanistan is paying significant attention to knowledge management and communication; and a knowledge management unit was established in 2014. The LDCF-1 project recruited in 2014 a training, advocacy and outreach officer. The Unit has developed a knowledge management strategy. The unit provides four types of services covering different aspects of knowledge management: a) knowledge products (e.g. preparation of technical reports, guidance notes, fact sheets, posters); b) training (development and execution of courses); c) advocacy, communication and outreach (e.g. events (e.g. conferences), posts on social media (e.g. Facebook page), campaigns); and d) knowledge storing and sharing (storing and publishing, e.g. uploaded on UNEP website and printed hard copies). The Team Leader of the knowledge management unit travelled in December 2014-January 2015 to the provinces covered by UNEP to gain an understanding of which types of materials would be useful.
174. Standardised approaches, guidelines and checklists have been developed for the elaboration of all types of knowledge and communication products and events by UNEP Afghanistan under all its projects. This includes developing a distribution plan for each product, utilising a range of channels, such as website, social media, events, as well as handouts. The knowledge management unit reports that a particularly useful communication channel is staff bringing communication products with whenever they go to meetings or events and engage in discussion with people on the products and the messages that UNEP

wish to convey on CC and environment. Reportedly, a culture of doing this has been well ingrained in the staff, and the MTE saw examples of the active use by some UNEP staff of knowledge products in their communication with stakeholders at different levels.

175. As described in chapter 3.2.4 (Component 4 outputs) chapter 3.3.1 (outcomes), the project's Component 4 is dedicated to knowledge management, i.e. making knowledge accessible and creating awareness, and good results have been achieved in terms of increasing the access to knowledge and promoting the sharing of experience. Several knowledge products of good quality have been produced and disseminated under the LDCF-1 project. International and national consultants have been involved in the development of some of the products. With the support from an internationally renowned retired architect, UNEP Afghanistan has developed a strong visual identity for its products and appealing graphical layouts. Many materials are translated to Dari and Pashto.

176. As described in chapter 3.2.4 (Component 4 outputs), three types of training packages are envisaged: SPEAK for professionals, TEACH for lecturers and students, and LEARN for communities. The SPEAK format and five SPEAK courses have been developed, mainly, but not exclusively, under the LDCF-1 project. TEACH is under development, but both TEACH and LEARN are unlikely to be ready by the project completion date. Feedback is always collected from training participants, and the uptake of learning by participants is also assessed.

177. The communication under the LDCF-1 project targets a broad range of stakeholders as well as the general public:

- GoIRA technical staff are targeted through technical trainings and participation in pilot activities as described in earlier chapters. University lecturers have also participated in these trainings. All technical staff interviewed report that the project has significantly enhanced their awareness of, and knowledge about, CC and CCA. NEPA staff in Bamyan indicate that they are using the knowledge gained in their awareness raising activities with communities.
- GoIRA decision-makers and policy-makers are targeted with policy briefs and participation in international events. The participation in the UNFCCC COPs has exposed the senior level to the experiences of other countries, which UNEP Afghanistan reports enhanced the commitment in MAIL towards the development of their NRM strategy that integrates CCA, and it also inspired the Minister of Energy and Water to pursue the development of an Energy Policy that integrates CC.
- Communities are targeted through training and broad range of pilot activities as described in earlier chapters. The project has enhanced the awareness of participating communities, especially of CDC members and other community members with a major involvement/role in in the project.
- University lecturers and students are being targeted through the curriculum development at Kabul University, and UNEP is also engaged in a class on environmental management at Bamyan University. It is too early to assess the results in terms of awareness.
- School children are targeted through environment days, and in one school in Bamyan also through ecosanitation facilities. It is also planned to support in the development of curricula for primary schools.
- The wider public is targeted through social media, publications and events. For example, the four participating provinces are now preparing environmental quarterlies, which are printed and disseminated through different channels, e.g. to schools and at events.

178. However, while UNEP Afghanistan over the last couple of years has engaged in a structured and comprehensive communication and awareness strategy and good results have been achieved in terms of raising environmental and CC awareness, UNEP Afghanistan and senior management in NEPA find that low visibility of the LDCF-1 project remains a challenge – as evidenced by a) the widespread view of the project being a UNEP project rather than a GoIRA/NEPA project, and b) the uneven understanding of the project's ecosystem based approach to adaptation. This does not seem to relate to major shortcomings in the approach to knowledge management and communication, but rather to the novelty and complexity of the topics to stakeholders, and UNEP Afghanistan's current approach knowledge management is fairly new.

The project's performance in ensuring communication and public awareness is rated "highly satisfactory".

3.6.5 Country ownership and driven-ness

179. As described in 3.6.2. (project management), the Project Steering Committee (PSC) only meets on an annual basis, but it comprises high level representatives of the key participating GoIRA institutions. Overall, the institutions, which are members of the PSC, display a good degree of commitment to the project and they were duly involved in the project design (see chapter 3.6.1 on preparation).

180. There is a clear ownership at the highest level in NEPA, as UNEP for several years has been a central partner for the establishment and strengthening of NEPA vis-à-vis delivering its mandate. The LDCF-1 project is an important element of this cooperation, as it is one of the larger NEPA-UNEP projects and since it is the main project helping NEPA with engaging in and coordinating CCA in Afghanistan. At the provincial level, NEPA is also supportive and engaging in the implementation, albeit the level of engagement also depends on the commitment and capacity of the individual NEPA Provincial Director. However, the project is still mainly driven forward by UNEP (albeit in cooperation and coordination with NEPA), largely due to NEPA's capacity constraints.

181. The other key partner ministries and agencies also generally show a good degree of commitment, as evidenced in the active role of the provincial departments of MAIL, MRRD and MEW in the field level implementation. However, the level of commitment at the central level appears to vary, although the MTE team did not meet representatives of MAIL, ANDMA and AMA as planned. For example, while the staff of the partner institutions were provided training by the project, MAIL did not send any of its staff members to the GIS training course provided by the project.

Country ownership and driven-ness is rated "satisfactory"

3.6.6 Financial planning and management

182. The estimated and actual costs as well as the expenditure ratio (actual/planned) of the project are summarised in Table 14 below. However, the financial statements are not broken down into components, so the actual spending per component is not known.

Table 14: Summary of project expenditures (US\$)

Component/ Sub-component/Output	Estimated cost at design	Actual cost (by 31 Dec 2015)	Expenditure ratio (Dec 2015/planned)
Component 1	929,379	156,539*	0:17
Component 2	719,250	420,200*	0:58
Component 3	2,498,455	1,480,000*	0:59
Component 4	707,516	180,000*	0:25
Project management	399,900	100,000*	0:25
M&E	135,500	35,000*	0:26
Total	5,390,000	2,386,739	0:44
Unspent funds (1 Jan 2016)		3,003,261	0:66

* Component cost figures provided by UNEP Country Office (financial statements are not component/output based)

183. As can be seen from table 13, by the end of 2015, the spending rate was low compared to with the implementation period; 44% of the budget was spent over 66% of the implementation period¹³. Hence, unless spending accelerated dramatically in 2016, the remaining budget appears sufficient for the sought

¹³ 32 months of implementation out of 48 months

project extension. The remaining budget should be sufficient for least a one-year and seemingly also for a two-year extension (see Table 15). On the other hand, it appears unlikely that the entire budget can be spent without an extension. However, financial statements for the spending so far in 2016 have not yet been prepared and shared with the MTE team, so the current financial status of the project is not clear.

Table 15: Average monthly spending under different scenarios (US\$)

Scenario	No. of months	Average monthly spending
Total project budget (May 2013 – Apr 2017)	48	112,292
Actual spending (May 2013 – Dec 2015)	32	74,586
Post-2015 without extension (Jan 2016 – Apr 2017)	16	187,704
Post-2015 with 1-year extension (Jan 2016 – Apr 2018)	28	107,259
Post-2015 with 1.5-year extension (Jan 2016 – Oct 2018)	34	88,331
Post-2015 with 2-year extension (Jan 2016 – Apr 2019)	40	75,082

Project co-financing

184. The project reports that the co-financing equals the commitments indicated in the Project Document. None of the co-financing is provided as direct in-cash contributions to the project, but provided either as baseline activities, which the project has latched onto (i.e. utilising structures/processes put in place and climate proofing infrastructure put in place) or in-kind contributions. The co-financing is confirmed by annual letters from the respective institutions. However, UNEP Afghanistan points out that the actual budget of the two main co-funding sources, NSP and NABDP in reality is much larger for the provinces covered by the LDCF-1 project, while it is impossible to break down their actual investments in the villages covered by the LDCF-1 project, let alone link it to the NSP/NABDP infrastructure actually being climate-proofed by the LDCF-1 project.

185. As mentioned in 2.6 (project financing), the projects providing co-funding have either closed or are coming to an end, RAMA never started and AgroMET was completed in 2013, so their contribution did not materialise, although the meteorological stations and equipment provided by AgroMET to MAIL is still functional. But, both NSP and NABDP will be followed by new projects, which in principle would provide similar indirect co-funding, through their activities.

Table 16: Summary of project co-financing

Co-financing Source	Amount (US\$)	
	Planned	Actual (2013-2015)
National Solidarity Programme (NSP) (baseline activities)	10,000,000	10,000,000
National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) (baseline activities)	2,400,000	2,400,000
NEPA (in-kind)	1,000,000	500,000*
Agro-Meteorology Programme (AgroMET) (baseline activities)	600,000	0
Rehabilitation of the Afghan Meteorological Authority project (RAMA) (baseline activities)	400,000	0
Totals	14,400,000	12,900,000

* For 2013-2014, 2015 data not yet available.

In-kind contributions

186. The project has three sources of in-kind contributions, but only one is recorded as co-financing in the Project Document and annual reporting from the project, i.e. the in-kind contribution from NEPA, which comprises staff time, office space, and access to vehicles in some provinces.

187. The other sources of in-kind contributions are a) staff-time from partner institutions participating in the project, and b) community contributions. The partner contributions are not calculated or estimated. The community contributions are at least 10% (mainly in-kind through labour or local materials, but some times in cash) of the costs of the community-level physical interventions. The community-contributions are recorded in their individual agreements with the project, but this information is not included in the calculations of co-funding.

Financial management

188. Since UNEP is providing execution assistance to NEPA, UNEP is directly responsible for financial management. Hence, as per UNEP GEF procedures, the project is not subject to external auditing, as UNEP financial management procedures are approved by GEF and the project is part of UNEP's overall auditing procedures.

189. To ensure strict fiduciary standards and avoiding that the dual role of UNEP as implementing and executing agency is creating conflicts of interest, UNEP has established a legal document with clear definitions of the roles of the UNEP DEPI CCA Unit – GEF in Nairobi as implementing agency, and UNEP's Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in Geneva and Afghanistan as executing agency (on behalf of NEPA). Overall, this means that:

- UNEP PCDMB as executing agency is responsible for project management, including elaboration of annual work plans and budgets, procurement and the preparation of technical and financial reports. UNEP Afghanistan has the day-to-day management role prepares the annual work plans and budgets and handles much of the procurement. UNEP Afghanistan reports to Geneva, who assists with financial management and reporting and some procurement.
- The UNEP DEPI CCAU as implementing agency is responsible for oversight approval of financial reports and technical reports and based on their approval, the release of funds to PCDMB.

190. This system enables UNEP to apply strict controls in the financial management, but also creates some challenges and delays (see chapter 3.5.2 on timeliness).

191. The main reason behind the delays is that the financial management and reporting system, UMOJA (and previous IMIS) do not provide the same level of detail or structure in the reporting as required by the standard templates used for UNEP GEF projects. Hence, the financial reports generated by UNEP's own system do not meet the reporting requirements. On the PCDMB side, this makes it difficult and time consuming to provide reports that are approved by the CCA Unit – GEF, and the system does not easily allow for a breakdown of budget lines as per GEF requirements. For the CCA Unit – GEF, it means that the reports received do not provide the level of detail and information needed for oversight and reporting onwards to the GEF Secretariat. For example, the financial reports do not provide a clear overview of the spending against components, outputs, and activities – and since a number of activities are co-funded by other projects, it is difficult to get a clear picture of the contribution of the LDCF-1 project. As a result, reports go back and forth between PCDMB and the CCA Unit – GEF before they are approved and funds are released.

192. Moreover, it is the impression of the MTE team that staff constraints exacerbate the delays, such as: a) the transaction time from submission of financial reports to receipt of comments and queries, and b) difficulties in obtaining clear information on requests for clarification on the spending.

193. This situation is a source of delays, significant amounts of staff time spent on reporting, and frustration for the staff on both sides. The UNEP GEF Coordinating Office is currently looking into developing a reporting template, which will facilitate the reporting on all internally executed GEF projects. It is not clear to the MTE team to what extent the difficulties stem from GEF Secretariat requirements or from the strict

fiduciary checks and balances put in place by UNEP for internally executed projects. But the MTE team is under the impression that a clearer understanding of the perspectives, context and challenge faced by the other side is needed in both the DEPI CCA Unit – GEF and PCDMB.

194.A related challenge is that GEF does not have a specific set of modalities for fragile states/countries affected by conflict. But, operating in fragile states like Afghanistan is highly challenging compared to other LDCs, due to the security challenges, lower capacities, and weaker institutions and legal frameworks. Due to security constraints, all activities and especially those that require travelling requires significant planning and administrative work compared to implementation in other countries.

Overall project financial planning and management is rated as “moderately satisfactory”.

3.6.7 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping

195.PDCMB Geneva provides technical backstopping and support for UNEP Afghanistan in general, including the provision of ad-hoc technical inputs and sparring for the LDCF-1 project – for example, the Communications Division in Geneva provided advice for the development of the knowledge management strategy. The PDCMB Head of Operations visits Afghanistan a few times annually to provide overall supervision of the country operations. Moreover, other parts of the UNEP family, such as the UNEP-DHI partnership in Copenhagen and CCA Unit – GEF of UNEP DEPI, have provided technical inputs or training for staff on an ad-hoc basis.

196.The Task Manager in the DEPI (CCA Unit – GEF) in Nairobi supervises the overall implementation, the Task Manager approves and provides feedback on technical reports (PIRs, half-yearly reports) and work plans, and participates over Skype in PSC meetings. Moreover, the Task Manager approves disbursement/sub-allocation of funds to the project.

197.Overall, the roles and responsibilities of UNEP Afghanistan, PCDMB Geneva and the CCA Unit – GEF of DEPI are clear to all, and there is regular communication between the three. However, as described in chapter 3.6.6 (financial management, and chapter 3.6.8 (monitoring and evaluation), there is a reporting challenge related to this arrangement, which is a factor that has led to delays in fund disbursement and hence contributed to the delays experienced the implementation of the project. Due to the shortcomings in the monitoring and reporting, it is difficult for the Task Manager to maintain a clear overview of implementation progress, and especially to get a clear picture of the size and significance of the contribution of the project activities, which are co-implemented with other UNEP projects. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the Task Manager has so far not been able to travel to Afghanistan. It is the impression of the MTE Team that the main topic of interaction between the task manager is related to reporting and the provision of guidance on reporting requirements, and less so in relation to providing inputs to the technical planning and execution of activities, as UNEP Afghanistan rarely requests assistance.

Overall UNEP supervision and backstopping is rated as “satisfactory”.

3.6.8 Monitoring and evaluation

M&E design

198.The project’s results framework includes objectively verifiable indicators, sources and means of verification for the project objective and outcomes, but no indicators are provided for the outputs. Most indicators are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound), and those that were not SMART were revised as part of the baseline assessment report. All the indicators are quantitative, but for some outcomes, an inclusion of some qualitative indicators would have added value, e.g. in relation to the integration of CCA in policies.

199.Moreover, most outcome indicators presented are in reality output indicators (e.g. number of people trained, number of training events, maps produced, equipment provided, toolkits developed), and they do not capture change and the achievement of the intended outcomes. Only some of the indicators for Outcome 3 are at the outcome level (e.g. change in number of households practicing drought-adapted

agricultural practices). One indicator is gender disaggregated. However, even for outcome 3, the indicators do not fully answer whether the outcome has been achieved (reduced vulnerability). This issue was not rectified in the baseline assessment report.

200. All indicators have targets, but the targets are mainly specified as final targets for the project completion; only very few milestones or intermediate targets were specified for different stages of the implementation (although annual milestones were introduced at the activity level in the annual work plans). The baseline situation is described for each component and the Project Document specifies that the project will carry out a baseline assessment for the indicators during the first three months of implementation.

201. The monitoring plan is not a detailed plan, but mainly provides a brief outline of the M&E with reference to the results framework. The monitoring arrangements are clear, but involve mainly the PMU and the Project Manager. The envisaged involvement of government partners is limited and not specified, although it is stated that: *“Other partners will have responsibilities to collect specific information to track the indicators”*. None of the indicators aim at utilising existing data, such as MAIL, MRRD or MEW data at the provincial and district levels. The budget in the Project Document contains allocations for an M&E expert, the baseline assessment, the MTE, and the final evaluation.

The M&E design is rated as “moderately satisfactory”.

M&E plan implementation

202. The Baseline assessment was carried out as planned, which both improved the indicator framework and provided baselines for each indicator. However, the indicators are not tracked systematically, but in the PIRs mainly narrative descriptions are provided on the activities implemented, although some figures are provided, e.g. on the number of people trained. The monitoring is carried out by the UNEP team, with no real involvement of NEPA or the partners. No surveys have been carried out so far, nor has there been any attempt to utilise the data collected by GoIRA institutions or other entities, or otherwise involve project partners and communities in the monitoring.

203. The monitoring that does take place, is mainly done to prepare the PIR, rather than providing information feeding into the project management.

204. The knowledge management unit collects pre- and post-training assessments of participant’s knowledge as well as feedback from participants to inform the preparation of future trainings. However, this highly relevant and useful information is not included in the training reports.

205. The technical progress is reported in the annual PIR and in the half-yearly reports. The half-yearly report is a light exercise focusing exclusively on activities, whereas the PIR is the main progress report covering progress at the objective, outcome and output levels. Once approved, the PIR is also submitted to the GEF Secretariat. The approval of the PIR is also a precondition for the release of funds. Formally, the technical reporting is the responsibility of NEPA as the executing agency, but in reality, the technical reports are prepared by the UNEP Project Manager. There are two issues with the PIR. Firstly, the PIR format has shortcomings, as it does not provide much space for reporting things that lie outside the results framework or for reflection that lies outside the direct delivery of activities, outputs and outcomes. Secondly, since UNEP Afghanistan has a programmatic approach to implementation, it is not clear from the PIRs whether the LDCF-1 project was sole, major or minor contributor to an activity or to what extent a given output is fully attributable to the LDCF-1 project. As with the technical reporting, albeit to a lower degree, the PIR are part of the reporting and approval challenges described in chapter 3.6.6 (financial management).

The M&E plan implementation is rated as “unsatisfactory”.

4 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Conclusions

206. The project aims to enhance the resilience to the impacts of climate change of rural communities and the Afghan economy more largely. Specifically, the project addresses GoIRA capacity constraints vis-à-vis adaptation planning and integrating climate change adaptation in development planning. The project demonstrates tangible adaptation options/measures in different ecosystems at the local level in four provinces (chapter 2.2, para 15-16).
207. The project is very timely, considering that Afghanistan rural communities are highly vulnerable to the impact of CC and GoIRA's capacity to address CCA is very low. Climate change has become a prominent theme in recent years, and the project is the first major CC project in the country, and is successfully contributing to making CC more prominent on the national agenda and enhancing the capacity of GoIRA to address this emerging challenge (chapter 3.1.3, para 51; chapter 3.4.1 para 130).
208. The project has made good progress in terms of enhancing national capacities to forecast CC risks to water as well as enhancing the knowledge base on CC in Afghanistan with the provision of downscaled models, information about adaptation options and the provision of tangible tools (chapter 3.2.1; chapter 3.2.4; Chapter 3.3.1; para 78-80, 90). Similarly, the project has contributed to enhancing GoIRA's engagement in UNFCCC-related processes, e.g. with assisting with the preparation of Afghanistan's INDC and revitalising the NCCC (Chapter 3.2.2, para 58 and 60; chapter 3.3.1, para 81, 93-94). However, the project has only to lesser extent enhanced the capacities and provided policy options for the integration of CCA in sector development policies and strategies and implement these (chapter 3.2.2, para 61; chapter 3.3.1, para 81-83, 95). Moreover, while the project aims at developing a CC financing strategy, the project has mainly provided ad-hoc inputs to various project proposals (chapter 3.2.4, para 73).
209. Mixed progress was found in regards to the practical application of the skills imparted. Community-level activities in Bamyan and Daikundi have enhanced the capacities of both provincial GoIRA and community-members, albeit still unevenly so (chapter 3.3.1, para 86-88). Importantly, communities are already reporting early, localised, improvements in their livelihoods and the local environment (chapter 3.3.2, para 102, 109). However, in Balkh and Badakhshan, implementation is still at an early stage and communities have not yet been engaged (chapter 3.2.3, para 61; chapter 3.3.1, para 84). Moreover, little progress has been made on the pilot early warning system (EWS) (chapter 3.2.1, para 56).
210. Overall, several outputs cannot be fully delivered before the current project completion date, but if the project is extended, then most outputs should be feasible to achieve (chapter 3.2.4, para 74-75).
211. The knowledge and capacity-related outcomes are partly achieved and they are likely to be achieved if the project is extended, but not to an extent where the stakeholders can fully engage in CCA without further support, especially not in Balkh or Badakhshan (chapter 3.3.1, para 80, 83, 85, 90, 91-92, 97; chapter 3.3.3, para 113). The outcome on integration of CCA into policies and programmes has only been achieved to a moderate extent and increased attainment would require enhanced engagement at the sector level (chapter 3.3.1, para 95). Tangible enhancements in community resilience is likely to be achieved in Bamyan and Daikundi, but uncertain in Balkh and Badakhshan (chapter 3.3.2; chapter 3.3.3, para 113).
212. The project is a first mover on CCA in Afghanistan, so while it is laying the foundation, it is too early to assess whether it will fully lead to the intended impact of enhanced resilience of the Afghan society and economy, this as well as sustainability and replication of the project would largely depend on whether external funding and capacity development support can be secured for continuation of the processes initiated/supported by the project (chapter 3.3.2; chapter 3.4, para 128). But this is very likely to happen; for example, four new GEF LDCF projects are starting or under development for Afghanistan. LDCF-3 will replicate the LDCF-1 project, and NGO member of the SRACAD consortium also likely to replicate the project at the community level (chapter 3.4.5, para 142).
213. As described above, the project has experienced significant delays to an extent which has significant bearings for the full delivery of the intended results. The delays are mainly due to external factors outside the control of the project and related to the volatile Afghan context, but also due to issues related to discrepancies between GEF financial templates and the UMOJA financial management system used by the UN, which delayed approval and disbursements (chapter 3.5.2; chapter 3.6.6). However, an overambitious

design with too many activities and a too large geographical scope, compared to the staff capacities at UNEP and NEPA, has also contributed to the delays, especially at the provincial level (chapter 3.6.2, para 167).

SWOT analysis

214. The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the project are outlined below.

215. **Strengths:** The project came at a very opportune time, where an appreciation of the importance of addressing climate change vulnerability has emerged in Afghanistan, and the global climate discourse (especially post-Paris) is extended to lead to significant new opportunities for Afghanistan – as such the need and there is thus both a demand and need for enhanced CCA capacities. The project is in general logically conceived and the components are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the technical quality of the project outputs is generally high and the capacity-development is overall well-targeted vis-à-vis the needs and capacities of the stakeholders. There is a good buy-in to the project by the implementing partners and stakeholders; they see the value and relevance of the project and are appreciative of the support received. An important factor behind the results achieved is the process facilitation provided by a highly dedicated and well-qualified UNEP team.

216. **Weaknesses:** The project's scope is overambitious in terms of number of provinces covered and the number and range of activities, considering the time-frame available, the limited staff resources of UNEP and NEPA, the limited stakeholder capacities (especially in the provinces) and the novelty of the theme and approach in Afghanistan. In short, "the butter is spread too thinly" and it has not been possible for the UNEP/NEPA project team to implement all elements of the project timely. As a result, a number of outputs, and in particular the piloting in Balkh and Badakhshan, have been significantly delayed (although external factors beyond the control of the project have also been a major cause of delays). While the ecosystem-based approach to adaptation is highly appropriate, it is also a complex concept, which is not fully understood by many stakeholders. This, in combination with UNEP arguably being too hands-on in the implementation has led to a widespread perception of the project being UNEP's project. The progress monitoring and reporting is insufficient and activity-focused and thus does not capture outcomes; and there are challenges related to the financial reporting, which have also contributed to delays.

217. **Opportunities:** the project is the first of a series of LDCF projects, so the project can influence, and has influenced the design of these. They, in turn, provide opportunities to further consolidate and expand the results achieved by the project. The post-Paris enhanced commitment of the global community to support developing countries in CCA (and in particular the emergence of the Green Climate Fund) will provide similar opportunities and possibly at a larger scale – and an opportunity for the project is to support Afghanistan in becoming ready to access such new funding. The ongoing development of the Citizen's Charter programme provides a window of opportunity to influence its procedures and promoting the mainstreaming of CCA in GoIRA's rural development endeavours.

218. **Threats:** Afghanistan is a high-risk environment due to the volatile security situation. This is a major threat to implementation as well as the sustainability and replication of the results achieved, in particular at the provincial level. Security incidences have caused delays and if security further deteriorates, it may become impossible to implement in some districts. The delays and slow pace of implementation, e.g. in Balkh and Badakhshan may affect the stakeholders' ownership of, and commitment to, the project. The results of the project are not fully consolidated, especially not at the provincial level, which is another threat to sustainability. Due to financial and human resource capacity constraints, GoIRA will not be able to continue the processes initiated by the project without further support (while the LDCF-3 project offers an opportunity to continue work at the central level, it does not cover the same provinces as the LDCF-1 project).

Implications for future implementation

219. As already highlighted in several places, the project has been significantly delayed and many of the intended outputs cannot be fully delivered unless the project is extended; an extension is imperative if the expected results are to be delivered and consolidated to a reasonable degree. However, even with an

extension, it will be difficult for the project to fully deliver the entire range of activities planned and the project will need to prioritise and focus its remaining resources and time on fewer activities and the key partnerships – priority needs to be given to those that are essential vis-à-vis impact, enhanced ownership, and sustainability. Critical gaps to address include: enhancing the understanding of the ecosystem based approach to adaptation; piloting early warning systems at provincial level; integrating the project activities more in the work plans of the implementing partners; strengthening the link to sector and provincial policy and planning processes; and engaging more systematically in the development of a post-project financing strategy.

Overall assessment ratings

220. The MTE's overall assessment is that the project performance can be rated as “**satisfactory**” based on the assessed criteria, when considering the challenging context it is being implemented in and that the project is a “first mover” on CCA. However, this rating hinges on the assumption that the anticipated extension will be given for at least one year, preferably two years (budget allowing). Table 16 below provides an overview of the ratings given for each evaluation criterion.

Table 13: Summary of Evaluation criteria, assessment and ratings

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	Afghanistan's rural communities are highly vulnerable to the impacts of CC. The project is the first major CC project, and is in line with Afghanistan's NAPA. The project is fully aligned with UNEP and GEF's priorities, especially in relation to CCA.	3.1	HS
B. Achievement of outputs	Most outputs under Component 1 (CC risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information) are on track and likely to be delivered, except EWS piloting. Many, but not all outputs, under Component 2 (CC adaptation and response strategies) are likely to be delivered. Only 2 out of 4 outputs under Component 3 (pilot CCA projects) are likely to be attained, work is still at an early stage in 2 provinces. Many, but not all outputs under Component 4 (learning and knowledge management) are likely to be achieved.	3.2	MS
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results		3.3	MS
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC	Outcome 1 is partly achieved with increased monitoring and forecasting capacities. Outcome 2 is partly achieved but the capacity to integrate CCA in planning is still not fully in place. Outcome 3a is largely achieved with increased capacity to promote CCA measures in 2 provinces (albeit with gaps), but unlikely to be achieved in the other two provinces. Outcome 3b has been partly achieved with increased community CCA capacities in two provinces (but with need of further strengthening), but with no progress in the other 2 provinces. Outcomes 4a and 4b have largely been achieved with increased access to knowledge and sharing with other countries, but can be further enhanced. The higher outcome of CC risk being integrated into policies, plans and programmes has only been achieved to a moderate extent; the UNFCCC related CC policy framework is strengthened, but the influence on integration of CC into policies is limited.	3.3.1	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
2. Likelihood of impact using ROTl approach	Many of the intended outcomes can only be fully achieved if the project is extended. The outcomes are feeding into longer processes, but GoIRA is affected by capacity and financial constraints and continuation would need further donor support. The project is a first mover on CCA in Afghanistan, so while it is laying the foundation, it is too early to assess whether it will lead to the intended impact. The drivers and assumptions needed to move from the outcomes to the intermediate states and on to impact are generally in place, but sufficient security in the future is uncertain. Localised, small-scale early positive environmental changes are already emerging in target communities in Bamyan and Daikundi.	3.3.2	L
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	There are already localised examples of increased resilience of the target communities in Bamyan and Daikundi, but it is uncertain whether this will be achieved in Balkh and Badakhshan. The intended enhancement of the capacities of the target institutions to address CC risk has been partly achieved, but capacities remain uneven and in many places low it appears unlikely that the stakeholders at this stage are able to effectively address CC risk without further support. As a first-mover, the project is laying the foundation for further extending the CC capacity development to other parts of GoIRA, which in turn should contribute to increasing the resilience more largely in Afghanistan.	3.3.3	MS
D. Sustainability of Outcomes	The project has focused on supporting existing processes. Capacity development is at central, provincial and community level the centre-stage of the project. "Learning-by-doing" is an important element, but has not always materialised fully, e.g. due to delay of the EWS pilots and work in Balkh and Badakhshan, and UNEP appears to be overly hands-on at times. The conceptual understanding the project is uneven.	3.4	ML
1. Socio-political sustainability	The policy framework is supportive of the project results and processes, but more work is required for the integration of CCA into sector policies/strategies to enhance the likelihood of continued involvement of sector ministries. The project focuses on low-cost eco-system based solutions communities can maintain, and communities already see livelihoods benefits.	3.4.1	L
2. Financial resources	A major constraint for the sustainability is the scarcity of financial resources at all levels, which poses a real challenge to the maintenance of equipment and the ability of GoIRA partners to follow up after the project. New international CCA funding opportunities are emerging. The project is engaged in fund-raising, but mainly through inputs to project proposals, which do not always aim at deepening LDCF-1 project results.	3.4.2	ML
3. Institutional framework	Existing institutional structures and processes are used by the project for delivery, and the project partners are operating within established institutional mandates. The project's work plans are not fully integrated into the annual work plans of the relevant provincial departments and staff job descriptions.	3.4.3	L
4. Environmental sustainability	The project aims at restoring/enhancing eco-system integrity and services to enhance CC resilience. Communities in Bamyan and Daikundi report positive environmental changes at the local level.	3.4.4	HL

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
5. Catalytic role and replication	The project has catalysed some policy change in relation to Afghanistan's overall CC policy framework. The project has demonstrated the value of inter-ministerial cooperation on CCA at the provincial level. Support for curriculum development contributes to creating a cadre of CCA professionals. Project lessons inform upcoming LDCF projects; LDCF-3 will replicate the project, and NGOs in SRACAD will be trained to replicate.	3.4.5	HS
E. Efficiency	The financial statements are not broken down into components and activities, thus making it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness in the implementation of the activities. The planned activities, expected outputs and geographical coverage appear overly optimistic vis-à-vis the budget. Synergies are often achieved with joint activities with other initiatives, such as the climate-proofing of infrastructure constructed under NSP. Implementation is significantly delayed, due to factors often outside the control of the project, such as security incidents, presidential elections, and the transition to UMOJA. UNEP reporting processes and a mismatch between IMIS/UMOJA and UNEP's GEF templates are also a source of delays. Staff constraints at UNEP and NEPA are also causing delays, especially at the provincial level.	3.5	MS
F. Factors affecting project performance			S
1. Preparation and readiness	Overall, the project design is coherent. However, the project was overambitious in its geographical coverage, number of activities and intended outcomes and outputs, when considering the novelty of the topic and approach, the staff resources available to UNEP, the capacities of NEPA and other implementing partners, the challenging Afghan context, and the timeline of the project.	3.6.1	S
2. Project implementation and management	The roles of the partners in the implementation is generally clear and well aligned with their institutional mandates. Capacity constraints affect their ability to engage, but the very purpose of the project is to enhance their capacities. The project is formally executed by NEPA, but day-to-day implementation is primarily handled by UNEP. UNEP staff are qualified, motivated and well-coordinated, but limited staff resources and a limited presence at the provincial level is a major constraint, which affects Component 3 implementation. The difficulty of attracting qualified experts has affected some of the more technical activities (e.g. EWS).	3.6.2	S
3. Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships	The project, and UNEP and NEPA more broadly, are engaged, or planning to engage, in several partnerships with other organisations (e.g. NGOs) for specific activities at both national and provincial levels in addition to the main implementing partners. These partnerships enhance the project's capacity to deliver, but the large number of partnerships also require significant coordination. As part of the UN family, the project also benefits from access to UN facilities. Stakeholders are significantly involved in the implementation. Stakeholders at all levels are trained, and each institution is responsible for implementation of activities within their mandates. Communities are directly involved in community-level activities; such as the development of village plans and the identification and implementation of pilot	3.6.3	S

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	interventions - the community contribution is always at least 10% but often higher. Women are involved in some activities, but often not in the planning. Only few stakeholders have a broad understanding of the project concept and the ecosystem based approach to adaptation – it appears mainly understood by a few senior level stakeholders.		
4. Communication and public awareness	Component 4 is dedicated to knowledge management. UNEP Afghanistan has a knowledge management unit and strategy, and standardised approaches. Several knowledge products of good quality have been produced under the LDCF-1 project and disseminated through a range of channels targeting a broad range of people. Good results have been achieved in terms of raising environmental and CC awareness, but low visibility of the LDCF-1 project remains a challenge, but this does not seem to relate to major shortcomings in the approach to knowledge management, but to the novelty and complexity of the topic.	3.6.4	HS
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	There is a clear ownership at the highest level in NEPA, as the project is the main project helping NEPA with engaging in CCA. At the provincial level, NEPA is also supportive, but the level of engagement also depends on the capacity of the Provincial Director. However, the project is still mainly driven forward by UNEP due to NEPA's capacity constraints. The other key partners also show commitment (albeit to varying degrees), e.g. they are active in the field implementation.	3.6.5	S
6. Financial planning and management	By end 2015, spending of the GEF grant was at 44%, while 66% of the implementation period had elapsed. MRRD reports that the entire committed co-funding from NSP and NABDP has been provided, and NEPA reports that 50% of their in-kind contribution had been provided by end 2014. The minor contributions from the AgroMET and RAMA projects did not materialise. The reported co-funding provided thus stood at US\$12,900,000 by end 2015. Financial management is handled by UNEP in accordance with UNEP's controls for internally executed GEF projects. However, the UN's UMOJA financial system does not easily provide the information required in the format for GEF projects, and as result the financial reporting and approval internally in UNEP is problematic and causing delays in disbursements. For example, the financial reports do not provide a clear overview of the spending against components, outputs, and activities. Staff constraints exacerbate the delays.	3.6.6	MS
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	The UNEP DEPI GEF Unit supervises the overall implementation, provides feedback on technical reports and work plans. PDCMB Geneva provides technical backstopping for UNEP Afghanistan, including the provision of ad-hoc inputs for the LDCF-1 project. Other parts of the UNEP family, have provided technical inputs or training for staff on an ad-hoc basis.	3.6.7	S
8. Monitoring and evaluation		3.6.8	MU
i. M&E design	The monitoring plan is not a detailed plan, but a briefly outlines the M&E plan with reference to the results framework. The monitoring arrangements are clear, but involve mainly UNEP. The	3.6.8	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	involvement of GoIRA partners is limited and not specified. The indicators are SMART but only provided at the objective and outcome levels, but most are in reality output indicators and do not capture change. None of the indicators utilise existing data. The PIR technical reporting format has shortcomings and does not capture all aspects. It is unclear from the PIRs whether the project was sole, major or minor contributor to an activity or output.		
ii. M&E plan implementation	The indicators are not tracked systematically, in the PIRs mainly narrative descriptions are provided on the activities implemented, although some figures are provided, e.g. on the number of people trained. The monitoring is carried out by the UNEP team, with no real involvement of NEPA or the partners. The monitoring that does take place, is mainly done to prepare the PIR, rather than providing information feeding into the project management.	3.6.8	U
Overall project rating			S
Rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).			

Table 14: GEF project ratings on financial management

Financial management components	Rating	Evidence/ Comments	
Attention paid to compliance with procurement rules and regulations	HS	UN/UNEP has put in place strict rules and mechanisms.	
Contact/communication between the PM & FMO	MS	The discrepancy between UMOJA and GEF requirements is an ongoing challenge.	
PM & FMO knowledge of the project financials	MS	Unclear overview of costs per activity and the actual contribution from the LDCF-1 Project.	
FMO responsiveness to financial requests	MS	Disbursements are delayed due to lengthy approval process.	
PM & FMO responsiveness to addressing and resolving financial issues	MS	The challenges have not been solved yet – but it is to a large extent systemic rather than person-related.	
Were the following documents provided to the evaluator:			
A.	An up to date co-financing table	N	Only a single total figure is provided, not broken into sources. The financial reports provided cover up till 31 Dec 2015. Only one budget revision has been made and it concerned the change in the financial year. UNEP internally executed projects are not audited separately.
B.	A summary report on the projects financial management and expenditures during the life of the project - to date	N	
C.	A summary of financial revisions made to the project and their purpose	Y	
D.	Copies of any completed audits	N	
Availability of project financial reports and audits	S	Latest available financial report provided, but only covering till end 2015. No audits are done.	
Timeliness of project financial reports and audits	S		
Quality of project financial reports and audits	MS	No audits are done. The format and level of detail is a challenge that is	

		not agreed upon by PCDB and the GEF Unit.
FMO knowledge of partner financial requirements and procedures	S	N/A – internal UNEP execution.
Overall rating	MS	
Rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).		

4.2 Recommendations

221. The following is a presentation of the recommendations that have been generated from the evaluation findings. The recommendations are categorised in three priority levels: 1 – critical recommendations, 2 – important recommendations, 3 – opportunities for improvement:

Context:	The intended support for, and promotion of, climate change integration in policies and plans in the water, agriculture, and disaster and conflict prevention sectors has so far been modest. However, the integration of climate risks into relevant policies, plans and programmes is an intended outcome of the project. Moreover, effective implementation of adaptive measures can only take place at a large scale if the responsible sector ministries and agencies integrate it in their planning and services provision. (Chapter 3.2.2, para 60)
Recommendation #1	Map ongoing sector policy and reform processes, and identify windows of opportunity to engage and promote the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation at the sector level. Engage in a few particularly promising sector policy processes (if such are available) to ensure that the socio-economic importance of climate change adaptation is understood and climate change adaptation is mainstreamed into the policies – for example the procedures and guidelines currently being developed for the Citizen’s Charter to ensure that climate change adaptation and ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation are mainstreamed.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, Project Steering Committee members
Time-frame:	October-November 2016
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	The range of activities and number of locations of the project are very broad and possibly overly so, when considering a) the limited budget available per province, b) the project timeline, and c) the implementation capacity of UNEP, the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the partners. It has proven difficult for the project to adequately cover four provinces, and this has been a significant reason for the delays experienced. Covering fewer provinces, less scattering of efforts and perhaps also covering fewer valleys and CDCs could have allowed for a deeper engagement in the pilot communities. (Chapter 3.2.3, para 66-67)
Recommendation #2	Consider reducing the number of different activity types piloted (this is particularly pertinent for Badakhshan and Bamyan).
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement

Context:	The intended elaboration of a resource mobilisation strategy is not being fully implemented, but largely limited to ad-hoc recommendation for project proposals, which generally do not cover the same provinces and communities as the project, thus not fully enabling post-project continuity and consolidation of the results achieved. Moreover, a more comprehensive strategy could help the Government of Afghanistan to better meet the financing challenge and more effectively attract funding from emerging climate financing opportunities, whether international or domestic, public or private. (Chapter 3.2.4, para 72)
Recommendation #3	Engage in the development of comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy, which considers a range of funding options, including domestic and private sector funding as well as new international large-scale funding mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund. This could be done in cooperation with the new Climate Finance Unit at the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The strategy should serve as a tool for achieving continuity, sustainability, upscaling, and replication of the LDCF-1 project.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Time-frame:	Early 2017
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	Several of the intended outputs cannot be fully delivered before the current project completion date due to the significant delays experienced. As a result, the project will not be able to fully achieve its intended outcomes/results due to time constraints, and an extension of the completion date could significantly increase the achievement of outcomes/results. (Chapter 3.2.5, para 73) The remaining budget should be sufficient for least a one-year and seemingly also for a two-year extension, but the current financial status of the project is not clear. (Chapter 3.6.6, para 184)
Recommendation #4	Extend the project completion date. Calculate the appropriate length of project extension based on the current financial figures, and prepare an activity-based budget for the project extension based on the recommended revision of results framework. Extend the completion date by one or two years, depending on the feasibility and appropriateness of the budget scenarios prepared.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, UNEP PCDB, UNEP DEPI's GEF Unit, National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	1 – Critical
Context:	The capacity to independently carry out assessment, monitoring and forecasting of climate change risk is still not fully in place – this will to a significant extent depend on the implementation of the pilot early warning system, so the skills and tools are put into actual use. Without this practical experience from within Afghanistan, it is very unlikely that the relevant government authorities will be able to properly apply the skills imparted and prepare risk assessments and provide early disaster warnings to vulnerable citizens. (Chapter 3.3.1, para 78-79)
Recommendation #5	Prioritise in the work plans and budgeting for Component 1 the provincial level piloting of early warning systems.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, Project Steering Committee members

Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	The project has only to a limited extent engaged directly in sector planning processes. Capacities remain uneven and low and it is unlikely that the stakeholders at this stage will be able to effectively integrate climate change adaptation in development plans at the sectoral and sub-national levels, and thereby ensure that future infrastructure investments and farming practices promoted are resilient to climate change. (Chapter 3.3.1, para 81)
Recommendation #6	Prioritise in the work plans and budgeting for Component 2 the following: a) sector level planning (in one or two sectors), and b) provincial level planning (e.g. the integration of landscape plans in provincial sector development planning).
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, Project Steering Committee members
Time-frame:	October-November 2016
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	UNEP support appears sometimes overly hands-on in the management and implementation of project activities, and the project is widely seen as a UNEP, not Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, project. Hence, the National Environmental Protection Agency and the other Afghan partner institutions are not sufficiently capacitated to assume full responsibility for implementing an ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation as well post-project continuation and replication. A more long-term engagement with follow-up projects is needed. (Chapter 3.4, para 126-127)
Recommendation #7	Develop a strategy for a gradual transition, handover and withdrawal of UNEP. Possible elements of such a strategy include: a) a gradual process for transferring UNEP's responsibilities to the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) staff where UNEP assumes a mentoring role; b) identifying key knowledge gaps and priority people and provide them with targeted training on the ecosystem-based approach to adaptation; and c) integrating continued support for the processes initiated under the LDCF-1 project at national and provincial levels in new UNEP projects.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	2 – Important
Context:	The project's work plans are not fully integrated into the annual work plans of the relevant provincial departments; this is not fully conducive for post-project follow-up or for ensuring that the line departments will integrate climate change adaptation into their work. (Chapter 3.4.4, para 136)
Recommendation #8	Pilot in Bamyán the integration of the project work plan into the annual work plans of the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA), the Provincial Departments of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD) of MRRD and the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) of MAIL. This may require adjustments to the project

Responsibility:	work plan to ensure a proper fit with the annual work plans of these institutions UNEP Afghanistan, NEPA, MRRD/DRRD, MAIL/DAIL
Time-frame:	2016-2017
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	The project has not engaged in “training of trainers”. Training a cadre of Afghan trainers could help ensuring that the skills imparted are transferred to other professionals, thereby help ensuring that the project partner remain to have access to skilled staff, and also that the approaches promoted by the project can be replicated in other provinces and by other organisations. (Chapter 3.4.5, para 142)
Recommendation #9	Develop and implement “training of trainers” courses for relevant professionals from other organisations on the training courses, tools and approaches developed under the project.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan
Time-frame:	2017-2018
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	The project design is overambitious compared to the complex context and the available capacities and time with too many activities. (Chapter 3.6.1, para 158 and 161)
Recommendation #10	Develop a theory of change, and on the basis of the theory of change and implementation experience revise and restructure the results framework. This exercise should be participatory and involve the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) and implementing partners. Key technical experts/consultants should also be involved in the process. Identify and focus on priority activities for achieving outcomes and ensuring sustainability, and reduce the total number of activities. Take the activities and priorities recommended by the Mid-Term Evaluation into consideration in the revision.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, NEPA, implementing partners
Time-frame:	October-November 2016
Priority level:	2 – Important
Context:	UNEP Afghanistan uses a programmatic approach with joint activities and synergies between their projects. However, UNEP Afghanistan has not developed an overarching strategy, which presents a clear overall vision and outline of how its different projects each specifically contribute to achieving the overall vision of UNEP Afghanistan. Hence, there appears to be a certain overlap, several activities are cofounded from more than one project, and the attribution of a given output to a specific project is difficult. A strategy and mapping of the roles of each project could help delineating/distributing the activities to specific projects, and create more clarity on which output a given project can claim ownership of. (Chapter 3.6.1, para 162)
Recommendation #11	Develop a 3-5 year UNEP Afghanistan master plan that: a) defines the overall strategic objectives and components (e.g. the iconic landscapes) for UNEP’s engagement in Afghanistan, b) defines how each project contributes, and c) maps areas of synergy between the projects. The project mapping elements should be updated annually.

Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan
Time-frame:	2016-2017
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	Partnerships enhance the project’s capacity to deliver. However, the large number of ongoing or planned partnerships of the project requires a significant coordination effort, thereby taking up significant amounts of staff time, which could otherwise be used for the delivery of project activities. (Chapter 3.6.3, para 168)
Recommendation #12	Prioritise the partners and partnerships, and focus on the most important ones for project delivery. Assess whether the number of partnerships should be reduced to reduce transaction costs and coordination challenges.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA)
Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	Community women are engaged in specific project activities, but they are rarely involved in the village planning and they are not consulted separately. Considering that disaster affect men, women and children differently, enhanced involvement of women is pertinent. (Chapter 3.6.3, para 172)
Recommendation #13	Further enhance the involvement of women, e.g. through separate consultations with women in relation to the development of village plans.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA), implementing partners
Time-frame:	November 2016 and onwards
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	Only few stakeholders have a broad understanding of the project objective, concept and its landscape approach. As a result, many stakeholders mainly think of the physical implementation of pilot activities, without fully understanding the planning process; nor is there a wide understanding of the project being the Government’s, but tends to be seen as UNEP’s project. Without a proper conceptual understanding of the project, there is less likelihood of the stakeholders continuing implementing an ecosystem based approach to adaptation after the project has completed. (Chapter 3.3.1, para 83, Chapter 3.6.3, para 173)
Recommendation #14	Endeavour to further train Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) staff, implementing partners and communities on the project concept, objectives and ecosystem based approach to adaptation, and on creating a shared vision of the project and an understanding of the project being a GoIRA, not a UNEP, project. This could include sharing brief versions of the landscape plans with all stakeholders.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan
Time-frame:	January 2017 and onwards
Priority level:	2 – Important

Context:	UNEP's and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) field presence is limited and the implementation of Component 3 is negatively affected by this, e.g. in terms of engaging sufficiently in all four provinces and in terms of engaging regularly with communities and ensuring that women are fully aware of the project. The project has a partnership with Kabul University, and a practicum for students to work with the implementing partners (e.g. with the National Environmental Protection Agency or the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority) has been launched. (Chapter 3.6.2, para 166; chapter 3.6.3, para 168, 172)
Recommendation #15	Explore the feasibility of expanding the Kabul University practicum to also engage students in community-level facilitation and data gathering as a means to enhance the field presence, monitoring and contributing to building a future cadre of Afghan professionals – and as a means to enhance the involvement of women (by engaging female students).
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, NEPA, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)/ Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)/ Provincial Departments of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD)
Time-frame:	2017
Priority level:	3 – Opportunity for improvement
Context:	Due to a mismatch between UMOJA and the GEF financial reporting templates, the financial reporting and approval internally in UNEP is problematic and causing delays in disbursements. Staff constraints exacerbate the delays. (Chapter 3.6.6, para 192-194)
Recommendation #16	Improve the financial reporting process. Recruit a clerk (national staff) in Kabul to assist with the financial reporting for the LDCF-1 project and the LDCF-3 project. Bring the DEPI CCA Unit – GEF Task Manager to Afghanistan and the Project Manager to Nairobi on exchange visits to gain a better understanding of the challenges and requirements the other face and reaching a common understanding on the financial reporting.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, UNEP PCDMB, UNEP GEF UNIT (DEPI)
Time-frame:	October 2016 – January 2017
Priority level:	2 – Important
Context:	The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is insufficient and does not serve as a management tool. Indicators do not capture outcomes/change and are not tracked systematically, hence it is difficult to track whether the project is leading to the intended changed or revisions are needed. The Project Implementation Review (PIR) format does not provide space that lies outside the direct delivery of the activities, outputs and outcomes in the results framework. It is not clear from the PIRs whether the LDCF-1 project was sole, major or minor contributor to an activity or to what extent a given output is fully attributable to the LDCF-1 project. The involvement of National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) and implementing partners in the monitoring is very limited. (Chapter 3.6.8, para 199-201)
Recommendation #17	Strengthen the M&E to capture outcomes and provide useful data for project management: engage an international M&E and Learning Officer to help UNEP Afghanistan developing a standard monitoring system, revise the outcome indicators to ensure that there are a few outcome-oriented indicators capturing all the intended

	outcomes/change (include only indicators that realistically can be monitored), develop and implement systems for tracking of indicators, engage NEPA and project partners in the monitoring and reporting and utilise as much a possible existing sources of data. Include pre- and post-training assessment and participant's feedback in training and workshop reports. Develop a brief technical reporting format for better capturing different aspects of the implementation progress, case studies, challenges and lessons and attach as an annex it to the PIR. Indicate in the reports whether the LDCF-1 project was sole, major or minor financial contributor to the activities and outputs reported on.
Responsibility:	UNEP Afghanistan, NEPA, implementing partners
Time-frame:	October-December 2016
Priority level:	2 – Important

4.3 Lessons Learned

222. The following is a summary of the main lessons that have been learned from some of the project's successes as well challenges:

Context:	The project is the first full-scale climate change adaptation project in Afghanistan and it promotes an ecosystem-based approach to adaptation, which is piloted in four provinces – which has proven overly optimistic. UNEP and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) have only had sufficient capacity to make real progress on the community pilots in two of the provinces two-thirds into the project. The intended outcomes will not be achieved and no lessons will be generated in the other two provinces unless the project is extended.
Lesson # 1:	The field/pilot components of projects that are “first movers” engaging on the promotion of new concepts and approaches in least developed countries (LDCs) should first be tested and refined in one or two project sites. This will help ensuring that implementation capacities are not overstretched and that there is enough time and resources to adequately engage, build capacity, test options, and generate results and lessons.
Application:	UNEP and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) when planning future innovative projects.
Context:	The project has made good progress in enhancing national capacities, but these are still insufficient to effectively engage in climate change adaptation action independently. At the same time, while there is stakeholder commitment, the project is still widely seen as UNEP's rather than the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GoIRA's). It appears that UNEP at has times been overly hand-on in the implementation.
Lesson # 2:	When UNEP is providing direct executing assistance due to low national capacity, there is a difficult balance to strike between engaging enough to ensure that activities are implemented in a timely manner and with sufficient quality, while avoiding to become overly “hands-on” and leaving too little responsibility to the national stakeholders to assume full ownership. A transition strategy with gradual handover should be implemented from the onset of the project, and the potential need for mobilising post-project support should be integrated in the strategy.

Application:	UNEP and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) when planning projects, elaborating annual work plans and implementing activities.
Context:	The Afghan context is a challenging one to implement in and the significant delays the project has experienced are to a large extent due to external factors, such as security, the presidential elections, and high rates of staff turnover with Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) partners.
Lesson # 3:	In fragile states and volatile contexts such as in Afghanistan, the situation is unpredictable and several factors can significantly delay or stall implementation and jeopardize the achievement outputs and outcomes. It is important to consider this from design and build in flexibility to adapt to a changing context – and be aware that significantly more time may be needed than in non-fragile states. Project designs should be realistic and ambition should be managed – e.g. in terms of the range of activities, the scope of outcomes, and geographical coverage.
Application:	UNEP and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) when planning projects.
Context:	The project, and UNEP Afghanistan has a very structured approach to knowledge management and has developed and disseminated numerous quality knowledge products and carried out several trainings, which have successfully increased capacity. However, what the project is promoting (climate change adaptation in general and an ecosystem based approach to adaptation in particular) are new concepts which are quite complex, and the understanding of these is very uneven; the concepts and project objectives are still only fully understood by some stakeholders.
Lesson # 4:	It takes time in Afghanistan to create awareness and a good understanding of complex new concepts and approaches, and to develop sufficient capacity for independent implementation of these – even if the capacity development, knowledge management and communication outputs are successfully delivered at a good quality. Hence, projects aiming at this should contribute to more long term processes and not be seen as stand-alone interventions – and expectations as to what can be achieved should be realistic.
Application:	UNEP and the National Environmental Protection Authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (NEPA) when planning their overall programming as well as individual projects.
Context:	UNEP is both implementing agency and providing execution assistance, including financial management. To ensure high fiduciary standards, and to adhere to GEF requirements, strict financial management and reporting procedures are in place. However, the GEF reporting templates and the UMJOA financial system are not well aligned, and combined with staff constraints, it is a challenge to have reports approved and disbursement released, which has caused delays.
Lesson # 5:	Strict fiduciary controls and reporting requirements are important, but since UNEP's UMOJA system and GEF financial reporting requirements are not aligned, reporting can become a challenge and cause significant delays in disbursements, which in turn can negatively affect the implementation and achievement of the intended outputs and outcomes. Staff constraints at various levels can further exacerbate this issue. In such cases, priority should be given to aligning financial systems, controls and reporting – and ensuring that there is a shared understanding and agreed standards.
Application:	UNEP when reviewing its systems, standards, and practices and when different branches are cooperating as implementing and executing agencies, respectively. The GEF Secretariat, when supporting projects in fragile states.

5 ANNEXES

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

UNEP Evaluation Office TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP project “Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan 2014-2018”

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID:		IMIS number:	LDL-5060-2724-4C87
Sub-programme:	Climate Change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	1(a)
UNEP approval date:	9 April 2013	PoW Output(s):	
GEF project ID:	4227	Project Type:	Full sized-Project
GEF OP #:		Focal Area(s):	Climate Change Adaptation
GEF approval date:	17 October 2012	GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	CCA1, CCA2
Expected Start Date:	10 April 2013	Actual start date:	3 May 2013
Planned completion date:	31 May 2018	Actual completion date:	On-going
Planned project budget at approval:		Total expenditures reported as of [December 2015]:	
GEF Allocation:	US\$ 5,390,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:	US\$ 1,019,210.93
PPG GEF cost:	US\$ 100,000	PPG co-financing:	
Expected FSP co-financing:	US\$ 14,400,000	Secured FSP co-financing:	US\$ 14,400,000
First Disbursement:		Date of financial closure:	
No. of revisions:	2	Date of last revision:	March 2014
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	18 January 2016		
Mid-term evaluation (planned date):	29 th July to 10 th August 2016	Mid-term evaluation (actual date):	29 th July to 10 th August 2016

Project rationale

1. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been identified as being particularly vulnerable to climate change. With low vegetation cover and semi-arid soils, the ecosystems throughout the country are fragile and the climatic variability in terms of frequent droughts and floods result in increasing rate of erosion. The long-lasting instability and conflict have resulted in development challenges in Afghanistan with much of the infrastructure being damaged or destroyed as a result of conflict, and both education and government structures having suffered as well. Approximately 79% of the population is engaged in agricultural activities, the majority in the form of subsistence agriculture. The agricultural activities mainly depend on the very low levels of precipitation and on the flow of several perennial rivers that originate in the central highlands area. Increasing human activity in many areas is further causing negative effects on the fragile soils.

2. At present, Afghanistan is experiencing higher number and intensity of droughts, as well as more frequent floods as a result of increased climate variability and the melting of glaciers in the highland regions. The climate change induced problems facing Afghanistan are twofold. Firstly, it is predicted by regional science projects that the incidence of extreme weather events and droughts will increase, as will climate change-linked disasters such as floods and landslides. These changes are likely to adversely affect natural ecosystems but also agriculture and community livelihoods throughout the country. Secondly, national governance structures, including communities, district leaders, researchers and government agencies currently lack the capacity to plan for, overcome and withstand the anticipated climate change-related threats. This capacity deficit as well as underlying vulnerability to climate change impacts are exacerbated by the following non-climate change-driven causes: i) unsustainable use of natural resources; ii) high poverty and physical insecurity levels; iii) dependence on rain-fed agriculture; and v) a poorly developed policy environment. In addition, the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) highlighted water as the primary concern.

3. To address these challenges, the project *Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in Afghanistan* was designed to strengthen institutional capacity in Afghanistan to facilitate adaptation planning and protection of communities, ecosystems and development against climate change. The project aimed to address adaptation priorities identified during Afghanistan's NAPA process, namely "improved terracing, agroforestry and agro-silvo pastoral systems", "climate-related research and early warning systems", "improved food security" and "rangeland management". The GEF Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) is financing the project which aims to contribute to the adaptation priorities of "improved water management and use efficiency" and "community-based watershed management". In addition to capacity building activities at the national level, the project is also implementing small-scale interventions in different ecosystems within four selected provinces in Afghanistan to demonstrate ways in which agricultural productivity and water flow can be promoted under conditions of climate change through improvements in the functioning of degraded ecosystems.

Project objectives and components

4. The project *Building adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in Afghanistan* aims to reduce the vulnerability of Afghanistan's rural communities and economy to present climate variability and future climate change risks, particularly those associated with future changes in rainfall and temperature regimes. The project aims to enhance the capacity of Afghanistan to integrate climate change risks into relevant sectoral policies and plans (water, agriculture and disaster and conflict prevention), improve land and watershed management as a climate change adaptation strategy and to develop national climate change assessment and monitoring systems. The project includes demonstration components in four provinces that aim to restore and sustainably manage ecosystems to deliver the full range of ecosystem services they are capable of delivering, especially provision of water. The project is using ecosystem and landscape management approaches to build climate resilient local communities by enhancing the benefits provided by ecosystems and ensuring ecosystem resilience.

5. The objective of the project was stated "to increase resilience of vulnerable communities and build capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk". The overall goal of the project is to increase the resilience of Afghanistan's society and economy to the effects of climate change and to enhance

the capacity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to undertake effective planning on climate change adaptation.

Table 2. Project components, outcomes and outputs as defined in the project document.

Outcomes	Outputs
Component 1. Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information	
1. increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment, monitoring, and forecasting of climate change-induced risks to water in Afghanistan	<p>1.1 Improved tools to assess, monitor, predict and interpret climate change related risks and associated training course development and delivery.</p> <p>1.2 A model and standard operating procedures for a national early warning system for the systematic collection, analysis and distribution of information on climate change-induced risks to water resources at the national and community levels developed and piloted in the four priority provinces.</p> <p>1.3 Technical and policy briefs for policy makers on climate change risks to water and other key sectors developed.</p>
Component 2. Climate change adaptation and response strategies	
2. Climate change risks integrated into relevant policies, plans, and programmes	<p>2.1 Tools and methodology for identification, evaluation and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation measures in the water sector and other water related / affected sectors developed.</p> <p>2.2 Tools and training material targeting the current inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for climate change risk and adaptation integration (NCCC) developed.</p> <p>2.3 Policy options to include climate change risk and adaptation measures for sectoral policies and plans (water, agriculture and disaster and conflict prevention) developed and proposed.</p> <p>2.4 Capacities developed to implement the national climate change adaptation strategy and climate proofed sectoral plans.</p>
Component 3. Practices for water resources and watershed management piloted and tested in selected project sites	
3. Reduction of climate change vulnerability in the selected project sites through local institutional capacity building and concrete interventions for improved water use efficiency	<p>3.1 Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in the irrigated agricultural sector through cost efficient water infrastructure and irrigation technologies implemented in Badakhshan Province.</p> <p>3.2 Pilot demonstration to build resilience in the dryland agricultural sector through drought-resilient crops, water harvesting and catchment restoration measures implemented in Balkh Province and Badakhshan Province.</p> <p>3.3 Pilot demonstrations to build resilience in rural peri-urban communities through restoration of aquatic zones in Daykundi Province.</p> <p>3.4 Creation and institutional strengthening of water management associations by training members on integrated water resources management and ecosystem based adaptation in Bamyán District and other pilot areas.</p>
Component 4. Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices	
4. Increased knowledge of good practices on increasing resilience to climate change-induced risks to water resources	<p>4.1 Project lessons captured in, and disseminated through a project specific web site, the Global Adaptation Network (GAN) and the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN).</p> <p>4.2 Project knowledge shared with other countries in the region facing similar climate-induced drought and flooding hazards.</p> <p>4.3 Project knowledge for national flood and drought prevention</p>

	<p>incorporated into training approaches and materials.</p> <p>4.4 Awareness raising activities on climate change-induced risks to water resources and adaptation for local communities and key national policymakers delivered using appropriate means.</p> <p>4.5 Resource mobilization strategy developed for replication of project lessons and demonstrations in other locations of Afghanistan.</p>
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6. In addition to the NAPA priorities of Afghanistan, the project was also designed to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7 for Afghanistan, as well as contributing towards the achievement of (i) the Afghanistan National Development Strategy; (ii) the National Agriculture Development Framework; and (iii) the Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Executing Arrangements

7. UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI)/ Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) is the Implementing Agency (IA) for the project and National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) of Afghanistan is the Executing Agency (EA) for the project. Through a letter dated 22 May 2012, appended in project document (Appendix 21), NEPA has authorized UNEP DEPI/Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) to provide execution support to the project. UNEP DEPI/PCDMB was to work closely with NEPA to ensure that national capacity is built to enable the execution of similar GEF/LDCF projects in the future. Please refer to diagram below for the project management structure.

LDCF Project

Execution Agency:

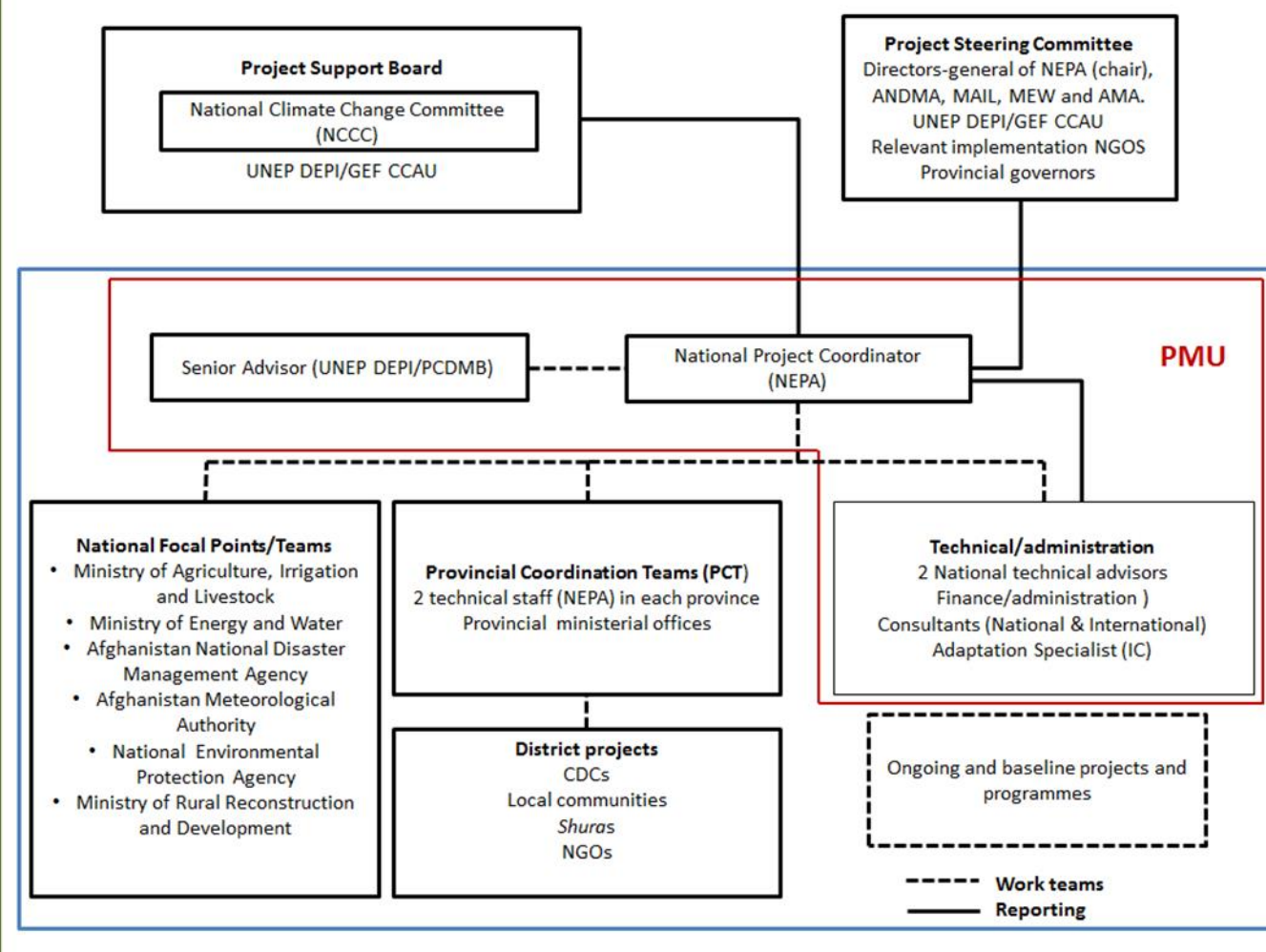
National Environmental Protection Agency - NEPA (with execution support from UNEP's Department for Environmental Policy Implementation/Afghanistan's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch) – UNEP DEPI/PCDMB

Roles: Chair of PSC, financial management, procurement and legal responsibility.

Implementing Agency:

UNEP's Department for Environmental Policy Implementation/GEF Climate Change Adaptation Unit – UNEP DEPI/GEF CCAU

Roles: Oversight, leadership and technical assessment of project outputs, products and deliverables. Ensuring that the UNCT is informed of project progress.



Project Cost and Financing

Component	Outcome	GEF LDCF Financing	Co-finance	Total
1. Climate change risk assessment, monitoring and forecasting information	Increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment, monitoring and forecasting of climate change-induced risks to water in	929,379	1,200,000	2,129,379

	Afghanistan			
2. Climate change adaptation and response strategies	Climate change risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes	719,250	1,920,000	2,639,250
3. Practices for water resources and watershed management piloted and tested in selected project sites	Reduction of climate change vulnerability in the selected project sites through local institutional capacity building and concrete interventions for improved water use efficiency	2,498,455	8,920,000	11,418,455
4. Adaptive learning and dissemination of lessons learned and best practices	Increased knowledge of good practices on increasing resilience to climate change-induced risks to water resources	707,516	1,300,000	2,007,516
5. Monitoring and evaluation		135,500	0	135,500
6. Project management		399,900	1,060,000	1,459,900
Total Project Costs		5,390,100	14,400,000	19,790,000

Implementation Issues

8. Issues flagged up by the UNEP Task Manager when asked why a mid-term evaluation (managed by the UNEP Evaluation Office) instead of a mid-term review (managed by the UNEP Task Manager) is requested:

- i) The project is in a high risk country and hence has been rated as risky in the PIR due to the current security situation and political instability in Afghanistan;
- ii) The project is executed through the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) with execution support from UNEP DEPI Post conflict and Disasters Management Branch (PCDMB) country offices in Afghanistan. This arrangement is new and involves UNEP playing a role in execution within the same Division of UNEP. The project would like to conduct an independent evaluation on whether or not this is working;
- iii) This is the first NAPA implementation project for Afghanistan and hence will set the trend for further development and execution of other such projects in Afghanistan and in other post conflict countries with PCDMB in general.

Risks mentioned in PIR¹⁴s:

- i) The political and security situation in Afghanistan remains unpredictable and volatile at both national and provincial levels, particularly due to national presidential elections and transfer of power spanning (at minimum) March to November 2014;
- ii) Recruitment of international and national staff and consultants is challenging due i) the unwillingness of many international experts to come to a country in conflict like Afghanistan, ii) low capacity and experience, respectively of national consultants.

¹⁴ PIR June 2015

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

9. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy¹⁵ and the UNEP Programme Manual¹⁶, the Mid-term Evaluation of the project *Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan* is undertaken approximately half way through project implementation to analyse whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required. The 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. 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. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

10. It will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the evaluation consultant as deemed appropriate:

- (a) To what extent has the project increased capacity and knowledge base for assessment monitoring and forecasting of climate change-induced risks to water in Afghanistan?
- (b) To what extent are climate change risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes in Afghanistan as a result of the project?
- (c) To what extent has the project contributed to reduction of climate change vulnerability in the selected project sites?
- (d) To what extent has the project enhanced knowledge of good practices on increasing resilience to climate change-induced risks?

Overall Approach and Methods

11. The mid-term evaluation of the project will be conducted by two independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the Evaluation Office of UNEP (EOU) in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager, the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Climate Change Sub-programme and the UNEP GEF Coordination Office.

12. The evaluation 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 consultants maintain close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.

13. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following (but not limited to):

- (a) **A desk review of:**
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia NAPA of Afghanistan; Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Afghanistan National Agriculture Development Framework, Afghanistan Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Afghanistan 2010-2013 and 2015-2019; project documents of similar projects implemented by UNEP in Afghanistan, such as *Promoting Improved Ecosystem Management in Vulnerable Countries for Sustainable and Disaster-Resilient Development and Climate Governance in Afghanistan*;

¹⁵ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁶ http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf

- 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 and relevant correspondence;
 - Documentation on project outputs;
 - Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.
- (b) **Interviews (individual or in group) with:**
- UNEP Task Manager;
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer and financial assistant;
 - National Project Coordinator (NPC) and other members of the Project Management Unit (PMU);
 - Climate Adaptation Specialist;
 - Project Support Board (PSB);
 - Project Senior Advisor and technical advisors;
 - Members of the project Steering Committee;
 - Other relevant staff at DEPI Climate Change Adaptation Unit;
 - Other relevant staff at DEPI Post-conflict and Disaster Management Branch in Geneva and Afghanistan;
 - Relevant staff at UNEP GEF Coordination Unit and the GEF Secretariat;
 - Other relevant staff at project partner institutions, including relevant staff at the Executing Partner Agency National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan and other agencies including Ministry of Rural Development and Rehabilitation, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (ANDMA), Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Afghan Meteorological Agency (AMA);
 - Representatives of the village councils where the project demonstration components are being implemented;
 - Other relevant resource persons such as national and international consultants who were contracted by the project.
- (c) In addition, the evaluation will use surveys, participation in relevant events, webinars and other information gathering tools as relevant and feasible to collect material for the evaluation.
- (d) The evaluation consultant will visit Afghanistan to meet with key project stakeholders and visit the project demonstration sites in Bamyán, Balkh, Badakhshan and Daykundi.

Key Evaluation principles

14. 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 is not possible, the single source will be mentioned without attribution to individuals. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

15. 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.

16. **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.

17. **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.

18. **Theory of Change (ToC).** UNEP project evaluations make use of ToC analysis to help assess several evaluation criteria. The ToC of a project describes 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 human living conditions). The ToC also presents any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called 'intermediate states'. The ToC further describes the external factors that influence change along the major impact 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.

19. A ToC is best presented as a narrative accompanied by a diagram. A diagram is often useful to show an overview of the causal pathways, the cause-to-effect relationship between different results / changes, and where the drivers and assumption intervene along the results pathways. It is also a great tool for discussing the ToC with project stakeholders. The narrative, however, will explain how or why one result is expected to lead to another, and should also present the roles of the main stakeholders in the change processes and how they can be affected by the changes resulting from the project intervention.

20. The evaluation will reconstruct the ToC of the project at design and at evaluation, based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. Verifying, amending and updating the problem analysis at the origin of the project will be an essential first step in reconstructing the ToC. The evaluator is expected to discuss the problem analysis and reconstructed ToC with key stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain his/her understanding of the project context, the impact pathways, the roles of various stakeholders and the validity of drivers and assumptions described in the ToC (Annex 8 proposes an approach for reconstructing the ToC of a project at design and at evaluation).

21. Theory of Change analysis is used to assess an intervention's causal logic, effectiveness and likelihood of impact, but also to help assess many other evaluation criteria. For example, it can help to verify alignment of the project with UNEP's Programme of Work and the Sub-programme's Theory of Change, and help to assess the extent to which the project intervention responds to stakeholder priorities and needs. In addition, ToC analysis can support the assessment of sustainability and up-scaling by providing better understanding of the relative importance of outputs, outcomes, drivers and assumptions, along with the role of stakeholders, in sustaining and up-scaling higher level results. ToC analysis is also useful to assess adaptive management undertaken by the project to respond to changes in context and deal with false assumptions.

22. **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. This would include reviewing the theory of change of the project and the 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.

23. 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.

24. 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. A roundtable Knowledge Management event in Kabul shall take place as part of the Evaluation Mission learning framework.

Evaluation criteria

Strategic relevance

25. 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.

26. The evaluation will assess whether the project was in-line with the GEF Climate Change focal area's strategic priorities and operational programme(s). 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.

27. The evaluation team can use the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC to verify the alignment of the project with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programmes of Work (PoW) and Programme Framework documents¹⁷ for the period covered by the intervention. The evaluation will assess whether the project is intended to make a tangible/plausible contribution to any of the EAs specified in the MTS 2010-2013 and 2014-2017 and/or outputs in the respective PoWs, and whether its ToC is aligned with the relevant Sub-programme's Theory of Change presented in the Programme Framework document.

28. Also, the problem analysis allows the evaluation team to verify whether the ToC at design took into account the whole complexity of issues the project set out to address, or whether some important elements were ignored or underplayed. Similarly, the updated problem analysis (needed to reconstruct the ToC) can be used to verify whether any revisions to the project's intended results reflected in the revised ToC (e.g. updates to the project logical framework) took into account any changes in the problem situation and the project context that occurred during the lifetime of the project.

29. 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:

1. *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*¹⁸. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
2. *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 Gender Equality (GE) norms and agreements as reflected in the UNEP Gender Policy and Strategy, as well as to regional, national and local strategies to advance gender equity and human rights?
3. *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.
4. *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.

¹⁷ UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes [known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs)] of the sub-programmes. Programmes of Work are biennial planning documents that set out, for each Sub-programme (SP), the desired outcomes (known as Expected Accomplishments) and outputs. Programme Framework documents are prepared for each sub-programme and present the overall sub-programme's Theory of Change.

¹⁸ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

5. *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 Environmental, social and economic safeguard (ESES) requirements complied with¹⁹?
30. Based on an analysis of project stakeholders, the evaluation should assess the relevance of the project intervention to key stakeholder groups.

Achievement of Outputs

31. 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 Project Document and any modifications/revisions later on during project implementation, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.
32. While the assessment of achievement of outputs should cover all programmed outputs at design and those outputs added by possible project revisions, it is often impossible to assess all project outputs with the same level of detail. The reconstructed ToC can be used to determine what project outputs are most essential for achieving the project outcomes, and also to establish the minimum characteristics and quality requirements for the project outputs so that they can provide their expected contribution to the project outcomes. The assessment of the achievement of outputs can then focus on the most critical outputs, and verify whether these meet the requisite characteristics and quality.
33. The evaluation should 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 to promote their ownership and use?

Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

34. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.
35. 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.
36. 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).
37. 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.
 - (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach²⁰. 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

¹⁹ Whilst the evaluation should look at how the project addressed ESES, it should take into account that the project was designed and approved before UNEP's ESES tool was released and hence was not compliant to the ESES requirements.

²⁰ Guidance material on Theory of Change and the ROtI approach is available from the Evaluation Office.

changes in turn to 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 document²¹. 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 human rights (HR) and gender equity (GE) considerations 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 the HR and GE principles (e.g. new services, greater responsiveness, resource re-allocation, etc.)

Sustainability and replication

38. 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 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.

39. The evaluation team can use the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC to see whether sustainability has been built into the impact pathways and whether the necessary drivers and assumptions (external factors and conditions) affecting sustainability have been adequately considered in the project's intervention logic. The evaluator should assess how likely the sustainability of direct outcomes (derived from the reconstructed ToC) is, and what the relative importance is of the direct outcomes to sustain higher level changes. Indeed, as outcomes relate most often to individual and institutional capacity building, they are often by themselves expected to ensure sustainability. For instance, a set of new regulations could be at the basis of a lasting change in how a natural resource is being managed. In addition to looking at the direct outcomes, the evaluation team will further assess sustainability of changes at intermediate state and impact levels by verifying the presence of drivers and validity of assumptions (derived from the reconstructed ToC) that affect sustainability of higher level results, considering their relative importance. Many drivers and assumptions required for progressing along the causal pathways from outputs to impact are also required for sustaining positive changes. Those external factors affecting sustainability are categorized in socio-political factors, financial factors, institutional factors and environmental factors:

- (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 sustain project results? 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

²¹

Or any subsequent **formally approved** revision of the project document or logical framework.

- stakeholders? To what extent has the integration of human rights and gender equity 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 resources²² 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?

40. **Catalytic role, replication and up-scaling.** 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) *catalysed 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 catalysing 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 catalyse change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

41. *Replication* is defined as the repetition of project approaches or application of project lessons in different geographic locations, while *up-scaling* is defined as the repetition of project approaches or application of project lessons in the same area, but on a much larger scale. Both replication and up-scaling should be undertaken by other actors and be funded by other sources than the project itself.

42. ToC analysis can help with the assessment of replication and up-scaling potential of an intervention in a similar way it can help with the assessment of sustainability, except that here, the evaluator should focus on those direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions that are most necessary for replication and up-scaling of project results. The evaluation team can thus use the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC to see whether replication and up-scaling have been built into the causal pathways and whether the necessary drivers and assumptions (external factors and conditions) promoting replication and up-scaling have been adequately considered in the project's intervention logic. To assess the likelihood of replication and up-scaling, the evaluators will assess the relative importance of direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions (derived from the reconstructed ToC) for enabling replication and up-scaling, and verify to what extent the most influential ones have been achieved or are present. The reliability of this assessment can be enhanced by looking for early evidence of replication or up-scaling during the project lifetime.

²² Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the national budget, public and private sectors, development assistance etc.

Efficiency

43. 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 secured budget and time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. The evaluation will describe the process of drafting, agreeing and signing of legal instruments and assess the efficiency of the processes. The evaluation will also describe the process of cash flows; the fluency and clarity of processes and the timeliness of receipt of funds. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions.

44. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which human rights and gender equity were allocated specific and adequate budget in relation to the results achieved.

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

Factors and processes affecting project performance

46. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focuses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders²³ 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?

47. The ToC of a project can be used to assess several aspects of project design, and, as a result, for assessing how well stakeholders were likely involved during project design processes. The UNEP Programme Manual recommends that all projects are designed on the basis of a thorough situation analysis with the development of a problem tree. This problem tree should then be used by the designers to develop the ToC of the project, by inverting problems into positive changes and conditions, and determining which changes and conditions the project will focus on. The necessary changes and conditions that are not part of the project's focus should then be considered as external factors affecting impact (either drivers or assumptions).

48. The evaluators can assess the quality of the project's ToC by comparing the ToC at design with the reconstructed ToC and determine, among other things, whether project outputs are logically connected (from cause-to-effect) to intended outcomes, and whether intended outcomes are logically connected to expected impact. They will check whether all essential outputs and outcomes have been taken into account in project design, and whether all necessary drivers and critical assumptions have been adequately considered. An important aspect here is to assess whether the project's focus is appropriate vis-à-vis: i) UNEP's mandate, programme of work and comparative advantages; ii) government and other stakeholder priorities; iii) what causal pathways are expected to most strongly contribute to impact; iv) resources available (including time); and v) what is being addressed by other actors (to find complementarities and synergies, and avoid duplication). Also, the evaluators should verify whether appropriate strategies have been built into project design to promote the drivers and manage the risks of possibly invalid assumptions. As noted above, drivers and assumptions cannot only affect the likelihood of impact, but may also play a major role in sustainability and replication and up-scaling.

²³ 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.

49. The evaluators can also use the reconstructed ToC to assess the quality of the stakeholder analysis in the project document, by verifying whether key stakeholders have been properly identified. With the help of the reconstructed ToC, they can also assess whether sufficient analysis is provided on how different stakeholders can affect or be affected by project results; the nature of relationships that exist among stakeholders; and how they should be incorporated into project design (as partners, beneficiaries, champions, victims, resisters etc.). On the basis of the assessment of the project focus and the stakeholder analysis, the evaluation team could also draw some conclusions on how well stakeholders were likely involved during project design.

50. **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:

- (g) 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?
- (h) 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.
- (i) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (j) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the UNEP Task Manager and project steering bodies.
- (k) 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.

51. The ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC can help understand the exact role of the project management team in delivering the project outputs and pushing change along the different causal pathways. The evaluation team can further assess whether the project team has put sufficient effort in promoting the drivers presented in the reconstructed ToC. Also, a comparison of the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC can help assess adaptive management by the project to respond to a changing context and react to invalid assumptions.

52. **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 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:

- (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?
- (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 (e.g. strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in environmental decision making?

53. The evaluation team can refer to the reconstructed ToC to verify whether it includes an approach for sharing information and cooperation with partners, national/local project stakeholders and other UNEP units, projects and programmes. Also, the reconstructed ToC at evaluation, stakeholder analysis and partner analysis should assist the evaluator 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, and should help to answer many of the questions asked above.

54. **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?

55. **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 the project Steering Committee:

- (a) To what extent has the Government of Afghanistan assumed responsibility for the project and supported 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?

56. **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. 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).
- (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.

57. 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.

58. **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.

59. 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?

60. **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 two 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 logical framework 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 human rights and gender equity (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.

61. The ToC of the project can help with assessing the quality of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, and how information gathered by the M&E system was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability, replication and up-scaling. More specifically, the assessment of the ToC at design based on the project's logical framework and the reconstructed ToC can help with the assessment of the quality of the logical framework (original and possible updates) as a planning and monitoring instrument. The quality of the ToC at design can also assist in the assessment of the adequacy of baseline information, for instance on the problem context, lessons learned from previous experience on what works and does not work and the capacity of partners.

62. The evaluators can compare the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC to verify whether monitoring findings have been used to bring possible adjustments to the project focus, increase attention on key drivers and put in place measures to deal with possible false assumptions, in other words whether the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

The Evaluation Consultant

63. For this evaluation, the Evaluation Office of UNEP will contract an independent evaluation consultant. The evaluation consultant should have a minimum of 10 years of technical and evaluation experience, including using a theory of change approach in evaluation; and a broad understanding of climate change adaptation, ecosystems management, dryland management, dryland agriculture, and working in least developed countries and in post-conflict countries.

64. The evaluation consultant will be responsible for data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the main report for the evaluation. The evaluation consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

65. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that she/he has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize her/his independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, she/he will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

66. The evaluation consultant 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.

67. 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.

68. 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.

69. 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).

70. 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.

71. 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 (See Annex 10 for a template)

72. 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.

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

74. **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 author will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

75. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation consultant will submit a zero draft report to the UNEP Evaluation Office (EOU) and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EOU. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EOU will share this first draft report with the UNEP Task Manager, who will alert the EOU in case the report would contain any factual errors. The Evaluation Office will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. 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 EOU for collation. The EOU will provide the comments to the evaluation consultant for consideration in preparing the final draft report, along with its own views.

76. The evaluation consultant will submit the final draft report no later than two weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The consultant will prepare a **response to comments**, listing those comments not or only partially accepted by her/him that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated in the final report. She/he 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 EOU with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

77. **Submission of the final evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by e-mail to the evaluation manager at the UNEP Evaluation Office who will share the report with the Director of the

Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will finalize the report and share it with the project stakeholders and interested divisions and Sub-programme Coordinators in UNEP. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou.

78. As per usual practice, the UNEP EOU 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.

79. 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 consultant 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.

80. 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 EOU within one month. (S)he is expected to update the plan every six month until the end of the tracking period. As this is a mid-term evaluation, speedy implementation of the recommendations is important 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.

Logistical arrangements

81. This mid-term evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EOU on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility to obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, plan for her/his travel in coordination with the Evaluation Office, arrange for their travel visa, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, assistance in demonstration site visits etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

Schedule of the evaluation

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

Milestone	Deadline
Consultants contracted	1 st July 2016
Inception Report	20 th July 2016
Evaluation Mission – 14 days in Afghanistan	29 th July to 10 th August 2016
Zero draft report	2 nd September
Draft Report shared with UNEP Task Manager	12 th September 2016
Draft Report shared with stakeholders	3 rd October 2016
Final Report	21 st October 2016

Annex 1. Consultants' Terms of Reference

The Lead Evaluation Consultant

The lead evaluation consultant will be hired for 1.5 months spread over the period 1 August – 30 October 2016. He will be responsible for conducting the evaluation, in close consultation with the UNEP Evaluation Office, and timely delivery of its outputs as described in the ToR of the evaluation. He will lead the evaluation design, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct a preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (partner survey and user survey);
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the inception report, including comments received from the Evaluation Office.

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of the project;
- keep the project manager informed of the evaluation progress and engage the project manager in discussions on evaluation findings throughout the evaluation process; and
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Office on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered.
- conduct an evaluation mission in Afghanistan and visit the project demonstration sites.

Coordination of the reporting phase, including:

- write the main evaluation report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete and coherent both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Office on comments received and ensure that comments are taken into account during finalization of the main report;
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the evaluation consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- prepare a 2-page summary of the key evaluation findings and lessons.

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Office on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

The evaluation consultant shall have had no prior involvement in the formulation or implementation of the project and will be independent from the participating institutions. (S)He will sign the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

The evaluation consultants will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Evaluation Office through individual consultancy contracts.

Key selection criteria

- Advanced university degree in international development, environmental sciences or other relevant environmental, political or social science areas;
- Extensive evaluation experience, including evaluations in post-conflict and least developed countries and using a theory of change approach;
- Experience in working in post-conflict countries, especially Afghanistan;

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Broad understanding of climate change adaptation issues, watershed management and dryland agriculture, and sound experience in working with developing country governments in developing institutional capacity to combat climate change;
- Knowledge of the UN system and specifically of UNEP;
- Knowledge of the GEF;
- Excellent spoken and written skills in English;
- Attention to detail and respect for deadlines;
- Minimum of 10 years of professional experience.

The fee of the evaluation consultant will be agreed on a deliverable basis and paid upon acceptance of expected key deliverables by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

Costs of travel, including air tickets and daily subsistence allowance will be paid separately.

Visa and security arrangement will be the responsibility of UNEP. Malicious Acts insurance will be the responsibility of UNEP, but medical and travel insurance will need to be arranged separately by the consultant. The consultant must have UN Basic Security in the Field (BSITF), UN Advanced Security in the Field (ASITF) and Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) training certificates in advance of arrival in Afghanistan in order to receive UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) security clearance to travel.

Deliverables:

- Inception report
- Draft main report incorporating Evaluation Office comments as required
- Final main report incorporating comments received from evaluation stakeholders as appropriate, including a “response to comments” annex
- Bulletin summarising evaluation findings (see template in Annex 10).

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverables	Percentage payment
Inception report	20% of fees
Submission and approval of the draft evaluation report	40% of fees
Submission and approval of the final evaluation report	40% of fees

Supporting Consultant

The supporting evaluation consultant will be hired for one month spread over the period 1 August – 30 September 2016. (S)He will be responsible for providing support to the evaluation by participating on the evaluation mission, conducting interviews independently and acting as a translator/co-interviewer with the lead consultant. The supporting consultant will, where needed, assist in collecting documentation to support the evaluation. The supporting consultant will also contribute to the drafting of the main evaluation report by contributing to the section on project background and taking the lead, under the supervision of the lead consultant, on drafting of specific components of the evaluation report. More specifically:

Data collection, including:

- In collaboration with the lead evaluation consultant, contribute to the drafting of evaluation interview questions;
- Conduct evaluation interviews independently during the evaluation mission in accordance to the evaluation framework developed with the lead consultant;
- Assist the lead consultant in evaluation interviews, provide translations when required;
- Assist with access to relevant documentation for the evaluation;
- Assist with translation of documentation as required.

Reporting phase, including:

- Contribute to the drafting of the background section of the main evaluation report;
- Lead drafting of specific aspects of the main evaluation report particularly related to stakeholder engagement, relevance of the project to country and beneficiary needs, and integration of gender equity and human rights principles in the project;
- Contribute to drafting of other specific sections of the main evaluation report, as needed;
- Review and provide comments on the main evaluation report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete and coherent both in substance and style and represents the evidence collected during the evaluation mission;
- Liaise with the Evaluation Office on comments on the draft evaluation report;

Managing relations, including:

- Maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible while maintaining its independence;
- Communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Office on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

The supporting evaluation consultant shall have had no prior involvement in the formulation or implementation of the project and will be independent from the participating institutions. (S)He will sign the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

The evaluation consultants will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Evaluation Office through individual consultancy contracts.

Key selection criteria

- Experience in working in donor-funded projects;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Understanding of climate change adaptation issues;
- Good spoken and written English;
- Attention to detail and respect for deadlines;
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience.

The fee of the evaluation consultant will be agreed on a deliverable basis and paid upon acceptance of expected key deliverables by the UNEP Evaluation Office.

Costs of travel, including air tickets and daily subsistence allowance will be paid separately.

Visa and security arrangement will be the responsibility of UNEP. Malicious Acts insurance will be the responsibility of UNEP, but medical and travel insurance will need to be arranged separately by the consultant. The consultant must have UN Basic Security in the Field (BSITF), UN Advanced Security in the Field (ASITF) and Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) training certificates in advance of arrival in Afghanistan in order to received UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) security clearance to travel.

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverables	Percentage payment
Submission and approval of the draft evaluation report	100% of fees

Contractual arrangements

83. The evaluation consultants will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). The contract stipulates consultant fees only. Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel and communication costs will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

84. By undersigning the Special Services Agreement with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that she/he has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize her/his independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, she/he will not have any future interests (within the six months following completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

85. The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultant agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

86. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these ToRs, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

87. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant's fee by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX II. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

All comments have been discussed and an agreement has been reached between the evaluation team and key stakeholders.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION PROGRAMME AND PEOPLE CONSULTED

Available from the UNEP Evaluation Office.

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ANNEX V. PROJECT COSTS AND CO-FINANCING TABLES

Project Costs

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned) (by 31 December 2015)
Component 1	929,379	156,539*	0:17
Component 2	719,250	420,200*	0:58
Component 3	2,498,455	1,480,000*	0:59
Component 4	707,516	180,000*	0:25
Project management	399,900	100,000*	0:25
M&E	135,500	35,000*	0:26
Total	5,390,000	2,386,739	0:44
Unspent funds (1 Jan 2016)		3,003,261	0:66

* Component cost figures provided by UNEP Country Office (financial statements are not component/output based)

Co-financing

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other* (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)		Total Disbursed 31 Dec 2015 (US\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Grants (GEF)	5,390	5,390	-	-	-	-	5,390	5,390	2,387
Loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Credits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equity investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
In-kind support (NEPA)	-	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	1,000	1,000	500
Other (*)	-	-	13,400	12,400	-	-	13,400	12,400	12,400
- NSP	-	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	10,000	10,000	10,000
- NABDP	-	-	2,400	2,400	-	-	2,400	2,400	2,400
- AgroMET	-	-	600	0	-	-	600	0	0
- RAMA	-	-	400	0	-	-	400	0	0
TOTALS	5,390	5,390	14,400	13,400	-	-	19,790	19,790	15,287

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

ANNEX VI. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS AND LESSONS

Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan (LDCF-1 project)

Results and Lessons Learned

About the Project

The *Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan* project's objective is to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities and build capacity of local and national institutions to address climate change risk. The project is implemented in the period May 2013 – April 2017 with a total budget of US\$ 18.8 million, including a Global Environment Facility (GEF) contribution of 5.4 million US\$. The project is implemented by the UN Environment and executed by Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) with execution support from the UN Environment Post conflict and disasters management branch. The Mid-Term Evaluation was carried out in the period 14 June – 30 December 2016, with a mission to Afghanistan on 24 August – 9 September.

Relevance

Afghanistan has an arid climate and glaciers in the high mountains are the major freshwater source and rural Afghan communities are exceptionally vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, even compared to other Least Developed Countries. However, due to the prolonged conflict and the focus on state-building, peace-building and reconstruction, climate change has not been given much attention until a few years ago, although Afghanistan ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2002 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. The project is the first major climate change project in Afghanistan, and is thus contributing to making climate change more prominent on the national agenda and enhancing the capacity of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to address this emerging challenge.

Performance

The project has made good progress in terms of enhancing the capacities to forecast climate change risks and the knowledge base on climate change in Afghanistan. Similarly, the project has contributed to enhancing the Government's engagement in UNFCCC processes. The capacity-related outcomes are likely to be achieved (if the project is extended), but not to an extent where the stakeholders can fully engage in climate change adaptation without further support. However, the outcome on integration of climate change adaptation into development policies and programmes have only been achieved to a moderate extent and increased attainment would require enhanced engagement at the sector level. Enhanced community resilience is likely to be achieved in Bamyan and Daikundi provinces, but uncertain in Balkh and Badakhshan. The extent to which the project will lead to the intended impact of enhanced resilience of the Afghan society and economy, as well as the sustainability and replication of the project would largely depend on whether external funding and capacity development support can be secured for continuation.

Factors Effecting Performance

The outputs are generally of high quality and well-targeted vis-à-vis the needs of the stakeholders. There is a good buy-in to the project by the implementing partners and stakeholders; they see the value and relevance of the project and are appreciative of the support received, but they tend to see the project as UNEP's project. An important factor behind the results achieved is the process facilitation provided by a highly dedicated and well-qualified UN Environment team, although their role in the implementation has perhaps been overly hands-on. The project has experienced significant delays, which have bearings for the attainment the intended results. Security concerns have caused delays (as is the case for all projects in Afghanistan). Moreover, an overambitious design with too many activities and a too large geographical scope (compared to the available staff resources and stakeholder capacities, and the complexity of the ecosystem-based approach) has contributed to the delays, especially at the provincial level.

Key Lessons Learned

- In fragile states, the situation is unpredictable and several factors can significantly delay or stall implementation and jeopardise the achievement of the intended outcomes. Flexibility to adapt to a changing context should be built into the project design– and significantly more time may be needed than in non-fragile states. Project designs should be realistic and ambition managed – e.g. in terms of the range of activities, the scope of outcomes, and geographical coverage.
- It takes time to create a good understanding of new concepts and approaches, and to develop sufficient capacity for independent implementation of these – even if the capacity development, knowledge management and communication outputs are successfully delivered. Projects should contribute to long term processes and not be seen as stand-alone interventions – and expectations as to what can be achieved should be realistic.
- Field components of projects that are “first movers” engaging in the promotion of new concepts and approaches should first be tested and refined in one or two project sites. This will help ensuring that implementation capacities are not overstretched and that there is enough time and resources to adequately engage, build capacity, test options, and generate results and lessons.

ANNEX VII. CONSULTANT RÉSUMÉS

CV1: Kris Borring PRASADA RAO, Evaluation Consultant

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1971
NATIONALITY: Danish
EDUCATION: MSc Human Geography, University of Copenhagen, 1999
 BSc Geography, University of Copenhagen, 1996
PROFESSION: Partner and Board Member, PEMconsult A/S

COUNTRY EXPERIENCE:

Region	Countries
Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Tajikistan, the Philippines, Thailand
Africa	Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica
Europe/North America	Denmark, Italy, USA, Lithuania, Poland

EMPLOYMENT/ASSIGNMENTS:

Year	Agency/company	Position
2006-present	PEMconsult a/s	Partner and Board Member (since 2011) Core consultant (2006-2010)
<p>International consulting assignments. Main areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme/project planning, design, appraisal, technical advisory, review/evaluation • Thematic studies and analyses • Preparation of policies and guidelines <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sweden</u>: Support for the development of theory of change, results framework and approach to monitoring evaluation and reporting for SIANI Phase III. Client: SEI/SIANI, 2016 • <u>Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia</u>: Global evaluation of EU's Water Facility. Client: EC, 2016 • <u>Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan</u>: Evaluation of the European Union's co-operation with Central Asia. <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: EC, 2015-2016 • <u>Cambodia</u>: Mid Term Review of the EU funded Project: "Sustaining biodiversity, environmental and social benefits in the Protected Areas of the Eastern Plains Landscape of Cambodia". Client: WWF, 2016 • Development of an outcome-impact results monitoring framework for UNEP-DHI, Phase 5. UNEP-DHI Partnership, 2015-2016 • <u>Costa Rica, Denmark</u>: Global Mid-Term Evaluation of the EU funded Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme. <i>Team Leader</i>. UNDP, 2015 • <u>Tanzania, Kenya</u>: Evaluation of Swedish (SMHI) International Training Programs (ITP); Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation 2007-2011. Sida, 2015 • <u>Bangladesh</u>: Evaluation of the development cooperation of Denmark, Sweden and the European Union. Focus area: Climate change and disaster management. Client: EC, 2015 • <u>Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Denmark</u>: Evaluation of the European Union's support to environment and climate change in third countries (2007-2013). Client: EC, 2014-2015 • <u>Uganda, Denmark</u>: Revision of sector guidance note for EU Delegations on mainstreaming of environment and climate change in the agriculture, food security and rural development sectors. Client: EC, 2014 • Mid-term Evaluation of the UNEP-DHI Centre for Water and Environment. Client: UNEP, 2014 • <u>Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Denmark</u>: Global joint donor review of UNDP Cap-Net. <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: UNOPS, 2014 • Quality assurance: Mainstreaming Climate Resilient, Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture within the 		

Year	Agency/company	Position
	Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA). Client: Danida, 2014	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ethiopia</u>: Appraisal Mission: Greening Agricultural Transformation in Ethiopia (GATE) Thematic Programme. Client: Danida, 2014 • <u>India</u>: Preparation of draft Water Policy for Meghalaya State, initial scoping for preparation of draft Water Policy for Nagaland State, technical support for seed sharing project in Nagaland and Meghalaya. Client: GIZ, 2012-2014 • <u>Stockholm</u>: Appraisal of regional drought management project designs by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) in the Horn of Africa and West Africa. Client: Danida, 2013 • <u>Afghanistan</u>: Programme identification mission for support to economic growth and employment. Client: Danida, 2013 • Global programme evaluation of the UNDP Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP). <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: UNDP, 2013 • Quality assurance: Review of bilateral programmes of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Client: Danida, 2013 • <u>Kenya</u>: Mid-term review of Hand in Hand Eastern Africa – Enterprise Development for Rural Families in Kenya. <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: Hand in Hand (Sida funded), 2012 • Preparation of Guidance Note on mainstreaming of environment and climate change into governance, client: EC, 2012 • <u>Brussels</u>: Planning/facilitation of “Hot Topics in Climate Change and Agriculture” seminar. Client: EC, 2012 • <u>Indonesia</u>: Formulation of Environmental Support Programme Phase 3. Client: Danida, 2012 • Quality assurance: Strategic Environmental of the National Sugar Adaptation Strategy for Kenya, client: Particip (for EC), 2012 • Preparation of a strategic and options paper for future Danish support to multilateral land and water institutions and programmes. Client: Danida, 2011-2012 • <u>Bhutan, Laos, Tajikistan, Thailand, Botswana, Kenya</u>: Global Midterm Review of UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative. <i>Environment expert, primary consultant for Asia and CIS country programme reviews</i>. Client: UNDP-UNEP, 2011. • <u>Uganda, South Africa</u>: SWAp and IWRM study: Good practices and lessons learned in the water sector with a focus on water and sanitation. <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: EC, 2011. • <u>Kenya</u>: Appraisal of Natural Resource Management Programme (sector programme) design. Client: Danida, 2009 • <u>Indonesia</u>: Preparation mission for the sector programme formulation process for the Danida Environmental Support Programme 2. Client: Danida, 2006 • Tendering of the identification of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Projects in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Client: Danida, 2006 	
2006-present	Individual Consultant	
	Assignments:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Liberia, Kenya</u>, Denmark: Global evaluation of the “Gender-responsive Climate Change Initiatives and Decision-making” programme phase 2 and 3 (implemented by UNDP-UNEP, IUCN, WEDO) under the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA). <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: UNDP (+IUCN and WEDO), 2013 • <u>Tajikistan</u>: Evaluation of Output 2, Rural Growth Programme (RGP). <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: UNDP, 2013 • <u>Ghana</u>: Support for the rollout of the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach Agenda. Client: FAO, 2012 • <u>Afghanistan</u>: Mid term evaluation of the HALO Trust (NGO) Demining Programme. <i>Team Leader</i>. Client: DFID, 2010 • Technical review of grant application regarding promotion of soybean cultivation in Tanzania. Client: the FAHU Foundation, 2007 • <u>Italy</u>: Desk analysis of approaches, lessons learned, and best practices from 25 IFAD projects in Asia and Latin America supporting indigenous peoples. Review of natural resource management project proposals. Client: IFAD, 2006 • <u>Zimbabwe</u>: IFAD country programme/portfolio supervision. Market linkages, drought tolerant crops, nutrition and economic status for HIV/AIDS affected people, smallholder irrigation, dry areas resource management. IFAD, 2006 	
2009-11	DDRN (Danish Development Research	Senior Adviser (<i>spezialkonsulent</i>)

Year	Agency/company (Network)	Position
Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal point for environment and climate change related strategic activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of SACCNet (Southern Africa Climate Change Network) Interim Steering Committee, facilitating the establishment of SACCNet - Facilitating Climate Change Task Force for Danish researchers and practitioners for sharing current research based knowledge and providing inputs to policy processes • Coordinating Global Value Chains Working Group for Danish researchers and practitioners for discussing, analysing, and promoting the theoretical framework and practical methodologies • Planning and facilitation of workshops, seminars, conferences, and meetings • Facilitating and monitoring member activities and working groups • Assessment of funding applications from members, mainly for events • Forging partnerships and liaising with Danish and international organisations • Managing production of reports (reviews, guidelines, and overviews) by external consultants Missions: <u>Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania</u>		
2008	Oxfam America, Program Management Department USA	Regional Program Manager – Livelihoods Lead
Responsible for support provided for three Regional Offices in Africa. Thematic lead on livelihoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and supervision of technical support for regional offices and programmes in Africa • Linking programming with agency level strategic thinking; providing advisory to HQ and regional livelihoods programmes (agriculture, cotton production and marketing through cotton associations and cooperatives, microfinance and savings groups, water management, natural resource management) • Input to formulation of programme strategies and specific livelihoods projects (food security, water management, agriculture, natural resource management, climate change adaptation, microinsurance). • Contributing to linking Oxfam America's livelihoods development assistance and humanitarian assistance • Managing a team of three Programme Associates plus external consultants Missions: <u>Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Senegal</u>		
2007-2008	DACAAR (the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees), Rural Development Programme Afghanistan	Natural Resource Management Coordinator
Project manager/coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WOL (Water Management, Opium Economy, and Livestock), rural livelihoods research project, (EC funded) - RALF 02-02, promotion of Sustainable Production and Successful Marketing of Saffron as an Alternative to Opium Poppy Cultivation (ICARDA/DFID funded) - RALF 01-03, Village Decision Driven Research Project (ICARDA/DFID funded) • Supervision/management and capacity building of local staff (1 Research Officer, 4 Research Assistants) • Coordination with implementing partners and donors • Planning, managing and supervising field implementation Other tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance and advisory in relation to natural resource management • Strategic natural resource management planning and project formulation • Project design and development of project proposals for EC funding • Reorientation of initial planning and field staff deployment for development of business plans (client: UNDP) • Supervision of consultants • Coordination with partners and partner identification • Preparation of technical reports for donors and partners • Frequent in-country missions to rural areas 		

Year	Agency/company	Position
2002-2005	IFAD (the International Fund for Agricultural Development), East & Southern Africa Division Italy	Associate Country Programme Manager
<p>Thematic officer for water management activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, designing, and supervising regional initiatives and implementation support for water management programmes in the region (technical advisory and capacity building) • Leading design of Improved Management of Agricultural Water in East and Southern Africa (IMAWESA) project (<i>the design received the second highest score out of 12 project designs during external review</i>) • Management of short- and long-term consultants <p>Management of Zimbabwe country programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market Linkages Project - ProFOOD (drought tolerant crops for food security) - Tuli-Lushonkwe Smallscale Irrigation Scheme - Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme - Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Project - South Eastern Dry Areas Project • Project/programme supervision and follow-up • Follow-up on technical and financial reporting • Liaison with partners (bilateral and multilateral donors, government, NGOs, research institutions) • Guidance to NGO partners on design of final project phases and development of phase-out strategies • Management of consultants <p>Other tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support/advice to division and reporting on natural resource management • Support to development of GEF OP-15 sustainable land management project proposals • Midterm review of Forest Resources Management Project, Zambia – thematic report • Study on conservation agriculture to investigate options for future IFAD engagement, Zambia • Facilitation of development and approval of Conservation Agriculture Manual project <p>Missions: <u>Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe</u></p>		
2000-2002	Water & Power Planners a/s	Consultant
<p>International consulting assignments. Main areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and field appraisals of environmental education projects in Thailand and Namibia. • Desk appraisals and tendering of environmental projects in Southern Africa and Eastern Europe: Species and habitat conservation, participatory forest management, environmental education, solid waste management, wastewater management, and environmental investment plans. <p>Missions: <u>Namibia, Thailand, Lithuania, Poland</u></p>		
1997	University of Copenhagen	Master student
<p><u>Ghana:</u> Field work for dissertation. Environmental and food supply problems in the bush-fallow system</p>		

CV2: Doulat Bibi ALIYAR, Supporting Consultant

Experience

Senior Research Assistant, Jan to Dec 2015

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul, Afghanistan

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Working on project teams to carry out a variety of research activities including taking responsibility for fieldwork at sites and writing up field notes.
- Extensive experience in both quantitative and qualitative research.
- Developing and administering surveys, conducting web searches, organizing data into spreadsheets, incorporating experts' comments in the reports and analysing data.
- Writing internal analytic memos, literature reviews; draft sections of research reports; develop PowerPoint's, fact sheets and other research products.
- Assisting Experts during Panels, facilitating Technical validation and Policy Dialogue workshops between AREU, Government, civil society and donor community.
- Attending area seminars and other meetings as necessary with experts.
- Writing Aid memoire for workshops and incorporating the inputs from the aid memoire to the reports.
- Participating in editing of policy recommendation for the research completed.

Research Experience in the following fields:

Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF): *The Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF), developed by the World Bank in partnership with FAO, IFAD, IFPRI, UN Habitat, the African Union, and numerous bilateral partners, is a diagnostic tool to assess the status of land governance at country level using a participatory process that draws systematically on existing evidence and local expertise rather than on outsiders.*

Human Trafficking: *In order to address the issues of Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan, the United States Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) has selected the Security Governance Group (SGG) based in Canada, to lead a three-year project to generate a sustainable Afghan capacity to provide training to security and justice personnel on the problem of trafficking in persons within Afghanistan. SGG is collaborating with AREU for conducting a mapping study with fieldwork (outside of Kabul) that will provide an overview of the problem of human trafficking in the Afghan context and the various initiatives launched to address it. The study will form the foundation for the subsequent curriculum development work.*

Program Manager, August 2013 – Nov 2014

Linda Norgove Foundation, Kabul, Afghanistan

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Management of funds and building relationship with donors and other stakeholder
- Responsible for project cycle management, technical support to the project, focusing on generation of knowledge, practice & methodologies
- Created project spreadsheets for expenses incurred by the organization itself and by the funded projects.
- Responsible for monitoring & evaluation of projects and partner organization's activities as well as creation of variety of monitoring tools and methods.
- Responsible for documentation, report writing, publication of brochures and annual newsletters for the Organization as well as writing narratives of programs for LNF website.
- Implementation, Management and Organization of literacy classes funded by LNF

- As a lady program manager, my role was to build the capacity of grass root level tribal women on gender, health, literacy and other gender related issues.

Volunteer and Leadership Roles

Co-Founder of TechWomen, Afghanistan

TechWomen Afghanistan is a multi-stakeholder platform for women aimed at increasing women's participation in technology, governance, civil society and business through the use of various information communication technology (ICT) disciplines.

- Organizer of the first TechWomen Summit in Afghanistan, which was inaugurated by H.E. Mrs. Bibi Gul Rula Ghani.

American University of Afghanistan

Roles:

- President of the Arête Business Club
- Vice President of Women Club
- Undergraduate Female Representative in the Student Government Association
- Member of the Newspaper Club and the Speech Club

Capabilities

- Excellent communication skills
- Tolerant and easily adaptable to every environment and community
- Administration of human resources
- Evaluating feasibility and suitability of various projects.
- Working experience with different stakeholders

Education

American University of Afghanistan

Bachelor of Business Administration

Language

Dari, Pashtu, English, Urdu, Pamiri

ANNEX VIII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants.

The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
Substantive report quality criteria			
A. Quality of the Executive Summary: Does the executive summary present the main findings of the report for each evaluation criterion and a good summary of recommendations and lessons learned? (Executive Summary not required for zero draft)	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
B. Project context and project description: Does the report present an up-to-date description of the socio-economic, political, institutional and environmental context of the project, including the issues that the project is trying to address, their root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being? Are any changes since the time of project design highlighted? Is all essential information about the project clearly presented in the report (objectives, target groups, institutional arrangements, budget, changes in design since approval etc.)?	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
C. Strategic relevance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention in terms of relevance of the project to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, and UNEP strategies and programmes?	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
D. Achievement of outputs: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
E. Presentation of Theory of Change: Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions and key actors)?	Draft report: Final report:	HS	HS
F. Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives?	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
G. Sustainability and replication: Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?	Draft report: Final report:	MS	S
H. Efficiency: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency? Does the report present any comparison with similar interventions?	Draft report: Final report:	S	S
I. Factors affecting project performance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?	Draft report: Final report:	MS	S
J. Quality of the conclusions: Do the conclusions highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect those in a compelling story line?	Draft report: Final report:	MS	S
K. Quality and utility of the recommendations: Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?	Draft report: Final report:	S	S
L. Quality and utility of the lessons: Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable?	Draft report: Final report:	S	HS
Report structure quality criteria			

M.	Structure and clarity of the report: Does the report structure follow EO guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?	Draft report: Final report:	HS	HS
N.	Evaluation methods and information sources: Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described?	Draft report: Final report:	S	S
O.	Quality of writing: Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)	Draft report: Final report:	HS	HS
P.	Report formatting: Does the report follow EO guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.	Draft report: Final report:	HS	HS
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING			S	HS

The quality of the evaluation process is assessed at the end of the evaluation and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Yes/No
Evaluation process quality criteria		
Q.	Preparation: Was the evaluation budget agreed and approved by the EOU? Was inception report delivered and approved prior to commencing any travel?	Yes
R.	Timeliness: Was a TE initiated within the period of six months before or after project completion? Was an MTE initiated within a six month period prior to the project's mid-point? Were all deadlines set in the ToR respected?	Yes
S.	Project's support: Did the project make available all required documents? Was adequate support provided to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	Yes
T.	Recommendations: Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared? Was the implementation plan adequately communicated to the project?	Yes
U.	Quality assurance: Was the evaluation peer-reviewed? Was the quality of the draft report checked by the evaluation manager and peer reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments? Did EOU complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?	Yes
V.	Transparency: Were the draft ToR and evaluation report circulated to all key stakeholders for comments? Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EOU? Were all comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the EOU and did EOU share all comments with the commentators? Did the evaluator(s) prepare a response to all comments?	Yes
W.	Participatory approach: Was close communication to the EOU and project maintained throughout the evaluation? Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately communicated?	Yes
X.	Independence: Was the final selection of the evaluator(s) made by EOU? Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised?	Yes
OVERALL PROCESS RATING		

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1

The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

ANNEX IX. ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

A.	Project Context and Complexity	YES/NO	Overall: The ProDoc duly recognises that Afghanistan is a high-risk environment, where the ongoing conflict as well as natural disaster can affect implementation. But, the 2014 presidential elections and their potential influence was not considered.	Section Rating ²⁴ : 5
1	Does the project face an unusually challenging operational environment that is likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?	Yes	Afghanistan is severely affected by armed conflicts, insurgency and terrorism. Deteriorating security in project sites is identified in ProDoc as a risk that could hamper implementation.
ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?		Yes	Afghanistan is prone to drought, and mountainous areas also to floods, landslides, and earthquakes. Extreme event (droughts, floods) identified in ProDoc is a risk that can damage infrastructure and ecosystems. At the same time, the focus of the project is to enhance the resilience to the impacts of extreme weather.	
iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?		Yes	President Karzai's term ended in 2014, and President Ghani was elected. The elections caused disruptions to project implementation, i.e. field travel and activities, coordination with government partners. The elections were not considered in the ProDoc.	
B.	Project Preparation	YES/NO	Overall: The ProDoc is providing a clear and comprehensive problem and situation analysis. The stakeholders are mapped, but a full stakeholder analysis is not presented, although elements of it are found in different places of the Pro-Doc. Government stakeholder were duly involved in the design process, but the involvement of other stakeholders appears more limited. Gender (particularly important in Afghanistan) and sustainable development is considered, but vulnerable groups have not been identified.	Section Rating: 4
2	Does the project document entail a clear and adequate problem analysis?	Yes	The ProDoc is providing a clear and consistent presentation of the problem.	

²⁴ Rating system for quality of project design and revision

A number rating 1-6 is used for each section: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking a weighted mean score of all rated quality criteria, see below. (For Project Context and Complexity, replace 'un/satisfactory' with 'un/likely')

3	Does the project document entail a clear and adequate situation analysis?	Yes	A comprehensive analysis and description of the Afghan situation vis-à-vis climate change is provided.	
4	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis?	No	The stakeholder analysis section only mentions that consultations were carried out; there is no mapping or description of the roles and interests of stakeholders. However, the section on institutional, sectoral and policy context does list the main government agencies and briefly describes their mandates and briefly mention they have capacity constraints. Capacity constraints are spelled out with some more detail under the component descriptions.	
5	<i>If yes to Q4:</i> Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation during project design process?	Yes	It is mentioned that stakeholder consultations were carried out in Apr-Dec 2011 in the form of an inception workshop for ministries and government agencies and also meetings with government agencies, DPs, and provincial authorities. Researchers and one NGO participated in the inception workshop. Provinces and project site selection was done in consultation with stakeholders, e.g. selection criteria were decided by stakeholders. A summary of the consultations held is provide in an annex. There has generally been a bias towards consulting government, and limited consultation with civil society and seemingly no consultations with private sector and communities.	
6	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development?	i) Sustainable development in terms of integrated approach to human/natural systems	Yes	The focus of the project is on sustainable NRM and ecosystem management to enhance resilience of rural communities. As such, an integrated approach to human/natural systems is at the heart of the project. The ProDoc states (without further detailing) that: <i>“All project interventions have been developed in accordance with internationally proclaimed human rights, in conformity with UN guidelines. In addition, all activities were developed together with various stakeholders to ensure that no rights or laws are infringed by the proposed activities.”</i>
		ii) Gender	Yes	The ProDoc states that women will specifically be targeted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The project stipulates that at least 30% of the project activity participants should be women, and wherever possible it will engage with and promote women’s shuras and other gender-focussed groups”.</i> <i>“The project will attempt to integrate and develop gender-based groups into community-based activities wherever possible, whilst being careful not to infringe upon strongly held cultural beliefs and roles. Project interventions at a local level will explicitly solicit women’s perspectives and ensure their representation in decisions affecting their livelihood. At least 30% of project participants will be women”</i> The ProDoc also says that M&E indicators will be gender disaggregated and there will be specific gender indicators.
		iii) Indigenous peoples	N/A	The project does not aim specifically to support vulnerable ethnic groups, but the Hazara are the majority population in two of the four target provinces. Vulnerable groups within the communities

				are not identified.	
C	Strategic Relevance		YES/NO	Overall: The relevance of the project vis-à-vis environmental issues is clearly spelled out. There is no reference to UNEP MTS or PoW, GEF OPs or the Bali Strategic Plan, but the project contributes to a number of UNEP objectives, priorities and sub-programmes, especially in relation to CC (CCA), but also in relation to aspects of disaster and conflict (DRR, environmental rehabilitation), ecosystem management (ecosystem services) and environmental governance (climate mainstreaming). South-south sharing is promoted by component 4.	Section Rating: 4
7	Is the project document clear in terms of its relevance to:	i) UNEP MTS, PoW and Sub-programme	No	MTS, PoW, Sub-programmes not mentioned in ProDoc, but there is an annex on UNEP's comparative advantage. The project contributes to a number of UNEP objectives and priorities, and the related sub-programmes, especially in relation to CC (CCA), but also in relation to aspects of disaster and conflict (DRR, environmental rehabilitation), ecosystem management (ecosystem services) and environmental governance (climate mainstreaming).	
		ii) Regional, Sub-regional and National environmental issues and needs?	Yes	The focus is mainly on environmental issues and needs at the national level, but the relevance of the project in relation to these is clearly spelled out.	
		iii) The relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programme(s)? (if appropriate)	Yes	GEF strategic long-term objective addressed by the project is climate change adaptation, which is mentioned in the ProDoc. But there is no reference to GEF operational programmes. The conformity with GEF and LCDF requirements and links to other GEF projects in Afghanistan are adequately described.	
		iv) Key SDG ²⁵ goals and targets	Yes	It is briefly mentioned that the project will contribute to MDG 1 and 7.	
8	Does the project address key crosscutting issues?	i) South-South Cooperation	Yes	Component 4 of the project is dedicated to knowledge management and sharing of experience, including with other countries facing similar challenges – but the focus is on disseminating the project's lessons, not on learning from other countries and mobilising their capacities.	
		ii) Bali Strategic Plan	Yes	There is no description of the project's link to the Bali Strategic Plan, although government capacity building vis-à-vis CCA, water and ecosystem management is central to the project.	
D	Intended Results and Causality		YES/NO	Overall: The intervention logic is generally sound and addresses key institutional and capacity constraints at central, decentral, and community levels. Relevant assumptions and risk are identified but not always placed at the appropriate level (see chapter 5).	Section Rating: 5

²⁵Depending on the date of project approval and type of intervention the MDGs (2015) or Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2020) may stand as alternatives to the SDGs (2030).

			The lead and contributing partners are identified for each output, but their individual roles are not spelled out clearly. The four outcomes are realistic, but may be delayed and take longer than anticipated due to the challenging Afghan context.	
9	Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change?	Yes	The intervention logic is generally sound and well explained in text and results framework (even if not presented as a ToC) and addresses key institutional and capacity constraints at central, decentral, and community levels (see chapter 5). The results framework only presents the objective and outcomes levels, not the goal and output level, but these are described in the text. However, the goal (impact) and project objective (intermediate state) are very similar without a clear differentiation (e.g. scope, scale).	
10	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long term, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the logframe or the TOC?	Yes		
11	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?	Yes	A number of relevant assumptions and risks are presented, some of the assumptions are in reality impact drivers (see chapter 5). They are, however not always presented at the right level in the causal pathway.	
12	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?	Yes	Lead institutions and key partner identified for each output, but the roles are described jointly per activity, and not specifically for each partner.	
13	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?	Yes	The four outcomes are realistic, but outcome 2 (climate change risks integrated into relevant policies, plans and programmes) may take longer than anticipated as policy change processes can take time and be delayed. Moreover, security issues can potentially cause significant delays, in such case an extension may be needed.	
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	YES/NO	Overall: No indicators are identified at the output level, and most outcome indicators are in reality output indicators. Indicators are generally SMART and have targets (those that were not SMART were revised as part of the baseline assessment report). The baseline is described at component level and it is stated that indicator-specific baselines will be established during the first three months of implementation. Monitoring arrangements are clear, but partner involvement appears limited. Budget allocations have been made to key M&E elements.	Section Rating: 4
14	Does the logical framework	i) Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?	Yes	See rows 9 and 10
		ii) Have 'SMART' indicators for	No	No indicators are provided for the outputs in the ProDoc – but the outcome indicators presented are in reality output indicators (e.g. number of people trained, number of training events, maps

	outputs?		produced, equipment provided, toolkits developed), and these are generally SMART (those that were not SMART were revised as part of the baseline assessment report).
	ii)Have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes?	No	Only for outcome 3 are some (but not all) of the indicators somewhat at outcome level for the other outcomes they are output indicators. However, even for outcome 3, they no not fully answer whether the outcome has been achieved (reduced vulnerability). They are generally SMART (those that were not SMART were revised as part of the baseline assessment report).
15	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?	No	The baseline situation is described for each component and the ProDoc specifies that the project will carry out a baseline assessment for the indicators during the first 3 months of implementation.
16	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?	Yes	All indicators have end of project targets.
17	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?	No	The monitoring plan is not a detailed plan, but mainly provides a brief outlines of the M&E with reference to the results framework. Neither the results framework nor the implementation plan contain milestones.
18	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?	Yes	The monitoring arrangements are clear, but seem to involve mainly the PMU and the project coordinator and with somewhat limited involvement of government partners, although it is stated that: <i>"Other partners will have responsibilities to collect specific information to track the indicators"</i> .
19	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress?	Yes	There are allocations for an M&E expert, a baseline assessment, the MTE and the final evaluation.
20	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic?	No	The work plan is divided into outputs, but only mentions <i>"output 1.1"</i> etc., not the actual nature of the outputs, and the work plan thus not easy to interpret, especially since the outputs are also not included in the results framework, but only in the narrative text.
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	YES/NO	Overall: The project management structure is clearly outlined and supported by a clear organigram. Section Rating: 5
21	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?	Yes	The project management structure is clearly outlined and supported by a clear organigram.
22	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined?	Yes	
G	Partnerships	YES/NO	Overall: Project activities appear well suited and planned vis-a-vis capacities and addressing constraints. Section Rating: 4

23	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed?	No	See row 4. But the project activities appear well suited and planned vis-a-vis capacities and addressing constraints.
24	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?	No	See row 12.
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	YES/NO	Overall: Component 4 is dedicated to knowledge management and dissemination of results and lessons. Output 2.2 is dedicated to improving inter-ministerial coordination. Section Rating: 5
25	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?	Yes	There is significant focus on knowledge management, dissemination and awareness raising; - component 4 is dedicated to knowledge management.
26	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders during the project life? If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?	Yes	The NCCC will be supported to strengthen inter-ministerial co-ordination (output 2.2).
27	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project?	Yes	See rows 25 and 26.
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	YES/NO	Overall: The budget is complex with numerous budget lines and it is not structured according to activities and outputs (although it is pegged against outcomes/components), so not easy to compare with the results framework. No obvious gaps were found. Letters confirming co-financing commitments are attached to the ProDoc. Output 4.5 focuses on developing a resource mobilisation strategy for replication. Section Rating: 5
28	Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning at design stage?	No	The budget is complex with numerous budget lines and it is not structured according to activities and outputs (although some expenses relate to specific outputs, e.g. allocations for sub-contracts for pilot projects), although it is pegged against outcomes/components, so not easy to compare with the results framework. But no obvious gaps were found from a quick screening.
29	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic?	Yes	Project co-funding is mainly mobilised through existing large-scale donor-funded rural/local development programmes as well as projects building the capacities of key partner government agencies. Letters confirming their co-financing commitments are attached to the ProDoc. Output 4.5 focuses on developing a resource mobilisation strategy for replication.
J	Efficiency	YES/NO	Overall: The planned outputs and activities appear in sync with the budget. Overall, the duration appears sufficient albeit with a risk of delays. The project is drawing upon Section

			major national programmes (NSP and NABDP) and the exist-ing CC coordination mechanism (NCCC). It seeks to strengthen existing insti-tutions, and engage them in the implementation.	Rating: 5
30	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?	Yes	The planned outputs and activities appear in sync with the budget, including co-funding although security is always a significant added cost in Afghanistan. Overall the duration appears sufficient, although there is always a risk of significant delays in the Afghan context, see row 13.	
31	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	Yes	The project aims at climate proofing existing development initiatives. It is thus drawing upon major national programmes, such as NSP and NABDP, as well as the existing CC coordination mechanism, NCCC. It also draws upon the results of other projects. Moreover, it seeks to strengthen existing institutions, including community organisations, and engage them in the implementation of project activities.	
32	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (ie increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?	Yes	There is a section on cost-effectiveness and how it is achieved by building on existing initiatives – see row 31. The ProDoc anticipates that the targeting of upstream areas will lead to improved provision of water-related eco-system services, which in turn will generate economic benefits for downstream communities.	
33	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date?	No	No comments.	
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	YES/NO	Overall: Six relevant risks are identified in the ProDoc, the two most important are presented in the results framework. The ProDoc states that no negative environmental or social impacts are expected, so no mitigation measures are needed. However, there could perhaps be a risk of negative social impacts (e.g. elite capture). Negative environmental impacts appear very unlikely.	Section Rating: 4
34	Are risks appropriately identified in both the ToC/logic framework and the risk table?	Yes	A couple of risks have been identified in the results framework. See rows 1 and 11, and section 5. Four more risks are identified in the risk table (risk analysis section). They are all relevant, in particular the two presented in the results framework,	
35	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate?	No	A detailed risk log has been responded to, but the ProDoc states that no negative environmental or social impacts are expected, so no mitigation measures are needed. However, while negative environmental impacts are very unlikely, there could perhaps be some risk of negative social impacts (such as elite capture).	
36	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative	No	The ProDoc specifies that no negative environmental footprint is anticipated.	

	environmental foot-print?		
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	YES/NO	Overall: Sustainability is promoted through a) ensuring stakeholder capacity development and ownership (e.g. through their involvement in project design), and b) latching on to existing structures. Project outputs include a resource mobilisation strategy and a national CCA strategy, aiming to promote replication. Section Rating: 5
37	Was there a credible sustainability strategy at design stage?	Yes	Stakeholder ownership is promoted through their involvement in project design. The project focuses on capacity building (incl. learning-by-doing), to enable stakeholders to continue their engagement post-project. The project latches on to existing interventions (NSP and NABDP) and structures.
38	Does the project design include an appropriate exit strategy?	No	It is planned to incrementally reduce the level of international TA and to capacitate national consultants. But otherwise the exit strategy is not that clear.
39	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic action?	Yes	Different CCA options are tested. Moreover, component 4 is dedicated to the dissemination of lessons and best practices, and also has a resource mobilisation strategy for upscaling as an expected output. A national adaptation strategy is another output that will promote replication.
40	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?	Yes	Not explicitly described, but the project is specifically aiming at improving environmental sustainability, and reducing economic and food security vulnerabilities. Moreover one expected output is a resource mobilisation strategy.
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	YES/NO	Overall: No major issues are identified in the ProDoc. All the main issues flagged by the PRC have been addressed. Section Rating: 5
41	Were there any major issues not flagged by PRC?	No	No major issues have been identified in the final ProDoc.
42	What were the main issues raised by PRC that were not addressed?	No	Major issues flagged by the PRC were addressed in line with the PRC recommendations. Some minor issues appear not to have been addressed.

ANNEX X. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1) Strategic relevance:

- Is the project responding to UNEP and GEF strategies and programme of work?
- Is the project responding to needs and priorities in Afghanistan?
- Is the project gender sensitive and socially inclusive?

2) Achievement of outputs:

- Is the project on track in its output delivery?
- Are the outputs completed useful and of good quality?

3) Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results:

- Is it likely that the project will achieve the intended outcomes of each component, as identified in the reconstructed ToC?
- Is it likely that GoIRA after the project will implement policies plans and programmes more effectively vis-à-vis addressing CC risks? (Intermediate state 1 identified in the reconstructed ToC)
- Is it likely that pilot communities will be significantly less vulnerable to the impacts of CC at the end of the project? (Intermediate state 2 identified in the reconstructed ToC)
- Is it likely that the project will make a significant contribution towards enhancing the CC resilience of the Afghan society and economy? (Impact identified in the reconstructed ToC)
- Gender: Is it likely that the project will have a positive influence on women and their CC resilience, in particular in the pilot communities?

4) Sustainability and replication:

- Is the project implementing a clear exit strategy?
- Is GoIRA (especially NEPA) demonstrating strong ownership, cooperation and proactive leadership in project implementation?
- Are there any early signs/examples of upscaling/replication?

5) Efficiency:

- Is implementation on track or are delays threatening the ability to deliver and consolidate project outputs?
- Is the project likely to be fully implemented within the allocated budget?
- Is technical and financial reporting timely and of adequate quality?
- To what extent is the project latching on to and coordinating with existing processes and initiatives to increase efficiency in delivery? (complementarity)

6) Factors and processes affecting project performance:

- Is the project design appropriate and adequately responding to addressing the needs and gaps vis-à-vis achieving its objective?
- Is the project inclusive and truly participatory?
- Is the project implementation and management setup conducive for implementation?
- Are the activities and outputs under component 4 ensuring that the project is visible and that the project results, outputs and lessons are reaching the intended audience?
- Is the project monitoring capturing results and a useful management tool?