



**United Nations Environment Programme**

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project:  
“Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small  
Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover  
Countries (LFCCs)”**

by  
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**Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this report are those of the Evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNEP, or of any individual or organization consulted.

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## List of acronyms & abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
AHEG	Ad Hoc Expert Group
BD	Biodiversity
BSP	Bali Strategic Plan
CCSP	Climate Change Subprogramme
CoP	Convention of the Parties
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
EA	Executing Agency (UNFF Secretariat)
EMSP	(UNEP) Ecosystem Management Subprogramme
EO	Evaluation Office
FFS	Forest Financing Strategy
FP	(UNFF) Facilitative Process
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IA	GEF Implementing Agency (UNEP)
ISC	International Steering Committee
LDC	Least developed Country
LFCC	Low Forest Cover Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
N/A	Not applicable
NCE	No Cost Extension
NFP	National Forest Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review (annual)
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
ROAP	(UNEP) Regional Office of Asia and Pacific
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFFS	United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat

**Table 1: Project Identification Table**

GEF project ID:	4235	Project Type:	MSP
GEF OP #:	GFL-2328-2713-4B56	Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity and Land Degradation
GEF approval date:	27 May 2011	GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	SFM-SP4; SFM-SP7
Expected Start Date:	1 August 2011	Actual start date:	1 November 2011
Planned completion date:	August 2013	Actual completion date:	February 2015
Planned project budget at approval:	US\$ 2,049,222.74	Total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2014:	US\$725,000
Planned Environment Fund (EF) allocation:	NA	Actual EF expenditures reported as of [date]:	NA
Planned Extra-budgetary financing (XBF):	NA	Actual XBF expenditures reported as of [date]:	NA
XBF secured:	NA	Leveraged financing:	NA
GEF Allocation:	US\$ 950,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2014]:	US\$746,177
PDF / PPG GEF cost:	US\$ 49,222.74	PDF co-financing:	US\$ 50,000
Expected MSP/FSP co-financing:	US\$ 1,000,000	Secured MSP/FSP co-financing:	US\$ 1,000,000
First Disbursement:	06 February 2012	Date of financial closure:	Not yet closed
No. of revisions:	2	Date of last revision:	23 January 2014
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	10 April 2013		
Mid-term review/evaluation (planned date):	None planned	Mid-term review/evaluation (actual date):	None carried out
Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	1 December 2014-15 March 2015		



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Evaluation background and methodology**

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Project Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) (hereafter the Project) was undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the degree of achievement and/or likelihood of outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the Project, including their sustainability. The TE took place between 1 December 2014 and 15 March 2015, the timing arranged to coincide with the final administrative and financial planning activities to conclude and close the SIDS-LFCC Project.

The TE was undertaken as a mix of desk reviews of project documents and other relevant literature and studies, and in-depth interviews (face-to-face, by skype or telephone, and by email) with UNEP, UNDESA, UNFFS, and GEFSEC individuals involved in the design, implementation and management of the Project, as well as selected national partner representatives and other international stakeholders, including SFM donors, who have participated in the Project. The Evaluation consultant visited New York in January 2015 to hold interviews with key staff from the UNFF Secretariat and UNDESA, attend the Second Meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad-Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2) on the International Arrangement on Forests (12-16 January 2015), and then travelled to Washington DC to interview members of the GEF Secretariat (GEFSEC).

### **Summary of the main evaluation findings**

#### **A. Strategic relevance:**

The Project was designed to 'kick-start' the UNFF Facilitative Process, although it is consistent with GEF BD and LD Focal Areas, principally through its support for enhanced financing for SFM, and is also relevant (mostly indirectly) to UNEP's mandate, policies and programmes, particularly the Ecosystem Management and Climate Change Sub-programmes. Interviewees stated that there is still a great need for increased financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs so the Project and its results remain relevant to national governments.

#### **B. Achievement of outputs:**

Most outputs were delivered, including four inter-regional workshops, and 45 out of 78 countries participated in at least one workshop. However, there were no national preparatory meetings workshops or national reports and few baseline studies were undertaken. Component I, a series of background studies, was delivered before the Project started, although the associated reports are the first time such information has been compiled for SIDS and LFCCs and consequently valuable. An important product has been a common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) for the SIDS and LFCCs, developed jointly with African and Least Developed Countries. The Project supported (and is a major contributor to) the Facilitative Process website, which provides useful information on SFM financing sources with linkage to donors and aims to create a 'community of practice' among those involved in SFM and its financing.

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

It is difficult to assess the degree of attainment of the Project objectives and outcomes due to lack of appropriate indicators, baselines and targets and a confused project logic, but there is some (mostly anecdotal) evidence of improved awareness of the need for increased SFM financing (restricted

largely to the main forest-sector stakeholders) and ‘political attention’ may have been increased in some (limited) countries. The Project’s goal of increased financing for SFM was not achieved, but this is understandable given the project’s short time frame and limited resources. However, the fact that the Project helps address the implementation of the Facilitative Process, presents clear opportunities for mainstreaming of results. The development and endorsement of a common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS), which is intended to act as a guide for the development of national-level forest financing strategies is a potentially significant achievement, although this remains to be integrated at national level. There was some successful but very limited capacity building on writing effective grant proposals. The interactive FP website, which hosts all the Projects reports and results and has an online forum to help develop a ‘community of practice’ for SFM and its financing, provides a potentially important capacity building tool, and a loose network of stakeholders is beginning to be established at global level through the website.

#### **D. Sustainability and replication:**

There are concerns over sustainability of the Project’s results. Additional efforts are needed to ensure uptake of project results, especially the FFS which needs to be mainstreamed at national level. The future and effectiveness of the recently updated FP website is also uncertain as it is not clear whether it will be sufficiently used as a fund-raising capacity tool, and it will need funding for an additional period to grow its online forum. Institutional capacity is a major issue for some countries, especially for SIDS, which could restrict uptake of project results. The Project has undertaken very limited direct capacity training efforts (through a specific workshop), and the UNFFS itself currently has very limited capacity to deliver projects or any follow-up.

#### **Catalytic role and replication:**

There has been limited evidence of catalysis or replication to date, although this is not surprising given the slow delivery of the Project. However, the Project did influence the design and implementation of two other UNFFS-executed FP projects, strengthening delivery of both, and it contributed indirectly to improving a multi-country Pacific-wide GEF project (Ridge to Reef Project).

#### **E. Efficiency:**

There were no specific cost- or time-saving measures initially proposed for the Project, and there is a question whether some project activities offered good ‘value for money’, e.g. regional workshops. The Project principally built on UNFF agreements and its scheduling was initially arranged to coincide with UNFF meetings, e.g. delivery of reports in time for presentation at UNFF10 in 2013.

#### **F. Factors affecting project performance:**

The Project was originally planned to run from November 2011 to August 2013, but the project experienced delays with its start-up and had a slow delivery. As a result, it was granted a No Cost Extension (NCE) for a 12-month extension to 31 August 2014 with a (final, revised) cost of US\$ 368,677 for the period 2013-2014, using unspent funds from the GEF budget (so again without additional costs to the project).

Whilst it was recognized that the Project did not fit ‘the typical GEF BD and LD project model’, the Project has suffered from a weak causal logic and poor design (focus on outputs, a lack of SMART indicators, absence of baselines, unrealistic targets and expectations) and was heavily influenced by ‘political decisions’. These have handicapped implementation and meant that the Project has not been able to deliver results effectively and on time, e.g. requiring an 18 months extension beyond the original closure date (and even then some activities only just delivered). There was low capacity

within the UNFFS (part-time PM and little direct experience of design or management of major donor projects) and the project's International Steering Committee was ineffective. However, the Project Manager deserves considerable credit for his commitment and efforts, without which the Project would have delivered much less.

There was very limited national ownership of the Project, particularly at the beginning of the Project, and unfortunately no national level preparatory meetings took place due to lack of funds. Essentially the Project was generated from discussions and a general request that came out of the UNFF9 meeting rather than directly by national stakeholders. At international level, some of the key stakeholders, notably FAO and UNCCD, did not engage with the Project in any meaningful way during its implementation. There was also very little engagement by the private sector, NGO community or academia in the Project. Nevertheless, 45 out of 78 countries did send representatives to Project meetings, which given the restrictions and challenges facing the project team can be considered a notable accomplishment.

The Project's communication and public awareness-raising activities are set out in a communication strategy that was only developed in the third year of the Project. The strategy has some weaknesses, particularly in relation to identifying key messages, specific audiences in target countries, and the most effective means to promote the Project's findings. Unfortunately, the almost total absence of baseline data makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the Project's communication strategy and associated materials.

Financial planning was handicapped by the relatively small project budget, the large number of countries that had to be involved and lack of co-financing during the implementation period, and was particularly restricted for national-level activities. The single biggest cash co-financing contribution was spent before the Project began, although this arrangement was approved by GEFSEC (despite objections raised by UNEP).

The relationship between the executing and implementing agencies was troubled initially with misunderstandings on both sides, not helped by communication being limited to emails with no face-to-face meetings between the UNFFS team and the UNEP Task Manager (TM) during the entire project period. However, the UNEP TM provided much useful technical advice on project design and implementation although his advice was not always implemented and much of the basic structure and content of the GEF Project was already determined before UNEP became the IA.

The project's M&E system followed UNEP's standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, although it suffered from a weak design (e.g. non-SMART indicators and targets with absent baseline data). Reporting requirements were largely fulfilled throughout the Project, and completing the annual PIR was considered to be particularly valuable as a learning exercise by the project team.

**Table 2: Summary of Evaluation Ratings**

Criterion	Overall Rating
A. Strategic relevance	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 TOC	Moderately Satisfactory
2. Likelihood of impact using ROTI approach	Moderately Unlikely
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	Moderately Unsatisfactory

Criterion	Overall Rating
D. Sustainability and replication	
1. Socio-political sustainability	Moderately Likely
2. Financial resources	Moderately Unlikely
3. Institutional framework	Moderately Unlikely
4. Environmental sustainability	Moderately Likely
5. Catalytic role and replication	Moderately Unsatisfactory
E. Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory
F. Factors affecting project performance	
1. Preparation and readiness	Unsatisfactory
2. Project implementation and management	Moderately Satisfactory
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships	Moderately Satisfactory
4. Communication and public awareness	Moderately Satisfactory
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Unsatisfactory
6. Financial planning and management	Moderately Satisfactory
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	Moderately Satisfactory
8. Monitoring and evaluation	Moderately Unsatisfactory
i. M&E design	Unsatisfactory
ii. M&E plan implementation	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall project rating	Moderately Satisfactory

### Summary of recommendations and lessons learned

The following is a summary of the main recommendations that have been generated from the evaluation findings:

Recommendation #1	
Context:	The Projects's logic was confused and there was little experience among the UNFFS team on project design, including design of logframes, indicators, etc. A Theory of Change (ToC) would have been useful in better articulating the Project's aims and objectives and guided important choices made during its design and implementation.
Recommendation:	All GEF projects managed by UNEP should employ a ToC approach during project design to ensure greater consistency in their internal logic and to more effectively identify and address assumptions and drivers that can influence the change pathways. This should be presented as an annex in UNEP-GEF project documents <sup>1</sup> .
Responsibility:	UNEP
Time-frame:	Design phase in future GEF projects

Recommendation #2	
Context:	The background studies developed under Component I, while available on the FP website, are not in an easily useful form. They are lengthy reports not suitable for decision-maker or donor audiences.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that short (2-4 page) briefing sheets are developed from each of the main initial background studies (produced under Component I) with the key findings and

<sup>1</sup> The UNEP TM commented that 'This could best be achieved by making modifications in the UNEP Project Document template, which is an integral part of the contracts established on the project design process.'

	messages produced in appropriate format for (i) potential donors of SFM, (ii) political decision-makers and (iii) in a more 'glossy' form for a general audience (to better promote overall Project results).
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU
Time-frame:	Before August 2015

Recommendation #3	
Context:	The project's Communication Strategy is weak in several places and needs to be made more specific.
Recommendation:	Review and revise the project's Communication Strategy to make it more effective, with clearer presentation of the key messages to be promoted, identification of individual institutions to be targeted and specific means to target each, and a budget and delivery plan with roles and responsibilities so its implementation is clearly set out. It is suggested that this is undertaken by a professional consultancy company/consultant with experience in public relations and social marketing from outside the UN system <sup>2</sup> .
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU and communication consultancy company experienced in PR
Time-frame:	Before September 2015

Recommendation #4	
Context:	The common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) is a valuable deliverable from the Project but it has yet to be integrated at the national level. Furthermore, it is not clear whether it would be best to develop specific national level forest financing strategies or to mainstream key recommendations into existing policy processes and programmes. In addition, the FFS is still little known by donors and decision-makers and not currently in the best format for uptake.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the UNFFS examines how best to develop national strategies from the FFS and/or identify and mainstream relevant recommendations from the FFS into appropriate national and regional processes in 3-4 target countries (the SIDS-LFCC project workshop countries, as relationships have already been established in these), and from this develop a strategy to implement the results, including a fund-raising plan. In addition, key recommendations and messages should be extracted and synthesized from the FFS to develop effective briefs for policy makers and donors to encourage uptake and funding of the FFS recommendations, as well as production of a short 'glossy' publication for a more general audience).
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU
Time-frame:	Within three months of closure of the Project <sup>3</sup>

Recommendation #5	
Context:	There were few direct building capacity measures in the Project even though this was recognised as a key weakness for SIDS and LFCCs at the design stage. The workshop which took place in New York in September 2014, covering how to use the FP website and how to write effective grant applications to raise funds for SFM, was greatly

<sup>2</sup> The UNEP TM commented that 'USD 72,000 was allocated in the project budget (2012) to just do that, yet UNFF decided to reduce that to USD 35,000 in 2013, and which was largely used for in-house development of the strategy; and which apparently was not leading to the desired strategy and results'. There is therefore a question on whether additional funds should be spent on this activity given the history. In the view of the evaluation consultant, the situation at UNFF Secretariat has changed in terms of capacity to implement activities and also there is a much greater appreciation of the value and importance of communication work and need to seek outside professional assistance to ensure communication is effective.

<sup>3</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

	<p>appreciated by participants but only a small number were able to attend (due to budgetary restrictions and availability of potential participants). There was a call for more of these workshops to enable other countries to participate as it was felt to be particularly relevant and valuable, although an online course for training on the use of the FP was considered an appropriate alternative.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that the grant-writing workshop undertaken in New York in September 2014 is repeated in two regions (one workshop for SIDS and LFCC each, and through regional organizations as cheaper and likely to include more specific and relevant examples for participants), with one workshop held in French, for participants not able to attend the NY workshop. It is also recommended that the UNFFS should consider developing an online training course for use of the FP website<sup>4</sup> (based on presentation by the PM at the AEHG2 meeting in New York in January 2015) and made accessible to all members of the FP website. A web-based training platform would likely be more cost-effective than regional or NY-based workshops).</p>
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU and workshop trainers
Time-frame:	Within three months of closure of the Project <sup>5</sup>

Recommendation #6	
Context:	<p>Baseline values on awareness and understanding of the need for SFM financing (including the value of SFM) were largely absent (only the fourth workshop in Fiji collected these and did not follow-up to examine any change) and levels have not been assessed after project activities as requested by UNEP, so it is very difficult to determine how effective the awareness-raising focus of the Project has been.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that the UNFFS undertake a post-project assessment of the state of awareness of SFM and financing requirements to examine how much was retained from the Project's workshops to determine whether participants feel their awareness and knowledge has changed with questions on how participants have used the information/knowledge since the workshops. In the absence of baseline data from most of the Project's workshops, appropriate questions could include "Has your level of awareness changed a) lot b) a little c) not at all, or d) decreased, as a result of your participation in the Project?" If UNFFS intends a follow-up project to develop and implement national-level forest financing strategies such information would be important.</p>
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU, with input on design of questionnaires from M&E and a communications consultant
Time-frame:	Before end September 2015

Recommendation #7	
Context:	<p>The future of the FP website, which hosts the Project's results and offers an online forum for stakeholders that aims to create a community of practice for SFM financing, is uncertain and needs clear direction and with a strategy to ensure its sustainability (including issue of its financing). The new FP website's new interactive facility has only just been launched and is at a critical stage.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that a strategic and financing plan is developed for the FP website, setting out its aims and development, resources needed and budget, and identifies possible sources of sustainable financing for the next 3 years. UNFFS should consider extending the existing contract of the IT consultant currently providing support for the</p>

<sup>4</sup> Similar webinars have been developed by the Foundation Centre, New York - <http://foundationcenter.org/newyork/>.

<sup>5</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

Responsibility:	maintenance and development of the website <sup>6</sup> UNFFS/PMU
Time-frame:	Within three months of closure of the Project <sup>7</sup>

Recommendation #8	
Context:	The Project still has substantial (uncommitted) funding remaining (c.US\$200,000). As it stands, these funds need to be returned to GEF. However, there are a number of recommendations in this report that will require finance. The Project has already had one 12-month NCE and been given an additional 6 months to wrap up Project activities by UNEP so a further NCE for the Project is not appropriate. Furthermore, NCEs involve additional costs/overheads for UNEP, which it has to meet from its own funding (there are no additional GEF financing for this), and UNEP has already made substantial additional investment in the delivery of the Project. In addition, implementation of a new administration/IT management system within UNEP (UMOJA) means that no new contractual arrangements will be possible until at least August 2015, which would represent a gap in project activities of almost a year. Consequently, GEFSEC should decide what to do with the remaining (still substantial) funds for this project.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that a discussion is held between GEFSEC and UNFFS on the fate of the remaining GEF funds, and whether they could be used to fund some of the recommendations in this report as a follow-up project through a direct access arrangement between GEFSEC and UNFF (so not involving the IA in any future management/administration role). The unspent resources could be used in respect of implementation of Recommendations #5 and 7 above. A proposal for the use of such funds should be set out in a new project document, with clear targets, indicators, etc, and follow standard World Bank fiduciary standards. However, UNEP first needs to close the Project and confirm the remaining funds for return to GEFSEC before any request to GEFSEC can be made.
Responsibility:	GEFSEC, UNDESA, UNFFS/PMU, UNEP
Time-frame:	Written agreement on fate of remaining GEF funds before end July 2015

Recommendation #9	
Context:	The Project's Terminal Report is comprehensive and detailed and provides a good overview of the Project's results. However, it is weak in some areas. In addition, it is not in the best format for general release, e.g. as a record for the Project participants or other stakeholders.
Recommendation:	The Project's Terminal Report should be revised with a clear analysis of the achievement of the Project's objective and outcomes and a financial summary statement <sup>8</sup> , and it is recommended that the 'self evaluation' and lesson learning sections are revised based on a formal UNFFS lesson learning exercise for the Project (following operational completion, after the implementation of the recommendations of this report). It would also be useful to produce a separate, shorter and more 'glossy' version of the Terminal Report to present the Project's main results to those who have been involved and to

<sup>6</sup> The UNFF Project manager commented that one outcome of UNFF11 (May 2015) was 'a call for the FP to serve as a clearing house mechanisms, (consequently) the scope and content of the FP website have to be changed substantively. This requires much more work beyond "having a financing plan" and takes longer time'. Given the changed situation the evaluation suggests that this recommendation is reviewed in light of the likely changes following UNFF11 as part of the management response to this evaluation report.

<sup>7</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

<sup>8</sup> According to the UNEP TM this will be included as part of the project's closing revision conducted on all projects by UNEP. However, in the evaluation consultant's opinion, it would still be useful to have a financial statement in the project's Terminal Report that goes to stakeholders, partners, and donors.

	complement materials on the web page (not everyone will read documents on the internet. Such an appropriate would be appropriate for any future final reports for UNFF projects (so also a lesson learned).
Responsibility:	UNFFS/PMU, facilitator
Time-frame:	At the end of operational completion of the Project (before end 2015).

The following is a summary of the main lessons that have been learned from the Project's successes and challenges:

Lesson # 1	
Finding:	The Project suffered from a particularly weak design with a poor logframe and focus at output level and very little input from national partners. This has handicapped the Project's ability to delivery meaningful results. The project design period was negatively affected by poor capacity in UNFFS in terms of project design and political motivations which set the boundaries of the project and targets, e.g. choice to include 78 countries.
Lesson:	A weak project design with unclear objectives, outcomes and causal logic and poor ownership often leads to difficulties in implementation and for delivery of project results and reduces the likelihood of achieving the environmental change sought. Although this is a common lesson among GEF projects, it particularly applies to this Project. Projects need to ensure that the project design period is participative and relevant technical and project management expertise is brought in where capacity and experience are lacking. It is important for executing agencies to ensure that they take a collaborative approach (this was particularly lacking in this project, given the project design (including GEF) experience among other CPF partners that could have been drawn on). Projects should be reviewed again during their inception period (first three months of implementation). National ownership and input at the design stage is particularly critical. GEF projects that seek to implement global-level processes need to pay special attention to project design. They need to resist 'political pressure' to set unrealistic aims, boundaries and targets, even if they are essentially delivering enabling activities.
Application:	UNFF, UNEP and GEFSEC for development of future GEF projects
Lesson # 2	
Finding:	The prior experience and installed capacity of the UNFFS was very weak during the design and start of implementation, which was known to some extent by UNEP and GEFSEC. However, this was not addressed directly.
Lesson:	The capacity of executing bodies needs to be sufficient to deliver a GEF project and it should be formally demonstrated that it has the required capacity during the project design stage, irrespective of the type and status of the executing agency. IAs need to ensure that executing agencies, even if they are a UN body, have a formal assessment of their capacity to undertake a GEF project during the PPG stage. Where capacity is lacking this needs to be built rapidly during the project's inception stage, but this can only be done if an honest assessment of capacity of the executing agency is undertaken.
Application:	GEF Implementing agencies when selecting executing agencies for development of future GEF projects (it is understood that a formal capacity assessment is now undertaken by UNEP through their Project Review Committee process)

Lesson # 3	
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Finding:	There was particularly weak national ownership of the project (virtually no involvement at the design stage) and participation by partners was very limited. There were no national preparatory meetings prior to the inter-regional workshops due to absence of funds (national partners appear to have been expected to fund these themselves). In the end although 45 out of 78 countries (42%) participated in at least one workshop, 33 didn't take part in any Project activities. UNEP highlighted the need for country stakeholder involvement, consultations, national reporting etc, but this was not fully followed up by the UNFFS.
Lesson:	Projects need to be owned by the participants, and conditions need to be created for national partners to participate effectively (which was not a case here). It is not reasonable to expect national input/participation from low capacity countries (most SIDS and LFCCs, which were partly targeted because most had limited capacity) to participate in a project without their consultation and buy-in during the design phase and sufficient financial resources to enable them to take part in activities. For UNFFS-executed projects, UNFF focal points need to have particularly good 'ownership' of the project.
Application:	UNFFS, for development of future donor projects

Lesson # 4	
Finding:	The relationship between the executing and implementing agencies was difficult on occasion especially at the beginning of the Project. Unfortunately there were no face-to-face meetings between the UNEP TM and the UNFFS PM during the whole period of the Project.
Lesson:	Failure to meet and resolve disputes face-to-face can contribute to poor project delivery. It is essential to have an initial face-to-face contact during the design and/or early inception period to build working relationships and review project implementation – there is no substitute for such meetings especially when there are conflicting views/opinions on aspects of project design and implementation.
Application:	UNEP and UNFFS when establishing project management relationships in future.

Lesson # 5	
Finding:	The Project sought to begin implementation of the UNFF Facilitative Process and the GEF funding was seen as 'seed money' for a longer-term process. Unfortunately, there was a lack of clear, realistic targets that could be accommodated within a 2-year GEF Medium Sized Project with a budget of only US\$1 million and little co-financing and there was 'political pressure' to include an unrealistic number of countries (78) within the project.
Lesson:	GEF projects that seek to implement global-level processes need to pay special attention to project design. They need to resist 'political pressure' to set unrealistic aims, boundaries and targets, even if they are essentially delivering enabling activities.
Application:	UNEP, GEFSEC for development of future GEF projects



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Subject and scope of the evaluation

1. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>9</sup>, the UNEP Programme Manual<sup>10</sup> and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations<sup>11</sup>, the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Project *Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)* (hereafter the Project) was undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the degree of achievement and/or likelihood of outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

2. The evaluation took place between 1 December 2014 and 25 May 2015 (see table 3 below), the timing arranged to coincide with the final administrative and financial planning activities to conclude and close the SIDS-LFCC Project.

**Table 3: Terminal Evaluation schedule**

Task/Deliverable	Date
Initial desk reviews and preliminary interviews dealing with project design stage and establishing approach, methodology, schedule of work, etc. for the TE	1-14 December 2014
Submission of draft Inception Report	15 December 2014
Approval of final Inception Report	22 December 2014
Data compilation including further desk reviews, interviews and consultations, and visit to UNFF Secretariat, New York (12-21 January 2015) for interviews and Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) meeting on the International Arrangement on Forests (12-16 January 2015) and interviews with GEF Secretariat in Washington DC (22 January 2015) with follow-up interviews by Skype	1 January – 5 February 2015
Submission of zero-draft Terminal Evaluation Report	4 March 2015
Approval of final Terminal Evaluation Report	25 May 2015

### 1.2 Evaluation objectives

3. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF, the executing partner UNDESA – UNFF, relevant agencies in the Project’s participating countries, and other interested stakeholders. In doing so the evaluation aimed to identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

4. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) assessed the Project with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped into four categories (see below), according to the respective evaluation

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP\\_Programme\\_Manual\\_May\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE\\_guidelines7-31.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf)

guidelines of GEF and UNEP (see above). All evaluation criteria were rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes was not rated.

- i. **Attainment of objectives and planned results.** This comprises an assessment of the achievement of the Project's objectives, outcomes and outputs and the Project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Given the project's expected long-term impacts, a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method was applied to identify whether or not the necessary preconditions, factors and elements needed to support achievement of long-term impacts have been put in place.
- ii. **Sustainability<sup>12</sup> and catalytic role.** This focuses on the (i) socio-political, (ii) financial, (iii) institutional and (iv) environmental factors affecting the sustainability of project outcomes and results, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices.
- iii. **Processes affecting attainment of project results.** This covers: (i) project preparation and readiness, (ii) implementation approach and management, (iii) stakeholder participation and public awareness, (iv) country ownership/driven-ness, (v) financial planning and management, (vi) UNEP supervision and backstopping, and (vii) monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
- iv. **Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes.** The TE also presents a brief narrative on: (i) how the Project relates to and links with UNEP's Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013; (ii) how it aligns with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP); (iii) the extent to which the Project considers gender in its design, implementation, and monitoring activities; and (iv) examples of South-South cooperation that the project has engaged in.

### 1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology

5. The TE was conducted by an independent consultant with expertise in natural resource/forest management, policy and institutional analysis, and project management and M&E (including UN and GEF project experience – see Annex V), under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (EO, in Nairobi), in consultation with the UNEP GEF Coordination Office (Nairobi), and the UNEP Task Manager at UNEP/ROAP (Bangkok).

6. The TE was carried out using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders were kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. Information was triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, then a single source is mentioned in this report.

7. The TE was undertaken as a mix of desk reviews, in-depth interviews (face-to-face, by skype or telephone, and by email) with UNFF Secretariat (UNFFS) and UNDESA staff that have been involved in the design, implementation and management of the Project, as well as selected national partner representatives and other international stakeholders, including SFM donors, who have participated in the Project.

8. The findings of the evaluation were based on the following:

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<sup>12</sup> In the context of the TE, sustainability is understood as the likelihood of continued benefits after the SIDS-LFCC Project ends.

- (a) A **desk review** of project documents and others that included:
- UNEP and GEF policy, strategy and programme documents pertaining to SFM and its financing, and forest conservation;
  - Project design documents, including those from the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase;
  - Project reports such as progress and financial reports from the UNDESA-UNFF to UNEP;
  - International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting minutes;
  - Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), and revisions to the project's logical framework;
  - Project audit report(s), Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent and revisions to project financing;
  - Relevant project correspondence between UNFF Secretariat and UNEP and others;
  - Project documentation related to its activities, outputs and deliverables such as the SFM Financing Strategy, Communication Strategy, media articles concerning the project, project/UNFF website, and other communication products, as well as completed GEF BD Tracking Tools. (However the BD Tracking Tools had extremely limited relevance for this GEF intervention).
- (b) **Interviews** with priority stakeholders included:
- The Project Manager (PM) and other project management and execution support staff at UNDESA – UNFF (New York);
  - Former members of UNFF that were involved in the Project's design and implementation;
  - A selection of the UNFF national Focal Points;
  - Members of the Project's International Steering Committee;
  - UNEP Task Manager and financial management officer (Bangkok and Moscow);
  - Selected national authority representatives in the participating countries;
  - Relevant staff of GEF Secretariat; and
  - Representatives of other multilateral agencies and other relevant stakeholder organisations.
- (c) **Field visits.** No visits to field sites were undertaken by the TE as the Project had a global focus. However, the Evaluation consultant visited the offices of the UNFF Secretariat and UNDESA in New York in January 2015 to hold interviews with key staff. The consultant also attended the Second Meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad-Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2) on the International Arrangement on Forests that took place 12-16 January 2015 at the UN Headquarters in New York, which had a specific session on financing for forestry which was highly relevant for the GEF Project. This meeting offered the opportunity to gauge the degree of mainstreaming of the Project's results into the UNFF process.

9. It was not possible to interview representatives from all the 78 countries that were invited to participate in the Project due to financing and time constraints, consequently only a selection of those that participated were interviewed. These were selected on the basis of their level of involvement in the Project (having been involved in more than one project activity) and their availability for interview during the TE period. A number of these attended the AHEG2 meeting in New York in January 2015 and the Evaluation's attendance at this meeting offered the opportunity

to hold face-to-face interviews with these key individuals (face-to-face interviews were considered more effective than relying on Skype or telephone calls). Efforts were made to include as many women among the interviewees as possible.

**10.** A list of data/information sources consulted and people interviewed in the preparation of this report is given in Annexes III and IV respectively.

#### **1.4 Main evaluation criteria and questions**

**11.** An evaluation matrix presenting broad categories of areas to be addressed and key sample questions to be asked during the evaluation process, with sources of data and information and the methods by which these would be gathered, was compiled and approved during the TE's inception period (set out in an Inception Report (an internal document submitted to the UNEP EO) produced in December 2014). These questions served as guides, not as a formal questionnaire, and only questions relevant to each stakeholder were asked.

**12.** Following agreement with the UNEP EO on aims and methodology, the TE focused on the following sets of key questions, to assess project performance and determine outcomes and impacts, and evaluate likely sustainability:

- (a) What is the validity of the assumed input-output-outcome results chain, and how did inputs compare with outputs?
- (b) To what extent has the project enhanced understanding of the specifics of SFM and its socio-economic and ecosystem services value in SIDS and LFCCs?
- (c) To what extent has the project improved understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and prospective mechanisms for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs?
- (d) To what extent has the project contributed towards strengthened national awareness and ownership, as well as strengthened inter-regional cooperation through networks, of SFM financing?
- (e) To what extent has the project contributed towards agreement on a common way forward for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs and an overall approach to SFM?
- (f) To what extent has the project contributed towards improved processes to build and strengthen capacity of SIDS and LFCC countries to address SFM funding gaps?
- (g) To what extent has the project contributed towards increasing political attention and awareness on innovative approaches to financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs?
- (h) What is the level of satisfaction of key stakeholders with the main objectives, activities and deliverables of the project?
- (i) To what extent did governance and management structures and processes enable or hinder delivery of the project's products and services?

**13.** In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the TE considered the difference between '*what has happened with*' and '*what would have happened without*' the Project. In addition, as this is a Terminal Evaluation, particular attention was given to capturing lessons learned from the Project's experiences. Consequently, the Evaluation has sought to go beyond the

assessment of “*what*” the Project’s performance was, to provide a deeper understanding of “*why*” the performance was as it was, i.e. assessment of processes affecting attainment of project results, in order to provide the basis for lessons that can be drawn from the Project.

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Context and development

**14.** Although forests do not generally cover extensive areas in SIDS and LFCCs, they provide many essential ecosystem services for these countries, such as protecting critical watersheds and acting as a key element in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and can play a crucial role in local economies and livelihoods. Moreover, forest landscape restoration has long been identified as a solution to desertification, the greatest environmental threat facing LFCCs, and forests strongly contribute to preventing erosion in SIDS with coastal forests in low-lying SIDS, particularly mangroves, acting as a major barrier to reduce impacts from storm surges and rising sea-levels. The geographical isolation of SIDS also means that their forests frequently act as hotspots for biodiversity and endemism. Forests are also considered a core component in the transformation to a green economy.

**15.** The Project targeted two inter-regional sets of countries with specific commonalities. SIDS share not only their insularity in common, but also environmental and economic vulnerabilities due to location, isolation, remoteness, and usually small populations. Likewise, LFCCs face common challenges including aridity, combating desertification and limited political attention given to forests in light of their (apparently) negligible contribution to the national economy. In addition, both sets of countries suffer from limited technical capacity and human resources in terms of sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest financing, albeit for different reasons, and both sets of countries have been largely sidelined in international discussions on forest financing which have focused on countries with large forest areas/forest carbon reserves.

**16.** The high level of deforestation and forest degradation common in SIDS and LFCCs argues for the need to strengthen forest management and ensure that SFM<sup>13</sup> practices are applied in the remaining forest areas. However, SFM is often not applied in these countries due to a variety of factors. These include: inappropriate governance and incentives; unclear land tenure systems; resource allocation conflicts; poverty; and the failure of markets to capture the values of forests to provide sufficient economic incentives against land conversion and alternative forms of land use (more details on these root causes are given in the project document). However, a key reason for poor implementation of SFM is lack of financing, both in terms of direct investment in SFM but also for activities to change policies and strategies at national and local levels that would encourage an SFM approach. Furthermore, financing for SFM has only rarely been treated in a holistic, cross-sectoral manner or in a way that includes connections between all its components (public, private, domestic, international, blended and innovative).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> According to the Forest Instrument adopted by General Assembly Resolution 62/98, SFM is a dynamic and evolving concept that is intended to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations. The UNEP-GEF project document defines ‘sustainable forest management’ as all forms of forest management that maintain or enhance the multiple values of forests, as well as avoid or mitigate any negative socio-economic impacts both on and off site. Measures can range from strict conservation in the most fragile ecosystems to sustainable logging and use of forest products by communities, and can include forest conservation measures such as REDD+ initiatives, as well as potential reforestation processes. Consequently, SFM has been interpreted broadly within the GEF project.

<sup>14</sup> See the 2012 study on forest financing by the Advisory Group on Finance available at [http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/AGF\\_Study\\_July\\_2012.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/AGF_Study_July_2012.pdf).

**17.** In 2007, as a contribution to addressing some of the global threats to forest ecosystems and weaknesses in their protection and sustainable management, the Seventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)<sup>15</sup> adopted the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (the 'Forest Instrument'). This was the first international instrument for SFM agreed by the UN Member States. In 2008, an analysis of the financial flows and needs to implement the Forest Instrument found that there had been a significant decline in official development assistance in the forest sector during the 1990s and 2000s, and there were significant gaps in external financial flows in support of SFM, particularly in relation to SIDS and LFCCs (and several other regions). At the Special Session of the Ninth Session of the UNFF, in 2009, the issue of financing gaps was recognized by the Member States as the largest obstacle to the implementation of SFM. In recognition of the problem<sup>16</sup>, the UN member states established the Facilitative Process (FP) on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 to assist developing countries to better mobilise existing, as well as to pursue new and additional, funding to finance SFM. The FP was set up along similar lines to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Global Mechanism<sup>17</sup>, which is part of the UNCCD Secretariat and works with countries on financing strategies for Sustainable Land Management (SLM)<sup>18</sup>.

**18.** The UNEP-GEF project 'Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)' Project was designed to 'kick-start' the Facilitative Process with a goal to facilitate financing for SFM across all 78 SIDS and LFCCs. The project document identifies a number of barriers to achieving sustainable financing and greater uptake and implementation of SFM in these countries, namely a combination of: low national political understanding of the value of, and need for, SFM (particularly in LFCCs); low awareness of opportunities for SFM financing; poor capacity among SIDS and LFCCs institutions to access what funding exists; and the small size and geographical isolation of many SIDS which makes them less able to apply for and attract external funding. The Project aimed to address these barriers. Initially, the Project was to be implemented over a two-year period from 2011-2013.

## **2.2 Project Objectives and Components**

### **2.2.1 Objectives**

**19.** According to the project document, the Project's vision is formulated as 'SIDS and LFCCs are applying SFM principles whereby healthy forests sustainably contribute to local livelihoods, economic development and ecological stability'. The Project's overall development goal is given as 'Financing mechanisms for SFM are identified and mobilised whereby forests are locally managed to sustainably contribute and improve local livelihoods and economic development, including delivering and ensuring ecosystem services such as biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaption, watershed and productivity on all levels (local, national and global)'.

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<sup>15</sup> The UNFF encompasses all member states of the United Nations and member states of specialized agencies, serves as the hub for forest politics in the United Nations system, and enjoys the support of ancillary institutions and processes, such as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and regional organizations. The main objective of the UNFF (and the CPF) is to "promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end".

<sup>16</sup> There was also a Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) report on financing of sustainable forestry management that provided further justification for action.

<sup>17</sup> See [global-mechanism.org](http://global-mechanism.org)

<sup>18</sup> The UNFF Project Manager commented that 'The two major differences with UNCCD, apart from the focus (SLM versus SFM) are (i) the size of the units in terms of staffing and (ii) the fact that the FP has no regular budget and relies entirely on voluntary contributions'.

**20.** The Project's stated objective was to 'enhance the understanding on opportunities for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCC countries through analysis and strengthening stakeholder capacity in financing mechanisms for SFM'.

### **2.2.2 Components**

**21.** The Project had three technical components and two management components.

#### **Component 1: Information gathering**

**22.** The first Component focused on fact-finding and analysis of opportunities for financing for SFM in seven countries (3 SIDS and 4 LFCCs), and the production of four macro-level inter-regional studies (2 for SIDS and 2 for LFCCs).

#### **Component 2: Information gathering**

**23.** The second Component focused on national consultations, engendering 'national ownership' and building consensus on approaches to SFM and its financing through national preparatory meetings (in both SIDS and LFCCs), four inter-regional workshops and the establishment of networks to support SFM financing. This Component also aimed to produce a global strategy to address SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs, although, this is not presented as a major deliverable in the project document.

#### **Component 3: Communication strategy**

**24.** The third Component was to focus on the design and implementation of communication activities at the national, inter-regional and global levels to help strengthen awareness and increase political attention on the need for, and approaches to, financing for SFM, as well as other capacity building measures to address SFM funding gaps in SIDS and LFCC countries. The principal deliverable of this Component was a communications strategy (and plan).

#### **Other Components**

**25.** Components IV and V of the Project focused on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the overall project and project management, respectively. For the purposes of this report they are treated separately and not as project components leading to specific outcomes. Indeed these two components should have been included as part of the standard project management and M&E activities common to all GEF projects, as they are 'means to an end' (necessary for the delivery of the project) not ends in themselves with discrete outcomes.



**Table 4: Project Logical Framework (from Project's Terminal Report)**

<b>OBJECTIVE: To enhance understanding on opportunities for financing sustainable forest management (SFM) in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) through analysis and strengthening stakeholder capacity in SIDS and LFCCs under the UNFF Forest Instrument</b>								
<b>COMPONENT I: Analysis of current financial flows, gaps, needs as well as governance structures for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs</b>								
<b>Objective/ Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Mid-term target</b>	<b>End-of-project target</b>	<b>Sources of verification</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Risks</b>
Enhanced understanding of the specifics of SFM in SIDS or LFCCs and its socio-economic and ecosystem services potential.	Number of detailed studies and papers describing the specifics of SFM in SIDS and LFCCs	Scattered, non-specific information on SFM in SIDS and LFCCs.	Number of studies on SFM reviewed and suggestions for improvement incorporated by UNFF (by 30 Sept. 2010)	Four macro-level studies on SFM and SFM financing.  Seven country studies on SFM and SFM financing.  Four preparatory inter-regional workshop papers.	Studies, papers, progress reports.	UNFF	June 2010 - August 2011	Low capacity of national sub-consultants to carry out studies.
Improved understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and prospective mechanisms for enhanced SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs.	Number of detailed studies and papers describing the specifics of SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs.	Scattered, non-specific information on SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs.	Number of studies on SFM financing reviewed and suggestions for improvement incorporated by UNFF (by 30 Sept. 2010)					

**COMPONENT II: Establishment of national ownership, review of thematic papers and consultations on way forward**

Objective/ Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Sources of verification	Responsibility	Time frame	Risks
Strengthened national awareness and ownership as well as strengthened inter-regional and regional cooperation through networks on SFM financing.	1) Number of national preparatory reports prepared through national network meetings with key stakeholders.  2) Number of inter-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships.	1) Awareness is only at the individual level and national prioritized actions are not existent.  2) No inter-regional cooperation through cross-sectoral networks.	1) Identification of potential inter-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships and networks reported to UNFF.  2) Awareness and ownership on an inter-/regional level is enhanced before holding inter-regional workshops and country data are gathered in a standardized format and sent to UNFF at least one month before the respective inter-regional workshop.	1) 78 national preparatory reports.  2) Four inter-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships and networks reported to the UNFF as a result of inter-regional workshop (one per workshop).	1) UNFF-standardised national preparatory meeting reports; progress reports  2) Four workshop reports	1) UNFF, in collaboration with countries.  UNFF will coordinate and set reporting guidelines for use of national focal points from SIDS and LFCCs.  2) UNFF	National level: June 2011 - May 2012  Inter-regional level: June 2011 - August 2012:  Iran workshop Sept. 2011  Niger workshop Jan. 2012	Low political engagement of SIDS and LFCCs.  Low interest and capacity of key stakeholders.  Undeveloped national ownership and low commitment.  Unclear responsibilities on national level resulting in incapability of national focal points to carry out tasks.
Enhanced insight and agreement on common way forward towards the elaboration of a SFM financing communication strategy and overall approach to SFM.	Number of communication products and media approaches agreed and proposed to be implemented by each inter-regional network after each workshop.	No inter-regional common SFM financing communication products.		At least two communication products per inter-regional networks are proposed by the network members after the inter-regional workshop.	Four workshop reports; report of Component II – including specific communication elements	UNFF, in collaboration with countries.	T&T workshop April 2012  Fiji workshop July 2012	

<b>COMPONENT III: Communication strategy for facilitation of SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs</b>								
<b>Objective/ Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Mid-term target</b>	<b>End-of-project target</b>	<b>Sources of verification</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Risks</b>
Improved process towards building and strengthening awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCCs to address SFM financing gaps.	1) Number and content of SFM financing communication strategies.  2) Number of communication products successfully implemented.	1) No SFM financing and communication strategies.  2) No inter-regional common SFM financing communication products.	Initiation of implementation of SFM financing communications strategy within respective countries and regions.  UN website in SFM financing designed	1) One common SIDS-LFCC forest financing strategy and four regional forest financing strategies.  2a) At least two communication products per inter-regional networks are implemented.  2b) SFM financing communication strategy webpage for SIDS and LFCCs initiated and maintained on the UNFF website.	1) SFM financing communication strategies; progress reports  2) UNFF website, containing communication products.	UNFF, in cooperation with networks	August 2011 - May 2013	Low political engagement of SIDS and LFCCs.  Low interest and capacity of key stakeholders.  Insufficient commitment by governments after project end.  Undeveloped national ownership and low commitment.
Increased political attention and awareness on innovative approaches on financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs through improved dialogue.	Level of integration of SFM financing references into national policies.	No integration of SFM financing references into national policies.	Compilation on required actions on SFM financing, based on Communication Strategy (Aug. 2012).	At least 9 countries report a „start-made” or mechanisms towards SFM financing in the national policies.	Countries’ reports to UNFF’11 in 2015.	UNFF, in cooperation with networks and countries.		

26. The Project's logical framework is presented in Table 4. This is the updated version, modified following review by an independent M&E consultant and approval by the UNEP Task Manager in 2012.

### 2.3 Target areas/groups

27. The Project was to be implemented in 39 SIDS and 48 LFCCs<sup>19</sup> (some SIDS are also classified as LFCCs) with a focus on groups actively involved in SFM and its financing, notably government departments of forestry or natural resource management, as well as groups from other sectors that either impact, or are impacted by, forest management and its financing, such as ministries of economy, agriculture, tourism, transport, etc. There were no site level activities planned as such, although visits to view relevant local SFM initiatives in the field were included as part of inter-regional workshops under Component II.

### 2.4 Milestones in Project Design and Implementation

28. Table 5 below presents the milestones and key dates in project design and implementation (compiled from PPG-period documents, Annex 6 of the project document, the Project's logframe and PIR 2014):

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

Milestones	Completion dates/duration
<b>1. Project design phase</b>	
PIF approval	26 April 2010
PPG request approval	30 March 2010
PPG phase	July 2010 – May 2011
Agency request to GEFSEC for extension on project milestones	23 November 2010
CEO Endorsement/Approval	27 May 2011 (due December 2010)
<b>2. Implementation period</b>	
<b>Component I</b>	
Four macro-level studies on SFM and SFM financing	30 November 2010 (before implementation started)
Seven country studies on SFM and SFM financing	30 November 2010 (before implementation started)
4 preparatory inter-regional workshop papers	30 August 2011
<b>Component II</b>	
Baselines of indicators set	Due 1 September 2011, but most not delivered (only Fiji set in September 2012)
National preparatory meetings planned and implemented	Depending on workshop date. To precede

<sup>19</sup> Namely: Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Djibouti, Barbados, Yemen, Burundi, Haiti, Marshall Islands, Jamaica, Jordan, Algeria, Bahamas, Uruguay, Fiji, Micronesia, Belize, Mauritius, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Namibia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Niger, Tunisia, Tonga, East Timor, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Lesotho, Togo, Chad, Egypt, Samoa, Libya, Guinea-Bissau, St. Vincent and Grenadines, UAE, Antigua and Barbuda, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain, Iceland, Iran, South Africa, Syria, Grenada, Israel, Palestine, Pakistan, Morocco, Ireland, Cape Verde, Cuba, St. Lucia, Solomon Islands, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Uzbekistan, Suriname, Mali, Kiribati, Mongolia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Qatar, Malta, Maldives, Kuwait, Mauritania, Seychelles, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Nauru, Singapore and Vanuatu.

and key stakeholders identified and national networks initiated	each workshop according to the list of participating countries.
78 national preparatory reports prepared through national network meetings with key stakeholders	Prior to regional workshops in 2011 and 2012, but not delivered
4 inter-regional workshops: Iran (final report); Niger (final report); Trinidad & Tobago (final report); and Fiji (final report)	Iran 2-9 Sep. 2011 (1 Nov. 2011) Niger Jan. 2012 (15 Mar. 2012) Trinidad and Tobago Apr. 2012 (15 Jun. 2012) Fiji Jul. 2012 (15 Sep. 2012)
Four inter-regional and cross-sectoral partnerships and networks reported to the UNFF as a result of inter-regional workshop (one per workshop).	No date for delivery given but assumed to be after regional workshops
Component III	
Draft (outline) Communications Strategy	May 2013
At least two communication products per inter-regional networks proposed by the network members	No specific dates given but after each inter-regional workshop
At least two communication products per inter-regional networks are implemented	No specific dates given but sometime after each interregional workshop
Common SIDS-LFCC forest financing strategy and four regional forest financing strategies	May 2013 (but idea for regional strategies abandoned)
Webpage for SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs initiated and maintained on the UNFF website	Date for initiation - 31 Dec. 2011 Date for completion - 28 February 2012
At least 9 countries report a 'start-made' or mechanisms towards SFM financing in the national policies.	By end of project (initially August 2013)
UNFF impact monitoring system and activity monitoring system established	By end of project (initially August 2013)
UNEP accepted all progress reports, financial reports, and positive terminal evaluation of the project.	By end of project (initially August 2013)
All SIDS and LFCCs report on progress in forest financing in their national reporting for UNFF11 (2015)	Early 2015

## 2.5 Implementation Arrangements

**29.** The GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for this project was the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The lead Executing Agency (EA) was the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), but with day-to-day project execution was carried out by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat (UNFFS). A Project Management Unit (PMU) was established within UNFFS, with one member assigned the role of Project Manager (PM). The Project also had an International Steering Committee (ISC) that was to provide overall guidance and direction for the Project, as well as approving the Project's annual work plans and budgets (brief Terms of Reference for the ISC given in Annex 11 of project document).

## 2.6 Project Financing

**30.** The GEF provided US\$ 950,000 of external financing to the Project (with an additional US\$50,000 for the PPG phase), categorising the project as a Medium-Size Project. The project document identified US\$ 1,000,000 in co-financing (in-kind and cash), through UNDESA, the UNFF Secretariat and UK-Department for International Development (DFID), bringing the Project's total cost to US\$ 1,950,000. Rather surprisingly, co-financing from institutions in the target SIDS and LFCC

countries that were to participate in the Project was not considered during the project design stage (not even in-kind contributions), although given the level of participation by countries in the project this would probably have been significant.

**31.** It should be noted that Component I was completed, and its associated co-financing from UK-DFID spent and associated outputs delivered, before the Project received GEF CEO endorsement (granted 27 May 2011), or officially began implementation (later in 2011).

## **2.7 Project partners**

**32.** A brief stakeholder analysis conducted during the PPG phase identified several general groups of stakeholders that the Project was to engage with during implementation of the full project. At the national level, these included: governmental ministries and authorities; NGOs; community-based organisations and smallholder associations; private sector including professional associations; academic organisations and universities; and media. Participating countries were largely represented by their UNFF Focal Points or other representatives from forest-related ministries, who were expected to be among the main beneficiaries of the Project. However, specific institutions to be targeted in individual SIDS and LFCCs were not identified and individual activities to 'establish national ownership of the project' were not detailed in project design documents.

**33.** At international level, key stakeholder groups were to include international organisations, such as UN agencies and bilateral donors; international agencies and research institutes, such as CIFOR; and international NGOs, such as IUCN and WWF. In addition, the project document identifies some inter-regional and regional level stakeholders, such as inter-governmental cooperation agreements (e.g. SADC and AU), as well as different partnership funds, as possible targets for collaboration or partnership during implementation.

## **2.8 Changes in design during implementation**

**34.** The Project was originally planned to run from November 2011 to August 2013, but the project experienced delays with its start-up and had a slow delivery (see section X.X). As a result, it was granted a No Cost Extension (NCE) for a 12-month extension to 31 August 2014 with a cost of US\$ 368,677 for the period 2013-2014 (this was the final agreed figure; there were several revisions of the budget), using unspent funds from the GEF budget (so again without additional costs to the project). According to the justification in the project extension proposal, this was to provide an opportunity to strengthen delivery of the Project's 'communication strategy' element of Component III, and to improve stakeholder networks to increase the likelihood that expected outcomes would be attained. The Project was granted a further NCE to 28 February 2015 to ensure project activities could be concluded, particularly those relating to Component III dealing with communications and awareness-raising, and to enable a capacity building workshop to be delivered.

**35.** The Project did not undergo a Mid-Term Review (MTR) or a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE). However, the project's logframe was reviewed by an independent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) consultant in 2012. Although the M&E consultant recommended a number of major changes to the logframe, these were not followed through and only minor revisions were made (largely to the wording of the outcomes and the addition of 'under the UNFF Forest Instrument' to the project objective, which helped clarify the limits to the objective).

## 2.9 Reconstructed Theory of Change of the Project

**36.** The project's logic was examined and used to produce a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC)<sup>20</sup>, and progress made towards achievement of project objectives and impacts was assessed using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) analysis (see section 2.12.2) based on this reconstructed ToC.

**37.** A Theory of Change is a diagrammatic representation of the causal logic of a project, derived directly from the project strategy/design documents. It articulates the logic that underpins the project's strategy and presents the causal relationships between a project's activities, outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) and immediate project outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs), and longer-term intermediate states and the project's ultimate desired impact (usually changes in environmental and social benefits). It can also help define the external factors that influence change along the pathways and whether one result can lead to the next, which may be either drivers (over which the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (where the project has no, or no significant, control). The ToC can also help identify the expected role and contributions of key actors.

### Project's causal logic as set out in the project documents

**38.** The Project's strategy is set out in its first three 'technical' Components<sup>21</sup>, comprising a set of activities and associated outputs which, if achieved, were expected to lead to six 'technical' outcomes<sup>22</sup> that would then deliver the Project's aims and eventual impact. However, a review of the Project's outcomes revealed that some are vaguely formulated and difficult to measure in practice, e.g. 'Outcome CIII.1 *Improved process towards building/strengthening awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCC countries to address SFM funding gaps*', and outcome CI.2 is essentially the same as the Project Objective.

**39.** In reality, the three 'technical' components are essentially sequential in nature with a focus on enabling activities and enhancing various aspects of national stakeholder capacity: (i) collation, analysis and presentation of key information on SFM and its financing (Component 1), followed by (ii) national and inter-regional meetings to verify the information, and agreement on a common position on financing for SFM (Component II); and then (iii) communication of key information and messages, particularly relating to opportunities for financing SFM, based on the results of Components I and II, brought together within a Communications Strategy/Plan (Component III).

**40.** In addition, some outputs and outcomes within these three components are not at their expected level in the causal logic, and some of the outcomes appear to overlap with each other (for instance, establishing networks to support SFM runs throughout Components II and III). Consequently, the causal logic presented in the project document is somewhat confused in places, with its overall aims and intended impact unclear and poorly worded, and it is difficult to follow. The reconstructed ToC attempts to untangle this.

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<sup>20</sup> The Project did not prepare a ToC itself as ToCs were not required by UNEP or the GEF projects during the project's design period.

<sup>21</sup> Components IV and V relate to M&E and project management and are not relevant here.

<sup>22</sup> The Project outcomes and outputs under these components are summarized in the Logical Framework Analysis (logframe) of the Project Document (Annex 4).

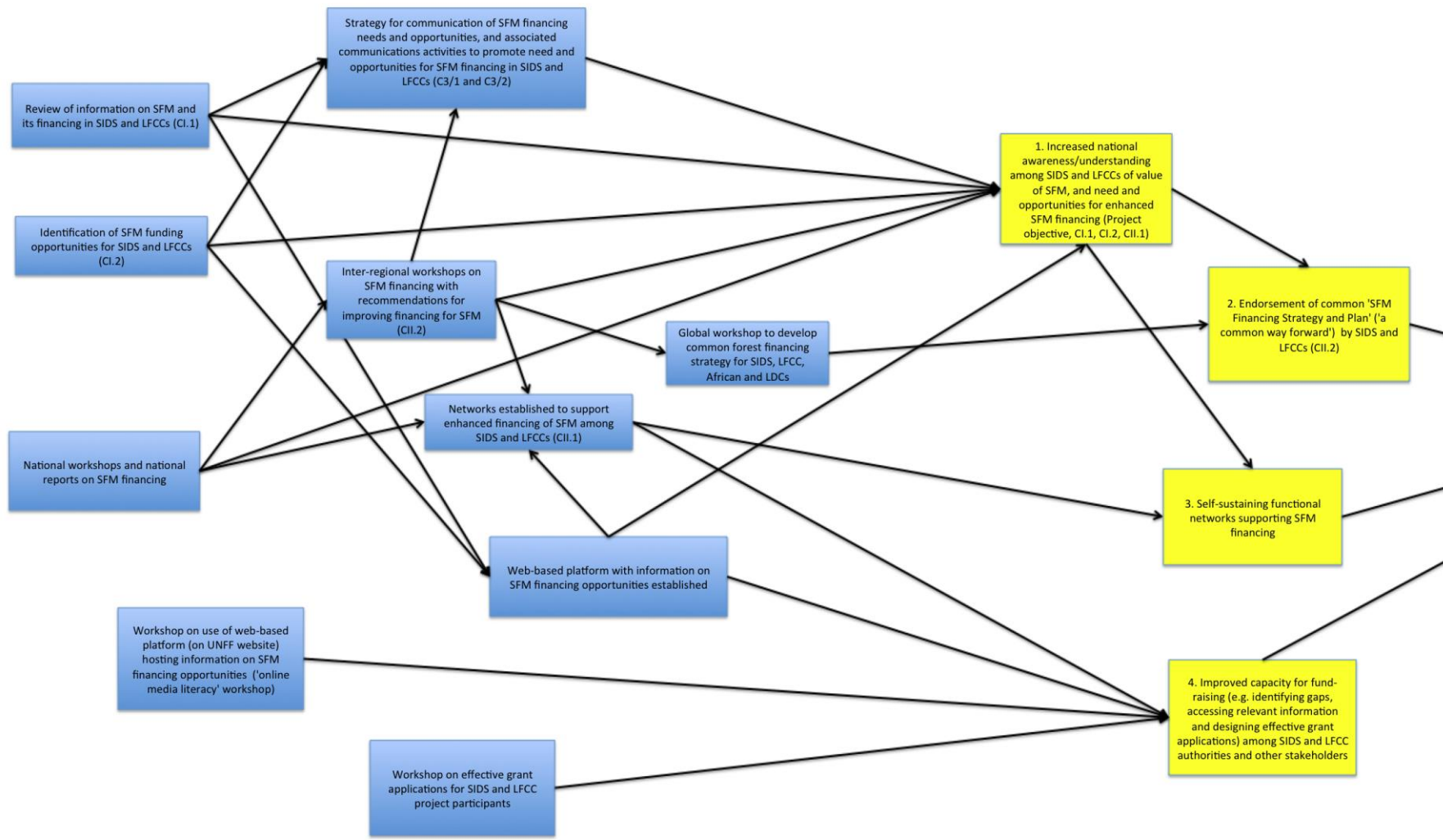
Figure 1: Reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) for the SIDS-LFCC Project (D = driver; A = Assumption; IS = Intermediate State)

**Project activities (grey)**

**Project outputs (blue)**

**Immediate outcomes (yellow)**

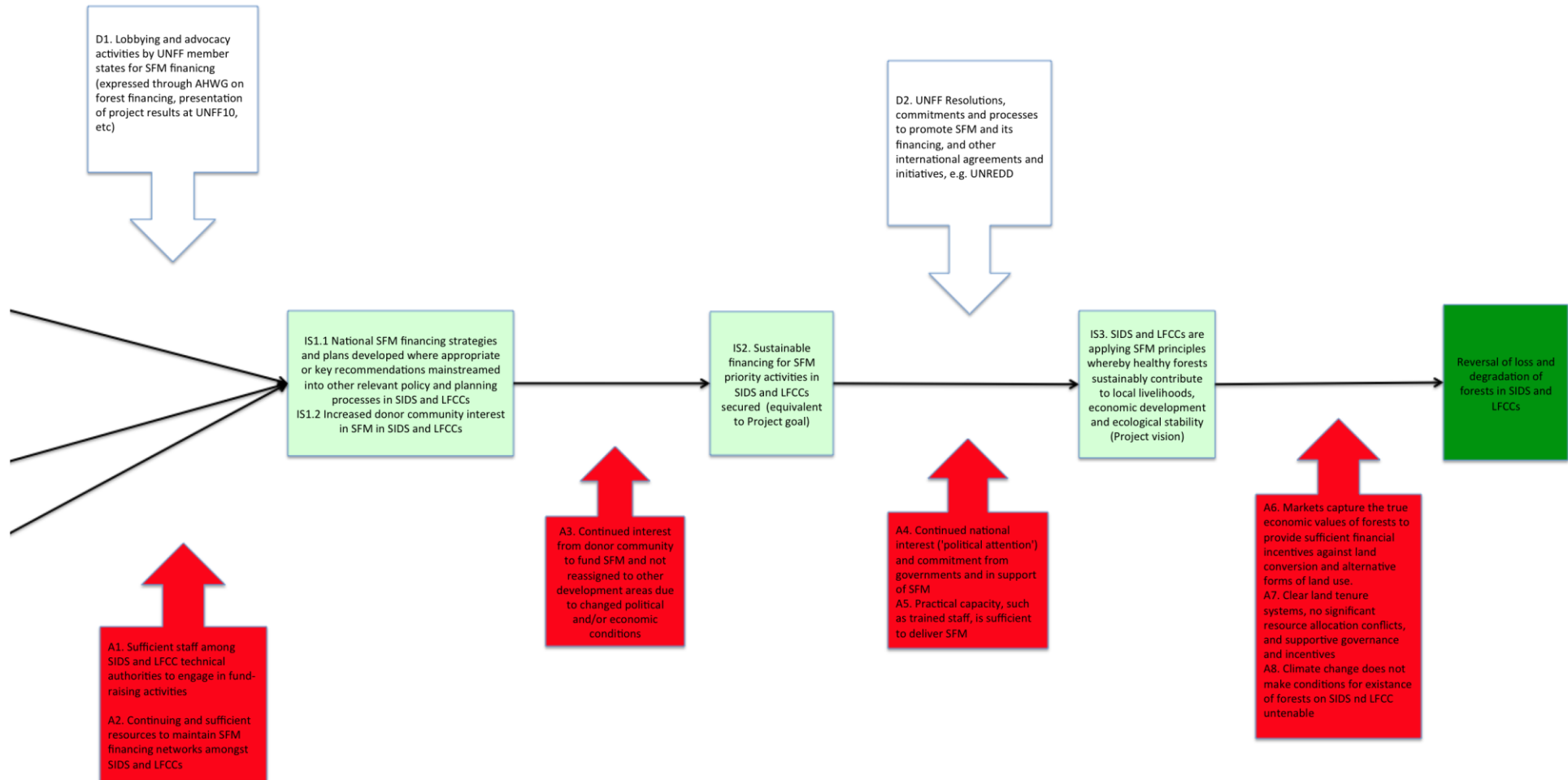
- Commissioning of two macro level studies on SIDS countries on financing of SFM
- Commissioning of two macro level studies for LFCC countries on SFM financing
- Commissioning of seven country studies on SFM
- Contracts for development of four preparatory inter-regional workshop papers
- Establishment of baseline awareness levels on SFM financing
- Organisation of national preparatory meetings with identification of key stakeholders involved with SFM and its financing
- Development of standardized reports with national findings and key issues on SFM and its financing
- Organisation of four inter-regional workshops with selected key stakeholders
- Initiation of inter-regional and regional networks on SFM financing
- Development of a common SFM financing communications strategy
- Development of project communications materials, including a report with main findings for presentation at relevant international meetings, e.g. UNFF10





**Intermediate States (pale green)**

**Impact (green)**



**Recommendation 1.** *The Projects’s logic was confused and there was little experience among the UNFFS team on project design, including design of logframes, indicators, etc. A ToC would have been useful in better articulating the Project’s aims and objectives and guided important choices made during its design and implementation. All GEF projects managed by UNEP should employ a ToC approach during project design to ensure greater consistency in their internal logic and to more effectively identify and address assumptions and drivers that can influence the change pathways. This should be presented as an annex in UNEP-GEF project documents. Responsibility: UNEP. Timeframe: design phase of GEF projects.*

**41.** The Project was intended to help implement the UNFF FP (‘kick-start’ the Process according to project documents) and the lack of clarity to the Project’s logic may have been partly the result of the difficulty of trying to use a discrete project design (GEF) framework to deliver what is essentially a new and on-going and evolving process (the UNFF FP) that did not have clear short-term outcomes and targets that could be easily captured in a 2-year GEF project.

### **Reconstructed ToC**

**42.** A ToC was reconstructed during the inception period based on an initial review of project documents and preliminary interviews with key project management figures, and then reviewed and revised following further discussions with the project management team and other interviewees during the main evaluation period. This is presented in Figure 1 above.

**43.** The Project’s stated objective – ‘to enhance the understanding on opportunities for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCC countries through analysis and strengthening stakeholder capacity in financing mechanisms for SFM’ - does not represent a result at impact level and deals with an element of capacity building (awareness/understanding). There is no explicit statement of the Project’s hoped for environmental impact in project documents (again probably, at least partly, because the Project was helping to deliver a new, ongoing, evolving process). However, the expected impact of the Project can be derived from its overall environmental problem statement (the high level of deforestation and forest degradation in SIDS and LFCCs) and can be formulated as ‘reduced and reversed forest loss and degradation in SIDS and LFF countries’ (achieved through application of SFM practices).

**44.** As the project document argues, forests are not high on the political agenda in many SIDS and LFCCs, and levels of awareness of the need to increase forest financing in these countries are low. According to the project document, the rationale for the Project’s intervention rests on the premise that: (i) collecting data on the needs, gaps and opportunities for SFM financing in LFCCs and SIDS, (ii) exchanging views with national and international stakeholders on recommendations to improve financing for SFM, and (iii) promoting awareness of the problem and solutions through a coordinated approach to communication would encourage decision-makers and other stakeholders to focus more on raising finance for SFM. The Project assumes that if financing can be improved it will lead to increased application of SFM principles in target countries, and so contribute to the Project’s eventual long-term impact of a reversal in the loss and degradation of forests in SIDS and LFCCs (through increased SFM practices). In addition, it would lead to improved opportunities to link forests and forestry to local people and would help deliver improved local livelihoods and related socio-economic benefits. Most of these results are beyond the project’s immediate ability to deliver and are longer-term outcomes and intermediate states (see Figure 1).

**45.** Although it is recognised that the Project itself will not lead directly to transformation of current land use and forestry patterns towards SFM or the eventual environmental (and social) impacts, it looks to strengthen opportunities for SFM financing in the 78 targeted countries and

thereby contribute to ongoing processes that are looking to secure the ecosystem services of forests, through national and global policies, such as REDD+ initiatives, PES schemes and natural capital accounting and establishing payment distribution systems to local stakeholder groups.

**46.** Three intermediate states were identified between Project outcomes and the intended impact and 2 key drivers and 8 assumptions to move from the Project's outcomes to its final desired impact.

**47.** Intermediate state 1 was identified as having two components: (i) national SFM financing strategies and plans developed where appropriate and/or key recommendations for SFM financing mainstreamed into other relevant policy and planning processes in SIDS and LFCCs; and (ii) increased donor community interest in SFM in SIDS and LFCCs. Two assumptions and one key driver were identified to move from the project outcomes to the first set of intermediate states:

- i. Assumptions: (1) continuing and sufficient resources to maintain SFM financing networks amongst SIDS and LFCCs, and (2) sufficient staff among SIDS and LFCC technical authorities to engage in fund-raising activities, including to develop national SFM financing strategies.
- ii. Drivers: (1) Lobbying and advocacy activities by UNFF member states for SFM financing (expressed through AHWG on forest financing, presentation of project results at UNFF10, etc).

**48.** The second Intermediate state was identified as the sustainable financing for SFM priority activities in SIDS and LFCCs secured. This is equivalent to Project goal. One assumption was identified for the move from intermediate state 1 to 2:

- i. Assumptions: continued interest from donor community to fund SFM and not reassigned to other development areas due to changed political and/or economic conditions.

**49.** The third Intermediate state was identified as SIDS and LFCCs are applying SFM principles whereby healthy forests sustainably contribute to local livelihoods, economic development and ecological stability, which corresponds to the project's vision statement. Two assumptions and one key driver were identified to move from the second to third intermediate states:

- i. Assumptions: (1) Continued national interest ('political attention') and commitment from governments in support of SFM; (2) practical capacity, such as trained staff, is sufficient to deliver SFM.
- ii. Drivers: UNFF Resolutions, commitments and processes to promote SFM and its financing, and other international agreements and initiatives, e.g. UNREDD.

**50.** Finally three assumptions were identified for the move from the third intermediate state to the ultimate environmental and social impacts:

- i. Assumptions: (1) Markets capture the true economic values of forests to provide sufficient financial incentives against land conversion and alternative forms of land use; (2) clear land tenure systems, no significant resource allocation conflicts, and supportive governance and incentives, and (3) climate change does not make conditions for existence of forests on SIDS and LFCC untenable.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 2.10 Strategic Relevance

#### 2.10.1 Alignment with GEF focal areas and strategic priorities

**51.** The project contributes to two main GEF Focal Areas - Biodiversity and Land Degradation - but also contributes to the GEF cross-cutting area of Sustainable Forest Management. The Project supports achievement of the global outcomes of the following GEF IV Strategic Programs: BD-SP4, 'Strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity' as well as LD-SP2, 'Supporting sustainable forest management in production landscapes' (also known as SFM-SP4 and SFM-SP-7).

#### 2.10.2 Relevance to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs

**52.** The Project was intended to 'kick-start' the UNFF FP (under the UNFF Resolution on the Means of Implementation of 2009), which specifically calls for increased attention, resources and actions to address the global lack of financing for SFM, especially in SIDS and LFCC. The FP was endorsed by the member states party to the UNFF so the Project can be said to be partly helping to meet national stakeholder priorities and needs to some extent. In addition, seven national case studies and an overview covering all 78 SIDS and LFCCs were produced prior to the Project (but treated as Component I) which identified in outline relevant national strategies, policies and plans in which SFM was considered to play an important role, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies and national forest policy documents.

**53.** The Project also aimed to contribute to objectives of existing National Forest Plans (NFPs) in SIDS and LFCCs and other work of UNFF with regards to forest-related funding mechanisms such as REDD+ financing and other payments for ecosystem services initiatives, and is closely tied to delivery of the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work 2007-2015. The Project also tried to capture conclusions from the UNFF Advisory Group on Forest Financing reports, which informed the development of the project document. According to national representatives interviewed by the TE, the Project's aims remain very relevant in that there are continuing problems in accessing funding for SFM and still a constant need to mobilize resources.

**54.** However, although the Project can be said to be relevant at the national level, there was little national stakeholder consultation during the Project design phase (see section 2.15.3), and the project's relation to national priorities such as NBSAPs is poorly covered in project design documents. Rather the project is a global project and it focuses on two categories of countries – SIDS and LFCCs – facing similar issues (such as geographic isolation and economic vulnerability in SIDS and desertification in LFCCs) and considered particularly in need of increased and sustainable financing for SFM.

#### 2.10.3 Alignment with UNEP's strategy, policies and mandate

**55.** The UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2010–2013 identifies six cross-cutting thematic priorities, organized as discrete Subprogrammes. Although the Project was not generated from UNEP's strategic thinking (see above), it is relevant to the Climate Change (CCSP), Ecosystem Management (EMSP) and Environmental Governance subprogrammes, through its lens of SFM, and is particularly relevant to one of the MTS's five 'means of implementation' - sustainable financing for the global environment. In addition, UNEP's Programme of Work for 2010-2011 sought to promote

transformation of the forest sector, which would only be realisable through increased investment and additional sources for SFM.

**56.** The Project is most relevant to the EMSP as it has sought to increase financing for SFM and as such it has contributed indirectly to MTS Expected Accomplishments within the EMSP, particularly EA(a) *'countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes'* and EA(c) *'countries and regions begin to realign their environmental programmes and financing to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services'*. It has also contributed to the aims of the CCSP, notably EA(a) *'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'* and EA (d) *'increased carbon sequestration occurs through improved land use, reduced deforestation and reduced land degradation'*.

**57.** The Project directly complements a number of UNEP projects under the EMSP and CCSP, particularly in relation to forest biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, ecosystem-based adaptation and REDD+ projects. It also indirectly contributes to UNEP's Forest Strategy - 'Strategic Agenda on Forest Ecosystems and Their Services' - although this was drafted in 2013 after the Project was designed. Overall, the project is consistent with UNEP's mandate, and relevant to several UNEP Governing Council (GC) decisions. However, it should be pointed out that the project's connection with UNEP EAs and programmatic objectives was not highlighted in the project documents.

#### **Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)<sup>23</sup>**

**58.** The Project has been essentially an enabling and capacity building initiative, with specific activities and outputs to build capacity to better access financing for SFM and support implementation of the UNFF FP, including the development of an interactive website for information exchange and network building with training in its use (see section 2.11.3). Consequently, the Project's aims and objectives have been relevant to, and consistent with, the BSP for Technological Support and Capacity Building which aims at more coherent, coordinated and effective delivery of capacity building and technical support at all levels and by all actors, in response to country priorities and needs.

#### **Gender balance**

**59.** The project management team made constant efforts to ensure women were included in project activities. However, this proved difficult (and indeed identifying women participants for interviews as part of the TE also proved problematic) and the gender balance among project participants shows a heavy male bias (the annex listing names of project participants in the Project's Terminal Report gives 142 men versus 44 women, a 3.2:1 ratio). This under-representation of women is a reflection of the degree to which forestry sector is dominated by men, not lack of focus or effort by the Project's PMU. However, the choice of Tehran, Iran, for the venue for the first inter-regional workshop may have also worked against attracting more women to the Project, as according to TE interviews, women participants were expected conform to local cultural norms, which the TE understands may have put off some potential women participants from attending the workshop.

#### **South-South Cooperation**

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

**60.** Facilitating South-South cooperation has been a major aim of this Project and there is some evidence that it has taken place both directly and indirectly. The Project was targeted at 78 SIDS and LFCC countries (by the end 45 countries had taken part), almost all of which are developing (South) countries, with the intention of bringing them together in a series of inter-regional and global-level workshops, and through an interactive project website. This presented an opportunity for a significant amount of networking and exchange, which was highly appreciated by those participants interviewed by the TE. In a couple of cases, more concrete and specific linkages were formed between participants. For instance, some of the Pacific SIDS representatives have investigated establishing a similar environmental funding model<sup>24</sup> to that presented at the Trinidad and Tobago inter-regional workshop by local government officials. However, it was unclear to the TE whether the contacts established with the Trinidad and Tobago officials have continued and cooperation formalized leading to replication of the Trinidad and Tobago experience elsewhere. It would be useful if UNFFS followed up on and reported on these (South-South) initiatives and identified whether additional support is needed from the Project to crystallize results.

**The overall rating for project relevance is Satisfactory.**

## **2.11 Achievement of outputs**

**61.** A summary of the individual project outputs is given in Table 3 below. The delivery of key outputs is discussed below.

### **2.11.1 Component 1: Analysis of current financial Flows, Gaps, Needs as well as Governance Structures for Financing SFM in SIDS & LFCCs**

**62.** Eleven background studies were delivered under this Component through a contract with a Finnish consultancy firm (Indufor Oy) in 2010. These give an overall picture on the gaps, obstacles and opportunities for forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs, along with some information on their socio-economic situation and specific ecosystems, with some concrete examples of issues encountered in forest financing.

**63.** Seven studies were targeted at specific countries covering a range of types of SIDS and LFCCs (the choice of countries for studies was based on: diversity, established forest policy and forests being in the political agenda, geographic diversity, GDP income (range), and practical considerations), while four studies were designed to present an overview of SFM and its financing in four different regions. An additional four international/regional studies were commissioned to identify macro-level analyses of SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs focused on the economic, geographic and institutional situations, and to identify challenges and opportunities for funding of SFM from a variety of sources. All the reports are available on the FP website<sup>25</sup>.

**64.** Whilst these are substantial pieces of work, the TE encountered some criticism of the timing and quality of these reports. All the Indufor Oy reports were completed by November 2010, before the Project began implementation proper (before GEF CEO endorsement and first disbursement of GEF funds). Indeed, they were undertaken during the project design (PPG) period but, strangely, were not treated as a specific output of the PPG phase. They represent key documents whose results provide support for the rationale for addressing the lack of financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCC, and

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<sup>24</sup> In Trinidad and Tobago, a 'Green Fund' has been established which uses a 0.1% levy on fossil fuel production to finance environmental initiatives.

<sup>25</sup> Verified on 15 February 2015.

are essentially (qualitative) baseline information that should have been treated as part of the preparatory activities. The TE understands that these studies (and thus Component I) were included within the Project because they allowed it to capture significant cash co-financing available from the UK DIFD (see paragraph 207).

**65.** The quality of the reports has also been criticized as being too narrowly focused on forestry issues (Indufor Oy employed staff trained exclusively in forestry to carry out the studies), with too little information on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of SFM in SIDS and LFCCs. Initial drafts were lacking in any kind of analysis of cross-sectoral linkages or the wider importance of SFM and opportunities for financing from other sectors, and consideration of alternative points of view e.g. a landscape approach or consideration of management of trees outside of forest-designated areas, was poor or lacking.

**66.** Although these reports were revised and expanded they still remain unbalanced in terms of their analysis of wider issues affecting SFM and its financing, and they are rather dry, academic and lengthy (most are 50-65 pages), most information presented is qualitative, and the findings are not presented in a 'user-friendly' way for likely donors interested in financing SFM, or for general or multiple audiences. Indeed, TE interviews revealed that few project participants (so those actually involved in SFM and its financing) were aware of these background studies and even less had read them and they were not considered particularly useable in their current form.

**67.** The main overall finding/message of these reports is that there is a severe lack of data on the situation regarding SFM and its financing in many SIDS and LFCC (they give an idea of what information exists and what is needed) and there is a need to look at innovative sources of financing for SFM to help fill the gaps between financial needs and funds available. The reports largely extend on existing information and no new data collection was undertaken. However, they do represent the most up-to-date and comprehensive collation and synthesis of existing information and are valuable in that sense, especially as this is the first time that such information has been presented for SIDS and LFCCs as a common group.

**Recommendation 2.** *It is recommended that short (2-4 page) briefing sheets are developed from each of the main initial background studies (produced under Component I) with the key findings and messages produced in appropriate format for (i) potential donors of SFM, (ii) political decision-makers and (iii) in a more 'glossy' form for a general audience (to better promote overall Project results). Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU. Timeframe: before end August 2015.*

**Table 3: Summary of the Project's success in producing programmed outputs (largely taken from project's Terminal Report with verification during the evaluation)**

Component	Expected Outcome	Outputs	Status at the end of the project (31 December 2014)
<b>1. Analysis of current financial Flows, Gaps, Needs as well as Governance Structures for Financing SFM in SIDS &amp; LFCCs</b>	<b>1 (CI.1): Enhanced understanding of the specifics of SFM in SIDS or LFCCs and its socio-economic and ecosystem services potential.</b>	CI.a. Two macro level studies on SIDS countries on financing of SFM reported.	Activity completed: one introductory study on SIDS and one study on forest financing in SIDS prepared by consultancy company Indufor Oy and discussed at two workshops on forest financing in SIDS (23-27 April 2012, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; and 23-27 July 2012, Nadi, Fiji) and posted on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites.
		CI.b. Two macro level studies for LFCC countries on SFM financing reported.	Activity completed: one introductory study on LFCCs and one study on forest financing in LFCCs prepared by consultancy company Indufor Oy, and discussed at two workshops on forest financing in LFCCs (12-17 November 2011, Tehran, Iran; and 30 January – 3 February 2012, Niamey, Niger) and posted on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites.
	<b>2 (CI.2): Improved understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and prospective mechanisms for enhanced SFM financing in SIDS &amp; LFCCs.</b>	CI.c. Seven country studies on SFM reported.	Activity completed: 7 studies on forest financing in Cape Verde, Fiji, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago respectively. Studies discussed at two workshops on forest financing in LFCCs and the two workshops on forest financing in SIDS, and posted on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites.
		CI.d. Four preparatory inter-regional workshop papers (with regard to CII) reported.	Activity completed: Four concept notes prepared ahead of four workshops on forest financing in LFCCs and SIDS, and posted on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites.
<b>2. Establishment of National Ownership, Review of Thematic Papers and Consultations on Way Forward</b>	<b>3 (CII.1): Strengthened national awareness and ownership as well as strengthened inter-regional and regional cooperation through networks on SFM financing</b>	CII.a. A baseline awareness levels set	Baseline awareness levels only partially set and very late on in implementation (only for 4th workshop, in Fiji). Quantitative baseline was not established during the design phase (despite being an activity identified for the PPG) and there was little initial understanding among the UNFF project team of the value and importance of baselines for measuring change due to project activities. An additional set of baseline awareness levels was collected prior to the online media literacy and grant application workshop held in New York in September 2014. This activity is more appropriately treated under M&E and it is unclear why it was identified as an output for one of the Outcomes.
		CII.b. National preparatory meetings planned and implemented and key stakeholders identified and national networks	No national preparatory meetings were held prior to the regional workshops. According to interviewees, this was largely due to the lack of a specific budget for these activities and a lack of buy-in from national governments during the design phase and early on in implementation (UNEP raised repeated concerns about this issue during the final phase of project design regarding the excessively high costs (and hence cost-effectiveness of the planned regional workshops). However, in each case key stakeholders were identified for inclusion in the project.
	<b>4 (CII.2): Enhanced insight and agreement on</b>		



<p><b>common way forward towards the elaboration of a SFM financing strategy and overall approach to SFM</b></p>	<p>initiated.</p>	<p>No national networks for financing SFM were created in any concrete form. Rather the ‘networks’ developed have been informal based on contacts between individuals.</p>
	<p>CII.c. Standardized reports (in questionnaire format) with national findings and key issues to influence/steer the inter-regional workshops submitted.</p>	<p>As there were no national preparatory workshops, no country submitted a standardized report, although representatives of some countries did give presentations on their national situation at the regional workshops.</p>
	<p>CII.d. Four inter-regional workshops with selected key stakeholders planned and implemented and inter-regional and regional networks on SFM financing initiated.</p>	<p>Activity largely completed with regional workshops delivered. First workshop on forest financing in LFCCs was co-organised with the Secretariat of the UNCCD and held in Tehran, Iran, 12-17 November 2011 and was attended by 41 representatives from 11 LFCCs and various regional and international organisations and NGOs. The workshop developed and endorsed 10 broad recommendations for improving forest financing in LFCCs. Second workshop on forest financing was co-organised with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and held in Niamey, Niger, 30 January to 3 February 2012. It was attended by 41 representatives from 14 LFCCs and regional and international organisations. Participants developed and endorsed 7 recommendations for improving forest financing in LFCCs. The first workshop on forest financing in SIDS, co-organised with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), was held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 24-27 April 2012. It was attended by 36 representatives from 8 SIDS and a range of other relevant organisations, and the group developed and endorsed 10 recommendations for improving forest financing in SIDS. The second workshop on forest financing in SIDS was co-organised with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and held in Nadi, Fiji, 23-27 July 2012 and attended by 56 experts from 12 SIDS and a number of national, regional and international organisations. The workshop developed and endorsed 15 recommendations to improve forest financing in SIDS.</p> <p>Project reports claim that regional networks on SFM financing were ‘established’. However, these were not formal structures but more ‘social networks’ relying on individual’s own interest and time to maintain contact with other participants.</p>
	<p>CII.e. 11 Component I papers (CI) and identified national key issues/outcomes in national preparatory reports (CII, part A) acknowledged and evaluated for integration</p>	<p>Activity partially completed. National preparatory reports were not delivered but each regional workshop produced a set of recommendations aimed at improving forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs. These formed the basis for the project’s common Forest Financing Strategy (see output CIII.a below).</p> <p>[Note there is confusion over the wording of this element in UNFF reports – the word ‘communications’ in ‘a common SFM financing communications strategy’ should not be present. The activities related to this outcome deal with developing a financing strategy not a communication strategy (that is part of Component 3).]</p>

		into a common SFM financing communications strategy.	
		CII.f. Four workshop reports indicating the way forward (with regard to Component III) incl. four SFM financing communications strategies submitted.	Activity partially completed. A 15-20 page report was produced for each workshop, including the recommendations endorsed at the end of the meeting, and reports were posted on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites. However, specific regional SFM financing strategies were not developed as the global level was considered more appropriate.  [Again, there is confusion over the wording of this element – the word ‘communications’ in ‘four SFM financing communications strategies’ should not be present. The activities related to this outcome deal with developing a financing strategy not a communication strategy (that is part of Component 3).]
		CII.g. One project report concluding on Component II and linkage with Component III submitted.	Activity completed. A 38-page substantive paper was produced that includes a brief history of discussions on forest financing and an analysis of the results of the project’s studies and the workshops [Singer, 2012]. This has been translated into French, Russian and Arabic (particularly important for reaching audiences in LFCCs) and is available on the UNFF and Facilitative Process websites.
		CII.h. Report with key findings presented to the Forum’s 10th session (UNFF10).	Activity completed. A report on project activities and deliverables was included within the Secretary-General’s report on the Means of Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management, presented to the 10th Session of the UNFF in Istanbul in April 2013 under a sub-report on progress made by the Facilitative Process.
<b>3: Communications Strategy for Facilitation of SFM Financing of SIDS and LFCCs</b>	<b>5 (CIII.1): Improved process towards building/strengthening awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCC countries to address SFM funding gaps.</b>	CIII.a. New financing opportunities identified and integrated into a common SFM financing communications strategy.	Activity completed. A common Forest Financing Strategy was prepared, based on the recommendations from the four regional workshops, and including input from equivalent workshops held under the GEF project’s sister project on financing for SFM in Africa and LDCs (the Africa-LDC project, also executed by the UNFF Secretariat), with a set of action points paired with proposed responsibilities and deadlines.  [Again, there is confusion over the wording of this output – the word ‘communications’ in ‘a common SFM financing communications strategy’ should not be present]
		CIII.b. Synthesis and recommendations for a SFM financing strategy submitted.	Activity completed (see above). These are contained in the reports of the first four workshops (see output CII.f above) and in the common forest financing strategy itself (see output CIII.a above).
	<b>6: (CIII.2). Increased political attention and awareness on innovative</b>	CIII.c. Potential solutions on SFM financing in SIDS and LFCC countries	Activity partially completed. Potential solutions to increase financing for SFM were disseminated through: (i) the first four workshops, where participants helped develop a set of recommendations specific to their country category contained in their workshop report (see output CII.f above); (ii) the common Forest Financing Strategy (see output CIII.a above); and (iii) the sixth workshop, held in New York on online media literacy and grant

<p><b>approaches on financing for SFM in SIDS &amp; LFCCs through improved dialogue.</b></p>	<p>disseminated.</p>	<p>applications (see output CIII.h below). In addition, four films aimed at illustrating examples of cross-sectoral financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs have been developed (see output CIII.e below) although these were not yet on the website and available to a general audience by the end of December 2014.</p> <p>The Facilitative Process website (see output CIII.h below), which was launched at the AHEG2 meeting in New York on 16 January 2015 provides a major route for stakeholders to access information generated by the Project.</p>
	<p>CIII.d. Component II outcomes including recommendations on common way forward reported back to workshop participants.</p>	<p>Activity completed. The reports of the first four workshops along with the common Forest Financing Strategy were sent to workshop participants and all documents are available on the Facilitative Process website.</p>
	<p>CIII.e. Selected communication activities implemented.</p>	<p>‘Selected’ is not defined so it is not possible to decide to what extent this output has been achieved. However, communication activities implemented have included production of a set of four films showcasing examples of cross-sectoral forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs: (i) a conservation project on turtles in Trinidad that is raising funds to preserve coastal forests (the coastal forests help screen urban lights from turtles which can disrupt nesting); (ii) sustainable harvesting techniques for walnuts in Kyrgyzstan, which are providing local people with up to a year’s worth of revenue; (iii) production and consumption of moringa (<i>Moringa oleifera</i>) in Togo, an introduced<sup>26</sup> high nutritional value food source among local communities that is attracting the interest of the World Food Programme (WFP); and (iv) the struggle of a remote local community in the Solomon Islands to retain the rights to their communal land threatened by a timber company and their attempts to develop an ecotourism project as an ecologically sustainable source of financing. These 10 to 15-minute films were to be broadcast as part of the UNTV series “Twenty-First Century in Action”, which are aired by over 80 channels around the world with a guaranteed viewership of more than 300 million. Two of the four films had been broadcast by 31 December 2014, with the remaining two scheduled for early or mid 2015.</p> <p>Shorter, 4 to 6-minute versions of each film have also been prepared with a more institutional focus aimed at professionals, i.e., forest financing stakeholders. Both versions of these films are expected to be available on the Facilitative Process website, although they were not yet available by 31 December 2014 or at its official launch on 16 January 2015.</p>
	<p>CIII.f. Networks of stakeholders that have been initiated under</p>	<p>No formal networks were established, although the four workshops helped build informal connections between participants (‘social networks’), which have been built on through the creation of email lists for project updates and further participant attendance at the Project’s workshops (in Addis and New York, although many participants</p>

<sup>26</sup> This species comes originally from the region of Afghanistan and North India and has been introduced elsewhere.

		Component II are strengthened and sustained.	only attended one workshop). The FP website was designed to be interactive and aims to help support and maintain these loose networks of parties with shared interests.
		CIII.g. Concluding project report with concrete lessons learnt for dissemination submitted.	Activity completed. A Terminal Report was produced in November 2014. It details the main results of the project and includes an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project, including lessons learnt, undertaken by the Project Manager. This output should have been treated as part of the M&E in the original project design.
		CIII.h. SFM financing webpage on SIDS and LFCC initiated and maintained on the UNFF website	Activity completed. The webpage ( <a href="http://unff-fp.un.org">http://unff-fp.un.org</a> ) has been upgraded and is now hosted on the UNFF website with its official launch in January 2015. However, its sustainability is not assured without additional funding. A joint online media literacy and grant application workshop was held in New York from 8-12 September 2014 to teach project participants how to use the website and share content. However, only 16 participants (from 13 countries) could attend.
		CIII.i. A SIDS-LFCC forest financing strategy and 4 regional forest financing strategies (1 per workshop) delivered, including in the form of policy briefs and publications.	Activity partially completed. The joint Forest Financing Strategy for SIDS, LFCCs, Africa and LDCs was produced in June 2013 (see output CIII.a above). The four regional forest financing strategies were not delivered largely because these did not distinguish themselves sufficiently from the common forest financing strategy to justify their separate existence, and a global level strategy was considered more appropriate. Three policy briefs with the main take-home messages were also prepared and are available on the Facilitative Process website (in English, French, Arabic and Russian). The evaluation understands that a peer-reviewed publication on the GEF project results is also under preparation, to be submitted to International Forestry Review.

### 2.11.2 Component 2: Establishment of National Ownership, Review of Thematic Papers and Consultations on Way Forward

**68.** A series of four 5-day inter-regional workshops (two for SIDS and two for LFCC countries) were held in Iran (November 2011), Niger (January-February 2012), Trinidad and Tobago (April 2012) and Fiji (July 2012), to review the findings of the background studies produced under Component I, and to make presentations on, and discuss alternative and innovative ways of raising funding for, SFM, e.g. revenue generated from a forest bat ecotourism project in Madagascar. The workshops were also intended to help build increased national ownership of the Project and its results.

**69.** TE interviewees stated that these inter-regional workshops did increase dialogue between countries on SFM financing, and the visibility of the UNFF and FP (there is generally low awareness of these), and also provided important networking opportunities and the chance to learn what others were doing in the field (participants reported feeling 'less isolated') with interviewees commenting that it was inspiring to hear 'success stories'.

**70.** However, no national preparatory workshops, which were designed to 'build national ownership' under Component II<sup>27</sup> and form the basis for national input to the inter-regional workshops, took place, nor were national reports on SFM financing prepared by national stakeholder groups prior to the inter-regional workshops. According to interviewees, the lack of national-level activities was largely due to the absence of specific project funding for these activities - there was no specific budget line for these in the project document, no co-financing was identified for these from national partners at the design stage, and it seems to have been assumed that participating countries would fund their own activities – a significant weakness in project design. The issue of national-level activities and participation was raised repeatedly by UNEP which had discussed its concerns during the late design phase about the high costs of the regional workshops and advised the UNFFS to consider reallocating funds to ensure increased national activities and support (although the UNFFS design team took the decision to focus on the expensive regional workshops).

**71.** Enlisting countries to participate in the inter-regional workshops also proved to be challenging as the rate of response to workshop invitations from the UNFFS remained low, especially among the LFCCs. For instance, the first workshop in Iran was postponed twice, as not enough member states initially responded to invitations (although reluctance to attend a workshop in Iran may have been partly due to political considerations). A particular disappointment was the low level of participation by staff from ministries other than those that included forests in their portfolio, e.g. ministry of economy, and general only those from the host countries attended the workshops. Practical difficulties for some participants travelling from remote or isolated locations to a workshop on another continent probably did not help in this regard either. However, by the end of the Project, 45 of the 78 SIDS and LFCCs had participated in at least one of the six workshops, which can be considered a significant achievement and deserves credit.

**72.** The primary output of each inter-regional workshop was the development and endorsement of a set of recommendations on increasing forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs. Originally, these were to be produced separately as a series of specific inter-regional SFM financing strategies but this was dropped, largely because these strategies did not distinguish themselves sufficiently from the global forest financing strategy (FFS) to justify their separate existence. Instead results were compiled to form the basis for a common FFS, which contains recommendations that are appropriate at national,

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<sup>27</sup> It should be noted though that there would have been high financial transaction costs in dispersing funds from the UN in New York to national partners if national-level workshops had been funded from the Project budget, although involving UNDP Country Offices may have been one possible route.

regional and global levels. The FFS was discussed, modified and endorsed at a workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, held from 3-5 June 2013 jointly with another UNFFS-executed project addressing the same issues but in African and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) – the UNFF Africa-LDC project, which was also being implemented under the Facilitative Process<sup>28</sup>. The meeting brought together 56 representatives from 41 countries and a range of international organisations, who discussed potential recommendations and then endorsed a common FFS for the SIDS and LFCCs, and African countries and LDCs, at the end of the meeting. Consequently, the final product can be said to have wide ‘ownership’ even if this document has not been officially approved by national governments<sup>29</sup>.

### 2.11.3 Component 3: Communications Strategy for Facilitation of SFM Financing of SIDS and LFCCs

**73.** This Component dealt with raising awareness of the importance of SFM and particularly the need for its financing by promoting the results of Components I and II and through specific capacity building activities to increase the likelihood of securing financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs (although these latter activities were added in later). There were four main outputs under this component: (i) a communication strategy, (ii) a joint FP/Project interactive website, (iii) production of various awareness-raising materials including four films showcasing successful cross-sectoral examples of non-conventional financing for SFM, and (iv) a capacity building workshop on online media literacy and effective grant applications. However, it should be noted that the Project highlighted communications as a specific project Component with two associated outcomes, but communication activities are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

**74.** The Communications Strategy was developed largely in-house with some input from an external consultant, who had only limited experience of communication strategies, and without input (requested) from UNEP at the draft stage, or surprisingly from the Division of Strategic Communication in UNDESA’s Division of Public Information, which generally advises on communication strategies.

**75.** The Communication Strategy is rather theoretical/academic and lacks specificity in places. It would benefit from much clearer presentation of (among other things) the key messages to be promoted, identification of individual institutions to be targeted and specific (best, most effective) means to target each, and a budget and delivery plan with roles and responsibilities so its implementation is clearly set out. It should also be noted that the Communications Strategy is rather confused in places as it appears to be intended both as the GEF Project communications strategy (dealing with communication of results of Components I and II, for instance) and as a communication strategy for the FP including the development of the ‘Facilitative Process Website’<sup>30</sup>. However, the FP is larger than the GEF Project and includes other initiatives such as the Africa-LDC and Climate Change Financing projects. Again, the confusion probably arises from the fact that the GEF ‘project’ was designed to implement the Facilitative Process, making it difficult on occasion to distinguish between what was supported by the FP or the GEF Project alone.

**Recommendation 3.** *Review and revise the project’s Communication Strategy to make it more effective, with clearer presentation of the key messages to be promoted, identification of individual*

<sup>28</sup> <http://unff-fp.un.org/unff-projects/africaldcs/>

<sup>29</sup> In many of the Project’s reports of this Strategy, it mentions the Strategy was ‘adopted’. However, this is not accurate as ‘adopted’ would signify that it had been approved and adopted by the UN General Assembly, which was not the case.

<sup>30</sup> See page 9 of the Communications Strategy Facilitating Financing for SFM in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries.

*institutions to be targeted and specific means to target each, and a budget and delivery plan with roles and responsibilities so its implementation is clearly set out. It is recommended that this is undertaken by a professional consultancy company/consultant with experience in public relations and social marketing from outside the UN system. Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU and communication consultancy company experienced in PR. Timeframe: Before September 2015.*

**76.** The Communications Strategy was delivered in the third year of the Project during the No Cost Extension period, which is surprising given that quite a lot of useful and important information existed before project implementation began (from the Component I studies). Indeed, there had been persistent requests from UNEP to start communication activities early on project implementation. Even at the formal end of the project (31 December 2014) the FP website was still not launched on the UN server and none of the four video films were available on the UNFF website. A better approach might have been to develop an initial project communications plan with associated materials within the first few months, using the existing background studies to ‘make the case’ for the economic, social and environmental importance of forest systems in SIDS and LFCCs, the value of the SFM approach, and the need for additional and sustainable funding of SFM, and to develop ‘key messages’ for the GEF Project to build a clearer understanding of what the Project aimed to achieve. This could have been updated later as more information/knowledge from the workshops and other project activities became available.

**77.** The SIDS-LFCC project webpage and its results has been hosted on the UNFF FP website since 2013, but has recently been updated and moved to a UN server (with a new address<sup>31</sup>) as of January 2015. The Project has contributed financially to the upgrading of the FP website, as the SIDS-LFCC Project is one of the FP’s major projects. One of the main aims of the UNFF FP website is to raise awareness and understanding among stakeholders, and it provides a route to access a wide range of information and data on forest financing by UNFF partners and others, such as linkage to the CPF database on SFM funding sources and information on other funding opportunities with a newsfeed, and it contains all the reports, briefs, publications from the GEF project. It is available in English and French language versions, although publications hosted on the website are available in up to six languages. The FP website can be considered a significant Project deliverable.

**78.** Another key aim of the new FP website is to provide a forum for stakeholders to exchange views and share experiences, and help maintain and build an informal ‘community of practice’ on SFM financing at a global level (for all the FP’s project, so not just for SIDS-LFCC project participants. The interactive component is accessible to specific forest financing stakeholders (with password protected accounts), where members are able to upload and share information including advertising events or new sources of financing and potentially matching donors with recipients. Although the FP website was delivered late (interactive component only after the Project had finished), the site had been undergoing extensive beta testing for some months before its launch and most elements were available before the official end of project activities on 31 December 2014 (and was live from 1 December although few were aware of its existence and it didn’t show on Google searches made by the evaluator).

**79.** It is worth noting that there are a number of other similar web-based platforms which aim to link members to donors and vice-versa in the biodiversity field, including the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) LifeWeb<sup>32</sup> initiative whose website (<http://lifeweb.cbd.int/>) provides a

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<sup>31</sup> <http://unff-fp.un.org>

<sup>32</sup> The mission of the Lifeweb Initiative is to ‘facilitate financing that helps secure livelihoods and address climate change through supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas’.

market place to match projects with potential donors. Other similar websites of potential value include that of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations – (<http://www.iufro.org/iufro/>) which emphasizes the easy access of information on information, and the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS – [www.gfis.net](http://www.gfis.net)) which has links to 300 high-quality information providers (including CPF and UNFF), provides news, jobs information, videos, etc., and is available in 10 languages. It is suggested that the UNFFS review these and other existing longer-established initiatives and seek advice from the groups operating these services, particularly on how they have managed to maintain membership and interest and become sustainable (such lessons could be captured in a specific short project report). It is also suggested that the UNFFS explore possible linkage with these platforms as a way of broadening the audience and reach of the FP website.

**80.** Among potentially the most useful communication materials developed for a general audience are a set of four films showcasing examples of cross-sectoral forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs - turtle watching/coastal forest conservation in Trinidad and Tobago, sustainable harvesting of walnuts in Kyrgyzstan, production of a traditional food source with the potential to combat malnutrition in Togo, and attempts by a remote community in the Solomon Islands to develop a sustainable ecotourism project as part of their fight to retain their communal land threatened by a timber company. These 10 to 15-minute films were produced in a partnership between the UNFFS and the United Nations Department for Public Information (DPI) and were to be broadcast as part of the UNTV series “Twenty-First Century in Action”, which have a guaranteed viewership of more than 300 million. Shorter, 2 or 4-minute versions of each film are to be prepared with a more institutional focus aimed at professionals, *i.e.*, forest financing stakeholders. Both versions of these films are expected to be available on the Facilitative Process website, although they were not yet available by 31 December 2014 or at its official launch on 16 January 2015 and all four videos were delivered later than scheduled.

**81.** The community level involvement in SFM, holistic and cross-sectoral perspective to forest financing and alternatives to ODA and REDD+ financing, which were to be promoted by the Project, does not come across strongly in project documents. However, these four films should help to redress this and are perhaps a more effective form of demonstrating such linkages than dry technical reports (at least to a general audience). The longer videos, produced by DPI for the project, targeted at a broader audience are seen as additional and ‘adding value’ to the Project’s communication activities.

**82.** A combined workshop on ‘online media literacy’ and grant applications was held in New York from 8-12 September 2014 and provided participants from SIDS and LFCCs with training on how to use the FP website (then in beta testing) and to identify and apply for financial support for SFM-related activities.

The overall rating on the delivery of Project’s outputs is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

## **2.12 Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results**

### **2.12.1 Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**

**83.** As discussed in section 2.9, GEF projects aim to achieve outcomes that lead the project towards its overall objective and engender change and impact. Consequently, the evaluation of the



Project's effectiveness is based on the extent to which the project's outcomes, as defined by the reconstructed ToC developed for the Project, were achieved.

**Immediate Outcome 1: Increased national awareness/understanding among SIDS and LFCCs of value of SFM, and need and opportunities for enhanced SFM financing**

**84.** This is equivalent to, or overlaps with, the Project's objective and several of its outcomes as stated in the project document (CI.1, CI.2, CII.1), which illustrates the confused nature of the original project design. A variety of approaches were employed to increase awareness and understanding, which were set out in the Communications Strategy (see section 2.11.3).

**85.** There was an initial focus on generating new knowledge through the background studies undertaken in Component 1. These background papers have been made available on the Facilitative Process website and represent the first time such information has been collected for either category of country and consequently can be considered to be an innovative deliverable of the project. The key findings were used in the preparation of substantive reports, publications and various briefs (produced under Component III) and to identify appropriate ideas for four films highlighting success stories.

**86.** The four inter-regional workshops held in 2011 and 2012 (in Iran, Niger, Trinidad and Tobago and Fiji), were also intended to raise awareness and understanding of SFM financing, as they brought together national and international stakeholders to debate the most relevant and important issues related to SFM financing (see section 2.11.2).

**87.** However, there were no quantitative baseline measures of awareness for this outcome. Pre-workshop assessments were only undertaken for the fourth workshop in Fiji (24 participants) and (surprisingly) these have not been repeated so there is no robust data on whether the Project has changed awareness and understanding among any group of project participants.

**88.** A notable aim of the Project has been to increase the 'political attention' paid to SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs. However, again, without an indicator or any baseline for this outcome it is difficult to say whether there has been any 'increased political attention' to SFM financing among target countries. Judging from Evaluation interviews the four inter-regional workshops certainly highlighted the issues and some of the host countries sent a number of high-level government officials (e.g. Trinidad and Tobago, and Fiji) who attended for at least some of their local workshop. However, it is not clear whether the 'political interest' was sustained or has increased in other participating (non-host) countries. One interviewee commented that his government is now more interested in funding SFM activities and can see their value, especially in relation to combating desertification. The overall impact is unclear but probably not large. However, the UNFFS needs to follow up on these initiatives (perhaps through the national UNFF Focal Point) and the situation reported in Project's Terminal Report. One possible example of raised political awareness of the value of SFM resulting from Project activities is that following the Fiji workshop (July 2012), 14 Pacific SIDS submitted a revised set of project proposals on integrated management of forests, agricultural land and coastal waters to the GEF Secretariat under the existing the GEF-funded Ridge-to-Reef (R2R) Programme<sup>33</sup>. The Project also fed results into the Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on Forest Financing between 2010 and 2013 by providing real-life examples, experiences, statistics and case studies, enabling the AHEG to make more informed recommendations to the UNFF (although interviewees were unable to give specific examples). UNFFS staff also suggested that the increase in the number and quality of national reports to the UNFF11 meeting (80) planned for May 2015

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<sup>33</sup> US\$90 million grant from the GEF, with US\$333 million secured as co-financing.

compared with those received for the UNFF10 meeting in 2013 (58), is partly the result of the awareness-raising activities of the SIDS-LFCC Project (indeed reporting on forest financing has been incorporated into the UNFF national reporting system by the Secretariat). However, the TE noted that there was little direct mention of the Project during the AHEG2 meeting in New York in January 2015. A potential indicator of increased political awareness might have been an increase in national government policy statements or press releases on SFM and its financing in the target countries following the inter-regional workshops (produced for nationally and/or at international fora such as the Convention of the Parties (CoP) of the CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC) but this was not tracked (nor was there any baseline). Part of the apparent weak interest in SFM ('low political attention') may have been because communication activities have not been generally targeted at specific individuals, departments, ministries, etc, within participating countries – there were few direct advocacy and lobbying activities at national level - as the Project has had a global-level focus, and national-level activities under the FP are expected to be led by national governments (particularly through the UNFF Focal Points). However, advocacy activities are not strongly promoted in the Communication Strategy (and would have required a different approach to communications), and unfortunately, much of the communication work came much too late to have an effect during the lifetime of the Project.

**89.** The failure to host national preparatory meetings or deliver agreed national reports through the Project has also undoubtedly worked against raising the political profile of the issue of SFM and its financing. Also, some interviewees felt that, generally, the Project's communication materials were not in the most effective form for decision-makers and this is an area that needs to be better understood by the UNFFS (e.g. 1-2 page policy briefing sheets with graphics rather than 8-10 pages of dense text). In addition, given that the Project was attempting to influence non-forest sectors, particularly ministries of finance, the economic (and social) value of forests under SFM (cost-benefit case) should perhaps have had greater promotion by the Project (and could have been done at an early stage) using existing data sources. A short briefing report on economic value of SFM (cost-benefit analysis) would still be useful to help 'sell' the Project's main message of the need to support increased SFM financing.

#### **Immediate Outcome 2: Endorsement of common 'SFM Financing Strategy and Plan' ('a common way forward') by SIDS and LFCCs (CII.2)**

**90.** A significant outcome of the Project has been the endorsement by the Project's participants of a 'common way forward' for financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs, expressed in the form of a Forest Financing Strategy (FFS). This is treated as an outcome by the TE as it required changes in awareness and understanding as well as negotiation and agreement<sup>34</sup> among the representatives of the various SIDS and LFCCs present at the workshops. The Project did not have full control over the decision reached in the process of negotiation and agreement.

**91.** The FFS was initially to be produced solely for the SIDS and LFCCs, but a decision was taken to develop jointly it with another project executed by the UNFFS – the Africa-LDC project – which had hosted its own workshops operating along similar lines as those of the SIDS-LFCC Project. There was a great deal of overlap between the findings and recommendations of the two sets of workshops. Some of these were specific to each set of countries, but there was a common core applicable to all countries within the four categories, e.g. lack of technical capacity at national level, needs assessments, etc., that justified lumping all six sets of recommendations into a common Forest Financing Strategy.

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<sup>34</sup> Note the project reports use the term 'adopted' for the strategy, but this is not correct. Adoption implies that it was officially approved and accepted by the member of the UNFF, which it is not (it has not been debated at a UNFF meeting) but rather the participants of the Addis workshop agreed upon and endorsed the recommendations.

**92.** This is the first time such a process has been undertaken and a common document has been produced among this group of countries. Consequently, it can be seen as another innovative product of the Project although surprisingly little emphasis is given to the development of a financing strategy/plan for SFM in the project document. The FFS has been translated into the main languages spoken in SIDS and LFCCs, namely English, French, Arabic and Russian, and is available on the UNFF and FP websites.

**93.** The TE found that the FFS had a low profile and has not been used (few interviewees had read it even if they contributed to the workshops that led to its development, or had been aware that it had been available on the UNFF website). The TE feels that the FFS needs a degree of reformatting, or at least key messages need to be extracted from the FFS and set out in formats more appropriate to their target audiences (mostly national policy makers, and potential donors), in the form of short (2-4 page) policy briefs to encourage them to engage the uptake and implementation of the FFS recommendations. It would also be useful to produce and disseminate (through FP website) a short 'glossy' publication for a more general audience, which would help promote the larger FFS document.

**94.** The FFS contains a total of 51 action points to be implemented at national, regional and international levels, over a suggested period of 5 years. In reality, the FFS is not a prescription for each country to follow. Rather it is more a series of guidelines (a 'matrix' of recommendations) that are intended to act as the basis for further work on forest financing at the international level, and as a 'blueprint' for the creation of national forest financing strategies, which are mandated under the UNFF Facilitative Process. At the TE, the FFS had not been translated to the national level in any SIDS or LFCC (or African or LDC) country as further funding was required for this (it was not envisaged as part of the GEF Project but as part of a follow-up project under the UNFF). However, it is also not clear whether specific national-level forest financing strategies are needed for each target country or whether results and recommendations from the SIDS-LFCC project and the Strategy would be better mainstreamed through integration with existing policy and planning processes, such as NAPAs, NBSAPs, rural development strategies, National Forest Programmes (especially for LFCCs), and UNCCD Global Mechanism projects and programmes. Some interviewees felt that creating new national structures specifically for SFM financing would not be useful or easy and wouldn't solve the problem of how to improve financing for SFM. Consequently, there needs to be a review of existing national processes to be targeted for mainstreaming over the next five years, with identification of institutional arrangements, capacity and financial needs, schedule, etc (where, who, how, when, how much, etc). Advice should be sought from the UNFF Focal Points and appropriate regional organizations (e.g. AFF) to identify opportunities for mainstreaming of results.

**Recommendation 4.** *It is recommended that the UNFFS examines how best to develop national strategies from the FFS and/or identify and mainstream relevant recommendations from the FSS into appropriate national and regional processes in 3-4 target countries (the SIDS-LFCC project workshop countries, as relationships have already been established in these), and from this develop a strategy to implement the results, including a fund-raising plan. In addition, key recommendations and messages should be extracted and synthesized from the FSS to develop effective briefs for policy makers and donors to encourage uptake and funding of the FSS recommendations, as well as production of a short 'glossy' publication for a more general audience. Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU, UNFF Focal Points. Timeframe: Within three months of closure of the Project<sup>35</sup>*

<sup>35</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

**95.** If UNFF member states do utilise the FFS to develop their own national forest financing strategies or integrate recommendations from the FFS into existing policies and plans, then it would represent successful mainstreaming and indicate increased ‘political attention’ on SFM and its financing, and represents one of the intermediate stages of the ToC.

**96.** Discussions between UNFFS and potential donors on how to apply the FFS should also be a specific target. For instance, GEF has a particular interest in SFM and has been supportive of the UNFF and FP, which offers the possibility of UNFF influencing financing for SFM and leveraging of financing for SFM in countries eligible for GEF funding. According to interviewees, there were around US\$300 million of unallocated GEF funds identified for SFM in the last replenishment, and there has been a shortage of good SFM for financing under GEF. Judging from feedback given at the AHEG2 meeting, many UNFF members are interested in securing GEF funds for SFM but find them technically very challenging and frustrating to access, with many SIDS particularly lacking the capacity to apply for themselves. Consequently, it may be worth the UNFFS focusing more on providing capacity support to interested countries to develop GEF (and other major donor) projects and access this unused funding, rather than on developing its own GEF projects (with the UNFFS perhaps setting up a bank of SFM consultants to help in project design that SIDS and LFCCs could access). It would also be useful to explore how relevant recommendations from the FFS might link to GEF’s SFM focal area work, and it is suggested that the UNFFS consider preparing a briefing paper for the GEF Secretariat outlining the main results of the project and identifying key recommendations from the FFS that could be considered within the GEF work related to SFM. Similarly, some countries have established networks of donors interested in funding forestry projects, such as Kenya, and the UNFFS needs to examine how best to feed Project results into them.

### **Immediate Outcome 3: Self-sustaining functional networks supporting SFM financing**

**97.** Although it was a key aim of the Project, no national-level networks that brought together parties concerned with SFM financing were established through the Project in any concrete form. Creating national networks was clearly an unrealistic aspiration originating from the Project’s design phase, especially as UNFFS has (according to interviewees) “generally only 1-2 contacts at national level”. In some cases, existing national networks dealing with biodiversity, forests or other related issues could have been co-opted, and encouraged to add SFM financing to their agendas (rather than creating new institutional structures), but these were not identified.

**98.** Project reports that ‘regional networks on SFM financing’ have been established are also somewhat exaggerated as these are loose informal structures - more ‘social networks’ or can perhaps be categorized as ‘policy networks’<sup>36</sup> – that have developed through contacts between participants at the Project’s workshops and which rely on individuals’ own interest and time to maintain contact with other participants (although the creation of email lists for Project updates and reports has helped support these links).

**99.** However, it is expected that the FP website’s interactive facility (see X.X), which was launched at the AHEG2 meeting in New York on 16 January 2015, will help support and maintain the loose network of parties with shared interests. It should provide a convenient forum for stakeholders to exchange views, and share experiences, and help to build and maintain an informal ‘community of practice’ (global-level network) on SFM financing, although in the TE’s opinion the site will probably need another 6-12 months before it is clear whether it will be successful in this.

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<sup>36</sup> Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy\\_network\\_analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Policy_network_analysis).

**Immediate Outcome 4: Improved capacity for fund-raising (e.g. identifying gaps, accessing relevant information and designing effective grant applications) among SIDS and LFCC authorities and other stakeholders**

**100.** Building capacity for effective fund-raising was addressed through two main measures. These were the development of the interactive FP website and online forum, and a training workshop on 'online media literacy' (on how to use the FP website) and on how to write effective grant applications, held in New York from 8-12 September 2014. These specific activities were added to the Project as part of the No Costs Extension in 2013. The collation and synthesis of information undertaken under Component I can also be seen as a contribution to capacity building, as this helped build knowledge.

**101.** The FP website offers a capacity building tool through its two main functions: to report on information on forest financing on all aspects of sustainable forest management, with a link to the CPF database of financing sources, and to act as a hub for a community of SFM practitioners. A newsfeed was being developed at the TE that can be used to identify and advertise funding applications, and the site will enable access to practical advice as well as new publications, information on projects and films on innovative forest financing in action. The intention is also to use the site to call for funds and to advertise availability of funds with links to training on that specific fund for those interested where available. However, this facility had only been established since the site was launched in January 2015. Although the initial response from countries attending the AHEG2 meeting to the launch of the website was very positive, the website relies on a sense of shared ownership and requires sustained active input from members to make it work.

**102.** At present the webpage links with the CPF source book on financing<sup>37</sup>, although it is not clear how often this is updated and it may be worth the UNFFS considering developing a more specific database on SFM financing for SIDS and LFCCs (with types of funds, donors, areas, countries, issues that can be funded specific to a country). In addition, the 'community of practice' to be developed through the FP website could potentially be used to identify more specific capacity needs.

**103.** TE interviewees confirmed that the New York training workshop had been valuable, although some participants felt that the level of information was too general (some participants had already many years experience of grant-raising suggesting that the selection of appropriate participants could have been improved). Comments were also received that the workshop would have been more effective if it had been tailored to individual national situations (and identification of specific donors that would be relevant to the country).

**104.** Unfortunately, only 16 participants (from 13 countries) could attend the New York workshop (due to budgetary constraints and availability of potential participants) and training clearly needs to be expanded to ensure that more (and more appropriate) users can fully utilise the functions of the FP website and it is used to its maximum potential. There were specific calls for the workshop to be repeated (run at regional level, or run by regional partners<sup>38</sup>, rather than at UN HQ) so more countries could participate and in additional languages (there were no funds for simultaneous translation for the New York workshop). There was also a general feeling was that the workshop should have been split into two separate events with the element dealing with grant applications

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<sup>37</sup> Sourcebook for funding sustainable forest management – see [www.cpfweb.or/73034/en/](http://www.cpfweb.or/73034/en/)

<sup>38</sup> The African Forest Forum (AFF) for instance, could provide this function for Africa. The AFF provides a platform for information sharing and expertise and helps to create an enabling environment for independent and objective analysis, advocacy and advice on policy and technical issues pertaining to SFM (backstopping). Building networks is a major focus/strategic objective for the AFF.

lasting 4-5 days and used to help participants develop their own funding proposal that could be submitted with little additional effort after return to their country.

**Recommendation 5.** *It is recommended that the grant-writing workshop undertaken in New York in September 2014 is repeated in two regions (one workshop for SIDS and LFCC each, and through regional organizations as cheaper (more cost-effective) and likely to include more specific and relevant examples for participants), with one workshop held in French, for participants not able to attend the NY workshop. It is also recommended that the UNFFS should consider developing an online training course for use of the FP website<sup>39</sup> (based on presentation by the PM at the AEHG2 meeting in New York in January 2015) and made accessible to all members of the FP website. A web-based training platform would likely be more cost-effective than regional or NY-based workshops. Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU with workshop trainers. Timeframe: Within three months of closure of the Project<sup>40</sup>*

**105.** Overall, despite positive feedback to the TE, the extent to which capacity has been built has not been measured (there was no project indicator) and indeed specific capacity needs in terms of accessing financing for SFM among SIDS and LFCCs were not identified for this Project at the design stage (only very generally that capacity was low). However, participants at the inter-regional workshops discussed their capacity limitations among other issues, and the FFS has identified a number of recommendations to address capacity concerns.

**The rating for overall achievement of outcomes is Moderately Satisfactory.**

### 2.12.2 Likelihood of impact using the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) approach

**106.** The ROtI approach is used to assess the likelihood of impact by building upon the concepts of Theory of Change (Section 3.9). There are a number of intermediate stages/results beyond the Project's outcomes in the causal pathway that need to occur for the realization of the Project's final desired impact. Two of these are Intermediate States captured by the Project's stated 'vision' and 'goal'.

**107.** There are also significant number of assumptions and drivers and assumptions that may impede or enhance the adoption of project outputs and outcomes and the eventual achievement of the Project's desired impact.

**108.** Important assumptions include:

- The presence of sufficient practical capacity (notably sufficient trained staff) among the SIDS and LFCC to implement SFM in the field even if financing for SFM is enhanced. This can be a significant issue for SIDS where there are often a very small number of trained staff. Some Caribbean islands, for instance, are not recruiting new members of staff and retiring staff are not being replaced and training and further education opportunities are limited due to austerity measures imposed by the government and, as a result, human capacity has been declining in recent years due to the 2008/2009 financial/economic crisis. This is unlikely to be reversed in the short-term. However, attempts to address this situation are being made

<sup>39</sup> Similar webinars have been developed by the Foundation Centre, New York - <http://foundationcenter.org/newyork/>.

<sup>40</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

through other initiatives, such as the work of The Nature Conservancy and other NGOs on protected areas in the Caribbean, and the UNFFS should attempt to link more strongly with these (see section 2.15.3 on partnerships).

- Continued interest and commitment from donors to fund SFM is also required (donors have redirected their funding in recent decades, often follow current trends and are affected by 'political' influences). This can be partly influenced through the UNFF and other global-level processes, which can help keep the issue of SFM on the international development agenda. The UNFF Secretariat's location in New York, and position within UNDESA, is an advantage in this regard because it can directly link with and input into wider UN environment and development processes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 agenda.
- Continued national level interest ('political attention') and commitment from governments in support of SFM. The Project's communication activities have sought to address this. Particularly important is the promotion of the successful examples of SFM financing (e.g. the four videos showcasing real-life examples) as these help maintain attention and encourage further interest.
- Another assumption is that markets capture the true economic values of forests to provide sufficient financial incentives against land conversion and alternative forms of land use. This could be addressed to some extent through better promotion of the economic value of forest services and natural capital accounting. Many other organisations have undertaken work on the economic valuation of forest ecosystems, including other UN agencies, which offer significant information sources that the UNFFS could draw upon, where it has little relevant information of its own (e.g. from Component I).

**109.** An important driver promoting adoption and use of the Project's results is the existence of various international agreements supporting SFM or related issues, such as the Rio conventions (CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC). As mentioned the design of the Project was tied tightly to the UNFF Facilitative Process. This calls for, among other things, the development of national SFM financing strategies and plans to be a follow-up project to the current GEF Project. Consequently, Project results could be fed directly into UNFF processes, programmes and events so there are expected to be good opportunities for the uptake, mainstreaming, catalysis and replication of Project results. However, in reality, delays over project delivery have meant that most results were delivered during the 18-month NCE period with many of the most important results, such as launch of the interactive FP website, coming at the very end of the project (or just after the revised completion date) and there has been little opportunity to date for active mainstreaming of results.

**110.** One successful example of (and future route for) mainstreaming is the inclusion of the Project's results in the UN Secretary General's Report on the Means of Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management that was presented to Member States at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNFF in 2013 under the report on progress made by the Facilitative Process. This resulted in the adoption of Resolution 10/2 on Emerging Issues, Means of Implementation and Enhanced Cooperation. The Resolution contains a minimum number of actions on forest financing, primarily as a result of UNFF Member States anticipating a greater push for decision-making at the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNFF planned for May 2015, during which the UNFF will be evaluated and its future decided as part of the assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests. Lessons from this Project are therefore expected to be taken up in May 2015, although at the TE point it is unclear which will be adopted and to what extent (nevertheless there is considerable potential).

**111.** It should also be noted that although the 78 participating countries have much in common in relation to SFM and its financing, differences between them mean that the influence of individual

assumptions and drivers is likely to vary considerably and may enhance or impede the widespread achievement of project outcomes across the SIDS and LFCCs and undermine Project results. For instance, climate change impacts may be particularly severe for low-lying SIDS in the coming years.

**112.** 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 7 below and the assessment of the Project’s progress towards achieving its intended impacts is presented in Table 8.

**Table 7: Rating Scale for Outcomes and Progress towards Intermediate States**

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were 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 have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were 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 have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

**113.** Not all the outcomes were fully achieved. This was due in part to the overly ambitious nature of the project given the initial timeframe of two years, limited project management capacity and experience within the UNFFS (at least during the design and early stages of the Project), and particularly UNFFS’s insistence on targeting all 78 SIDS and LFCCs (see paragraph 167). However, there is no rating category for partial achievement of project outcomes (so between D and C). Some of the outcomes were clearly designed to feed into existing, continuing processes, notably the FP, but again only some of the outcomes were achieved. Consequently, there is no single category rating into which the project neatly fits; it is a mixture of B, C and D. Therefore, **rating of progress towards Outcomes has been ‘averaged’ and is rated “C”**.

**114.** However, as mentioned above there are several assumptions that need to be met between project’s immediate outcomes, intermediate states and final desired impact. Progress towards intermediate states has started and is particularly helped by the fact that the Project helps to address the implementation of the Facilitative Process, thus presenting clear opportunities for mainstreaming results into global, regional and national processes supported by member states of the UNFF. **Rating of progress towards the Intermediate States is rated “B-C”**.

**115.** The Project has not achieved documented changes in environmental status during the its lifetime and is unlikely to achieve these in the immediate future as many other factors have to be met for desired environmental impact (the reversal of loss and degradation of forests in SIDS and LFCCs) to be achieved, which SFM alone will not resolve since it does not directly address root causes of forest loss and degradation. Consequently, the Project merits a final rating of **“CC”**.



**Table 8: Overall Likelihood of Achieving Impact**

Results rating of project entitled: Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)							
Outputs	Outcomes	Rating (D - A)	Intermediate states	Rating (D - A)	Impact (GEB)	Rating (+)	Overall
<p>Component 1</p> <p>Review of information on SFM and its financing in SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>Identification of SFM funding opportunities for SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>Component 2</p> <p>National workshops and national reports on SFM financing</p> <p>Inter-regional workshops on SFM financing with recommendations for improving financing for SFM</p> <p>Networks established to support enhanced financing of SFM among SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>Global workshop to develop common forest financing strategy for SIDS, LFCC, African and LDCs</p> <p>Component 3</p> <p>Strategy for communication of SFM financing needs and opportunities, and associated communications activities to promote need and opportunities for SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>Web-based platform with information on SFM financing opportunities established</p> <p>Workshop on use of web-based platform (on UNFF website) hosting information on SFM financing opportunities ('online media literacy' workshop)</p> <p>Workshop on effective grant applications for SIDS and LFCC project participants</p>	<p>1. Increased national awareness/understanding among SIDS and LFCCs of value of SFM, and need and opportunities for enhanced SFM financing</p> <p>2. Endorsement of common 'SFM Financing Strategy and Plan' ('a common way forward') by SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>3. Self-sustaining functional networks supporting SFM financing</p> <p>4. Improved capacity for fund-raising (e.g. identifying gaps, accessing relevant information and designing effective grant applications) among SIDS and LFCC authorities and other stakeholders</p>	C	<p>IS1.1 National SFM financing strategies and plans developed where appropriate or key recommendations mainstreamed into other relevant policy and planning processes in SIDS and LFCCs</p> <p>IS1.2 Increased donor community interest in SFM in SIDS and LFCCs (e.g. GEF)</p> <p>IS2. Sustainable financing for SFM priority activities in SIDS and LFCCs secured (equivalent to Project goal)</p> <p>IS3. SIDS and LFCCs are applying SFM principles whereby healthy forests sustainably contribute to local livelihoods, economic development and ecological stability (Project vision)</p>	B-C	Reversal of loss and degradation of forests in SIDS and LFCCs		CC
	Justification for rating:		Justification for rating:		Justification for rating:		
	The project's intended outcomes were only partially delivered. Some will feed into continuing UNFF processes after project funding closes. UNFF will lead on these as part of its work helping to support implementation of the FP. There is no single rating category that accurately reflects the delivery of project outcomes.		Some measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not yet produced results.		Project has not achieved documented changes in environmental status during the Project's lifetime (although it was never intended to)		

**116.** Following the usual UNEP project evaluation rating system, the rating obtained is translated into the usual 6-point rating scale used in UNEP project evaluations, as shown in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: ‘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 “+”.

**117.** The Project, with an aggregated rating of CC as described in the Table 9 above, can therefore be rated as “Moderately Unlikely” to achieve the expected Impact. Whilst the Project has produced some good results, the lack of national networks of practitioners and national financing strategies, poor national ownership and adoption, and little indication of increased donor interest (as result of project) and no new ‘project generated’ financing for SFM, suggest that its long-term impact is questionable. In reality, the project was seen as a small first ‘stepping stone’ in a much longer-term process to improve financing for SFM.

**The project is considered “Moderately Unlikely” to achieve impact.**

### 2.12.3 Achievement of the formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document

**118.** The project objective was to ‘*Enhance the understanding on gaps, obstacles and opportunities for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs*’<sup>41</sup>. Unfortunately, the term ‘understanding’ is not defined and somewhat ambiguous in project documents. For instance, it is not clear whether this just refers to information and knowledge generation or goes beyond this<sup>42</sup>. Also, unfortunately, the Project set no indicators or targets for its objective (“there’s no clear marker for success” as one interviewee stated). This is considered a serious omission from the design phase (and not corrected during the first year of implementation by the UNFFS, ISC or UNEP). Consequently, gauging whether the Project’s objective has been achieved is not straightforward. Possible indicators could have included an increase in the number of government press releases on SFM and the need for improved financing following attendance at Project workshops but these were not tracked by the Project.

**119.** Information on the gaps and obstacles and opportunities for forest financing can be said to have been increased through the Project, mostly through the 11 background studies on financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs, under Component 1, but the degree to which it has been taken up, absorbed and used is less clear and difficult to assess. Feedback from TE interviews suggests this may have been minimal to date, although there is potential for increased uptake through the newly launched interactive FP website.

**120.** Unfortunately baseline levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding among Project participants were not assessed either during the PPG phase for the Project or during the first three workshops, and unfortunately, the baseline awareness questionnaire undertaken at the fourth workshop in Fiji was not repeated. Consequently, it is impossible to determine quantitatively whether there has been any change in awareness, knowledge or understanding.

<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, every interviewee had a different definition of the Project’s objective, suggesting a lack of clarity on the communication of key project aims, features, results and messages by the Project. Examples included: to “create a vision for countries to look at forest financing in a more institutional, systematic and coherent way” and “to develop a forest financing strategy”.

<sup>42</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary ‘understanding’ is defined as ‘the ability to understand something: comprehension’, which suggests rather more than generating information. See [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/understanding](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/understanding)

**Recommendation 6.** *It is recommended that the UNFFS undertake a post-project assessment of the state of awareness of SFM and financing requirements to examine how much was retained from the Project's workshops to determine whether participants feel their awareness and knowledge has changed with questions on how participants have used the information/knowledge since the workshops. In the absence of baseline data from most of the Project's workshops, appropriate questions could include "Has your level of awareness changed a) lot b) a little c) not at all, or d) decreased, as a result of your participation in the Project?"* If UNFFS intends a follow-up project to develop and implement national-level forest financing strategies such information would be important. Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU with input on design of questionnaire from an M&E and a communications consultant. Timeframe: Before September 2015.

**121.** Those participants interviewed by the TE did believe they had gained a greater understanding of the complexities of, and opportunities for, financing SFM. For instance, before the workshops one interviewee commented that he had seen forest financing largely through the lens of carbon financing, but he now sees other possibilities, e.g. Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). Each workshop also had a field excursion to visit a demonstration project which were considered valuable awareness-raising opportunities (in most cases).

**122.** The 'goal' of the Project that 'financing mechanisms for SFM are identified and mobilised whereby forests are locally managed to sustainably contribute (to) and improve local livelihoods and economic development, including delivering and ensuring ecosystem services such as biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, watersheds and productivity on all levels (local, national, and global)' is very ambitious and not realistic for a project of this duration and budget. 'Mobilisation' of financing for SFM was not considered as an objective of the Project<sup>43</sup>, and it would appear that, to date, no additional financing has been facilitated through the Project (none was identified by through TE interviews).

**123.** However, one interviewee commented that the Project could have "claimed success" if their country had received specific money for SFM in the last three years above the expected level (this did not happen), and the expectation reported to the TE among workshop participants was that the Project should have led to increased financing during its lifetime ("even one successful grant application would have made a difference")<sup>44</sup>.

**The overall rating for the achievement of project goals and objectives is Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

## 2.13 Sustainability

**124.** Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the project funding and assistance has ended. Sustainability of project results was considered at the design stage, although the presentation is short and weak in project documents. The Project's approach to sustainability has particularly relied on:

- i. Key national stakeholders with decision-making influence involved in project;
- ii. Creation of a 'sense of ownership' of the Project results among participating stakeholders;
- iii. Creation of SFM financing networks;

<sup>43</sup> Although the title of the Project - 'Facilitating Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)' – suggests that SFM financing was to have been facilitated (delivered) by the Project.

<sup>44</sup> Thus one potential indicator for the project's objective would have been evidence of increased levels of national financing for SFM through Project's participants as they would have had to have understood and taken advantage of opportunities for financing using their new capacity built through the Project.

- iv. Establishment and maintenance of the Facilitative Process (project) website, and
- v. Development of an agreed common forest financing strategy (FFS) that sets out the path for follow-up projects by the FP.

**125.** Review of project documents and feedback from TE interviews shows that there are significant doubts about the sustainability of some of the Project's results. Unfortunately, the Project did not develop a separate sustainability and 'exit' strategy during the last year of the project, as is common for GEF projects, which would have helped identify needs to promote sustainability of project results.

**126.** The TE examined sustainability of the Project from the point of view of four parameters: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental.

**The overall rating for project sustainability is Moderately Satisfactory.**

### 2.13.1 Socio-political sustainability

**127.** It is questionable whether some of the Project's approaches to sustainability listed above would really promote socio-political sustainability or could be achieved given the initial short timeframe for the project (2 years) and number of countries to be involved (78). It would have been expected that numbers (i) and (ii) above should have been present or built strongly at the project design and early implementation stages, but this was not the case and indeed one of the challenges faced by the project management team has been in securing the engagement of some countries to participate in the project (33 out of 78 countries invited did not participate in the Project) and national ownership of the Project has been weak (see section 2.15.3).

**128.** With regard to (iii), forest financing networks formed through the Project are largely informal and it is debatable whether they will continue without those involved receiving tangible benefits from their involvement. Interviewees commented that they 'needed to see results' from their involvement in the Project, which for some of the interviewees was judged in terms of obviously increased funding for SFM in their countries attributable to the Project.

**129.** The recently launched interactive website (iv above) offers potential as a tool to sustain an online network, and since it hosts all the Project's reports and documents is a key element in ensuring that the Project results will continue to be available after the Project ends. However, despite the positive feedback from new users, it is difficult at the TE point to be sure that a critical mass of users will develop to sustain interest in the site in the long-term. It is not clear whether a web-based platform for serving a SFM financing network that requires the active participation from extremely busy national government officials and other stakeholders and needing to deal with multiple languages is going to succeed. Members will need to see some quick and direct benefits if they are to continue to use it. Posting success stories (e.g. the four films) will help but ultimately its success is likely to be down to whether the individual members have managed to secure more financing for SFM in their countries over the next 12-24 months from using the website. Although no formal criteria for judging success or ensuring its sustainability have been developed, the UNFFS considers that the site will need around 200 regular members to reach the 'critical size' where it becomes essentially self-sustainable.

**130.** Also, the website will need to be moderated which will require further resources, principally continued UNFFS staff input. The UNFFS estimates that initially 2.5 persons/week will be needed to generate and maintain membership and service the web content, but this could increase if the site, particularly the interactive element/forum, becomes more successful. Maintenance and development of the website needs to be clearly positioned and funded within the UNFFS as a core activity. Consequently, the FP website, as a key capacity building tool, needs to have its own strategic plan setting out its aims and

development, resource and budget and identifies possible sources of sustainable financing for the next 2-3 years. The website also needs more and wider promotion.

**131.** The proposed preparation of national forest financing strategies, using the FFS (number (v) above) as a 'blueprint', should facilitate long-term socio-political sustainability of project results. However, although this is called for under the FP, additional funding will be required so sustainability is not guaranteed. A follow-up project to deliver national forest financing strategies is apparently being planned by the UNFFS but at the TE no significant funding for this has been identified.

**132.** The UNFFS also needs to consider how best to integrate the Project results into other processes, and address relevant issues, e.g. the CBD Aichi Targets, SDGs, etc, and develop sets of policy briefs for SFM targeted at specific processes at both national and global levels. For instance, some of the proposals for the SDGs, published in July 2014 contain forest-related targets, with forests explicitly mentioned in SDG 15<sup>45</sup> and multiple functions of forests are also explicitly recognized in one of the targets for SDG 6 on sustainable water management<sup>46</sup>.

**133.** The UNFFS might also like to consider a so-called 'double mainstreaming' approach where recommendations are fed into relevant existing national-level environmental mainstreaming projects. This would be particularly cost-effective as mainstreaming structures would not then need to be set up by UNFFS as they would be provided by the partner project (the UNFFS project would be 'piggy backed' on the existing established mainstreaming project). For instance, the UNFFS could produce briefing SFM financing documents that feed into other GEF-funded projects with SFM elements seeking to mainstream BD conservation into development sectors.

**The rating for socio-political sustainability is Moderately Likely.**

### 2.13.2 Sustainability of Financial Resources

**134.** Financing to sustain Project results is needed for maintenance, development and growth of the website mentioned above, without which the website is likely to fail. Although the FP website is seen as an important part of UNFFS work, the more useful and successful it gets the more time and input will be required from UNFFS to maintain it. Indeed, there were calls from some delegates to the AHG2 meeting for an even more 'active' website with the UNFFS sending weekly alerts (or 'prompts') to individual countries (via UNFF Focal Points) on specific funding opportunities e.g. call for proposals for a specific donor for a specific country. Such a system would require even more investment from the UNFFS. However, the UNFFS's budget is uncertain as the future arrangements of the UNFF are still to be decided, and UNFFS has no core funding for communication activities (all need to be met from project funds). A meeting of the members of the UNFF in May 2015 will decide on this - whether it remains a Forum served by a Secretariat or changes into an alternative structure. Financing for any future arrangement is expected to be agreed at or shortly after this meeting. In the meantime, urgent funding is needed to maintain the website in particular.

**Recommendation 7.** *It is recommended that a strategic and financing plan is developed for the FP website, setting out its aims and development, resources needed and budget, and identifies possible sources of sustainable financing for the next 3 years. The UNFFS should consider extending the existing contract of*

<sup>45</sup> 15.2 (by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally) and 15.b (mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation).

<sup>46</sup> 6.6 (by 2020 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes).

*the IT consultant currently providing support for the maintenance and development of the website. Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU. Timeframe: Within three months of closure of the Project<sup>47</sup>.*

**The rating for the financial sustainability is Moderately Unlikely (without additional financing identified and secured).**

### 2.13.3 Sustainability of Institutional Frameworks

**135.** The institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies, agreements, legal and accountability frameworks required to sustain project results at national level are poorly identified and described in project design documents and reports. Relevant institutional frameworks and governance structures were only described for some countries as part of the background studies undertaken as part of Component I (undertaken before the Project began). The lack of national preparatory workshops and specific national reports that were to precede and feed into the four inter-regional workshops meant that these were not identified in any detail during project implementation.

**136.** It was clear from TE interviews that lack of technical capacity and in-house skills at national level are significant limitations to sustainability of project results, and the TE heard calls for repeats of the Project's grant application workshop held in New York in September 2014. However, the Project's capacity building activities need to be followed up to determine whether they were effective and training from the workshop is being used (and if not, why not). This information would be valuable in the design of additional capacity building workshops (see Recommendation 5), and the TE suggests the UNFFS undertake a follow-up survey of those directly involved in the 2014 capacity building workshop to determine if and how they have used their new knowledge and skills since the workshop and any problems they have encountered. The Project should also promote a 'training of the trainers' approach whereby participants of capacity building workshops are encouraged (required?) to undertake some training of their own colleagues on key aspects of the course.

**137.** At global level, sustainability of the Project results relies on their integration into UNFF processes, and thus the efforts of the UNFFS staff. However, human resources within the UNFF Secretariat are very limited. UNFFS only has a small budget, and has to depend on a limited number of staff that rely largely on voluntary contributions, and this significantly undermines the effectiveness of the Secretariat at times. If UNFFS intends to apply for funding to implement follow-up activities to the Project, e.g. development of national forest financing strategies or integration of key recommendations into existing national policies and processes, it needs to ensure dedicated technical and general staff are available (and they are covered by an adequate budget). Recommendations have been made to increase staff numbers at the Secretariat in the Secretary-General's Report on the Means of Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management, which will be examined by Member States in May 2015, and the lack of capacity at the Secretariat has been highlighted in the independent assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests (2014). The TE supports the conclusions and recommendations of these two documents.

**The rating for the institutional sustainability is Moderately Unlikely.**

### 2.13.4 Environmental sustainability

**138.** The project document does not identify any specific environmental factors that could affect sustainability of project results, but there is a brief 'Environmental and Social Safeguards' section, which argues that the Project, if successful, is likely to improve the state of the environment, e.g. through reducing GHG emissions, and positive local socio-economic impacts through increased application of SFM.

<sup>47</sup> The timing is conditional on GEFSEC authorising UNFF to utilise the unexpended funds following closure of the project and return of the unspent finances to the GEF by UNEP (see recommendation 8)

**139.** Climate change was not considered as an important element in this project, although it is a serious (or potentially serious) problem in many of the target countries, notably the low-lying SIDS. By promoting SFM this project contributes to the mitigation of Green Houses Gases (GHG).

**The rating for the environmental sustainability element is Likely.**

### 2.13.5 Catalytic Role and Replication

#### Catalysis

**140.** There has been relatively little evidence of any form of catalysis<sup>48</sup> (behavioural, institutional changes or policy changes, incentives, catalytic financing, or champions to catalyse change) to date, a reflection of the slow delivery of the Project.

**141.** Catalysis of national policy change was anticipated to take place mostly through linkage with the FP, targeted awareness raising and advocacy activities (under Component III), through establishing national networks (Component II) and involvement of UNFF Focal Points in the Project. However, it is not yet clear to what extent this has happened (TE interviews identified no specific examples) and unfortunately, although national level preparatory activities (under Component II) were seen as a key approach to catalyse behavioural change through promoting national ownership, there was no specific budget for these and they did not take place.

**142.** The FFS and development of national forest financing strategies offer an obvious route although the FFS was not identified as a mechanism to engender policy change in project documents, and, unlike the 'Communications Strategy', it is given very little attention in project design documents; indeed in the project document it is only mentioned as an activity/deliverable in the project Workplan (Appendix 5) and under some background studies (Appendix 18) and not in the main text (again this illustrates a confused approach during the project design phase). However, the recent UNFF11 meeting in May 2015 (which took place after the Project had officially closed) passed a resolution that called on the upgraded FP to help design such financing strategies.

**143.** There has been little evidence of catalytic financing either. The only concrete example offered to the TE was in the case of Kenya which was able to secure US\$60,000 for SFM work from FAO following attendance at the Niger workshop where it had "started to see opportunities for capturing financing".

**144.** The Project had no specific measures to create opportunities for particular individuals ('champions') to catalyse change, although this might be possible through the interest of individual national UNFF Focal Points and others who participated in the different inter-regional and global-level workshops under Components II and III. Individuals from non-forest sectors, e.g. ministries of economy and agriculture, were invited to the four inter-regional workshops but there was no evidence that any of these had picked up the key messages of the Project and have since been promoting it among their colleagues.

**145.** Perhaps the most concrete example of catalysis to date, was that following the workshop in Fiji, 14 SIDS agreed to submit a revised set of national and regional projects to the GEF on integrated management of forests, agricultural land and coastal areas under the GEF-funded (US\$90 million) Ridge-to-Reef Programme (R2R). This was attributed to discussions between participants during the Fiji workshop following presentations on SFM financing issues and elaboration of common recommendations for addressing the issue by the workshop group. The R2R project had previously become stalled and the Fiji workshop helped to "reinvigorate" the project according to interviewees. The Project's influence on this

<sup>48</sup> Catalysis can be said to occur in cases where project activities have stimulated others to undertake complementary activities in line with the project's aims and results.

was much appreciated by the GEFSEC staff interviewed as previously submitted projects were considered of very variable merit and a ‘bottleneck’ had developed over their development and approval, which the Project is credited as unblocking.

## Replication<sup>49</sup>

**146.** Again, replication of Project results has been limited to date. The clearest example of replication from the Project has been its influence on the design, development and implementation of the two other FP projects being executed by the UNFFS – the Africa-LDC project (largely funded by the German Government)<sup>50</sup> and the Climate Change Financing project (largely funded by the United Nations Development Account)<sup>51</sup> – both of which were developed after the SIDS-LFCC Project so had the opportunity to incorporate lessons learned from the earlier pioneering SIDS-LFCC Project as it was being implemented. For example, one important lesson that came out of the SIDS-LFCC Project and subsequently applied to the Climate Change Financing project, was to use regional-level partners to carry out project activities and focus on a small number of (pilot) target countries in each region rather than all relevant countries. The Climate Change Financing project in particular developed directly out of calls from participants to the SIDS-LFCC Project workshops, and this has benefited from and was strengthened by the networks initiated by the GEF-funded project.

**147.** There has also been some interest from the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation<sup>52</sup>, to undertake a similar project among the Amazon countries through the UNFFS, although this appears to be still at the preliminary stage (although there may be significant potential for replication).

**The project’s catalytic role and replication is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory.**

## 2.14 Efficiency

### 2.14.1 Cost efficiencies

**148.** Some Project activities have been very expensive, particularly background studies on financing of SFM (Component I, especially given their quality), consultants costs, and workshops (Component II) and there is a question over whether some of these were good value for money. Indeed, the cost of some of these, especially the regional workshops, was repeatedly questioned by UNEP during the project design phase. This was (only) partly corrected by the UNFFS during this period and also during project implementation where some of those funds could be realigned to e.g communications activities. The inter-regional workshops were especially expensive as some participants from other regions were invited to foster greater ‘cross-fertilisation’ of ideas, e.g. SIDS participants from the Pacific participated in the LFCC workshop in Niger, although such arrangements were appreciated by the participants interviewed by the TE for their networking opportunities.

**149.** On the other hand, the Project was executed by the UNFF Secretariat so there was opportunity to tie in with planned UNFF meetings to raise awareness, increase ‘political attention’ and present Project results with little additional direct investment, and the UNFFS location within UN Headquarters in New York provides an advantage due to opportunities to build close relationships with many UN agencies and input directly into wider UN processes and meetings, such as post-2015 agenda meetings.

<sup>49</sup> Replication is often defined as lessons, experiences, demonstrations, techniques, or approaches coming out of a project that are repeated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects.

<sup>50</sup> <http://unff-fp.un.org/unff-projects/africaldcs/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://unff-fp.un.org/unff-projects/climate-change-financing/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://otca.info/portal/index.php?p=index>



**150.** Project established a partnership with DPI to produce a series of four short films illustrating alternative and successful ways to generate funds from SFM. A more expensive company could have produced the 2- and 4-minute films commissioned by the Project but would not have had access to the wider distribution networks that DPI has and this can be seen as one area where the Project achieved cost-effectiveness. Also, linkage with the Africa-LDC project to produce the common FFS allowed cost-sharing, especially as the Africa-LDC project was structured in a similar way to the SIDS-LFCC Project.

### 2.14.2 Timeliness

**151.** The Project principally built on UNFF agreements and its scheduling was initially arranged to coincide with UNFF meetings, e.g. delivery of reports in time for presentation at UNFF10 in 2013. For instance, one specific output in the Project's logframe is given as 'Report with key findings presented to the Forum's 10th session (UNFF10)'.

**The overall rating for efficiency is Moderately Satisfactory.**

## 2.15 Factors affecting performance

### 2.15.1 Preparation and readiness

**152.** The Project was developed before the concept of Theory of Change was introduced for UNEP projects. In its place is a traditional logframe (standard throughout the GEF family of agencies and portfolio). This is poorly designed, with vague wording of outcomes e.g. 'enhanced insight...', 'improved process', and 'increased political attention', or has complicated formulations of outcomes e.g. 'strengthened national awareness and ownership as well as strengthened inter-regional and regional cooperation through networks on SFM financing' (this covers three separate areas – awareness, cooperation and ownership which should have been treated separately). The lack of clarity was exacerbated by the lack of proper associated SMART indicators to measure changes in outcomes. In some cases, outcomes duplicate or overlap, e.g. outcomes 1.1. and 1.2, are essentially the same as the project objective. It is clear from the reconstructed ToC presented above (section X.X) and analysis of the Project Document that the focus for most of the Project has been on achievement at the output level rather than the expected higher outcome level.

**153.** In addition, many of the indicators are not SMART<sup>53</sup> and are largely process indicators tied to project outputs rather than indicators for achievement of their associated project outcomes. The project objective does not have any indicator, which is considered a serious fault in project design (objective level indicators should link to the GEF results framework)<sup>54</sup>. Time-bound targets and means of verification are presented in the logframe, although some targets are not specific, e.g. 'number of communication activities/events/products in accordance with respective national situation successfully implemented' is phrased more as an indicator than a target, and it is not clear what 'start-made' entails in the target 'At least 9 countries report a 'start-made' or mechanisms towards SFM financing in the (sic) national policies'. Also, the identification of assumptions in the logframe is cursory and does not fully match those listed in the main text of the project document. Some changes were made to the project's logframe part way through the second year. These were mostly changes to the wording for clarification but also some targets were reduced.

<sup>53</sup> Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Time-bound

<sup>54</sup> The latest GEF M&E Policy 2010 states 'The (GEF) Secretariat reviews all projects and programs prior to their approval to ensure that they meet GEF M&E requirements, including the use of indicators and targets that align with focal area objectives and indicators.' Para 84 of that policy states 'GEF project and program objectives and intended results should be specific and measurable, so as to make it possible to monitor and evaluate the project and program effectively.'

**154.** Although the logframe is given as an Appendix to the project document, the narrative on the intervention logic and causal pathways from project outputs towards impact is not well described in the main project documents. Many of the ‘root causes’ are actually barriers to addressing the threats, and the Project rationale is rather weakly presented. Most of what the Project was proposing can be seen as ‘enabling activities’ focused on information gathering and needs analysis, establishing informal networks, and awareness-raising with some additional target (and limited) capacity building.

**155.** Interviews revealed that the project design stage was particularly confused. Many activities listed in the PPG application are actually those to be undertaken during the main project implementation period. Four national consultants were employed to help develop inter-regional workshops but they appear to have achieved little, and no baseline data was collected during this period as is expected for GEF projects. The loss of an international GEF design consultant (who had to be replaced due to non-performance), introduced significant delays resulting in an application and approval of a 6-month extension of the PPG milestones by GEFSEC. Consequently, delivery of the PPG phase and the CEO Endorsement Request and Project Document was late, which affected the Project’s start date.

**156.** UNFFS had little, if any, in-house experience of project design during the PPG phase, and relied heavily on external guidance from (initially) the GEF Secretariat and (later) UNEP as the Implementing Agency. The logframe and indicators and targets were largely developed in-house with little input outside of the immediate project design team, apart from the UNEP Task Manager. Although the UNDESA’s Capacity Development Office (CDO) gives advice on project design and management, none was provided to the project team during the design stage. Disappointingly, no drafts were reviewed by CPF partners<sup>55</sup> that have more experience of project design and management.

**157.** Another weakness from the design stage was that there was no specific assessment of proposed national partners to determine whether they had the capacity to participate in the Project, even though it was recognised in project documents (and is one of the arguments for the Project’s target group) that many SIDS and LFCCs have very weak institutional capacity.

**158.** Two additional activities were added as part of the NCE (year 3 and the following 6 months): a joint workshop held with the Africa-LDC project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2013 to discuss and endorse a common FFS; and a capacity building workshop focused on online media literacy and how to prepare effective grant proposals held in New York in 2014 to help better deliver project results before the end of the Project.

**159.** It should also be noted that there is marked confusion in the project document over terms relating to the communications strategy and the forest financing strategy, with three terms - ‘SFM financing strategy’, ‘SFM financing communications strategy’ and ‘SFM financing and communications strategy’ - used in various places in the project document and reports. In most places, the reference clearly relates to the financing strategy rather than the communications strategy, although the fact that the communications strategy is highlighted much more than the forest financing strategy as a Project output in the project document only adds to the confusion. The TE understands that the project document was put together in a hurry – that there were numerous challenges during the PPG period (reflected in the unusual need for an extension to the PPG milestones), so it was perhaps inevitable that mistakes were made during this period which carried over into the project documents. However, in the TE’s opinion, there should have been a

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<sup>55</sup> The CPF is composed by the following organizations: UNFF, FAO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Union for Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), World Agroforestry Center and the World Bank.

thorough review of the Project by the International Steering Committee (ISC) prior to and during its first meeting (as is normal practice). Unfortunately, the ISC did not function as expected (see paragraph 178).

**160.** Because many elements of the Project relied upon other elements being in place, e.g. dissemination of many communications materials and development of the web-based 'community of practice' required that the website be up and running, any delay in one area had the potential to create a cascading impact on others. Nevertheless, over time, most elements of the logframe at the output level came together - just not within the initial timeframes that were estimated, and the initial two years of the project was stretched to three and a half years.

**161.** The TE was informed that the Project originated as a result of calls from the UNFF9 Resolution for an initiative to address the lack of financing for SFM, and discussions that took place in 2009 between the former heads of UNFFS and GEFSEC and other senior GEFSEC staff. These discussions led to agreement that GEF financing could be made available for a project to implement some of the activities requested under the FP, especially as there were earmarked funds for SFM under GEF-4, SFM was a focus for GEF-5 and because GEF recognized that low forest cover countries in particular did not have the same opportunities as 'high-carbon' countries where significant funding was available through REDD+ and other sources. There was also an opportunity to access some unallocated GEF funding at the end of GEF-4 under the Biodiversity and Land Degradation focal areas that could be assigned for SFM and to the Project.

**162.** These initial exploratory discussions were followed up with further discussions within UNFFS and with GEFSEC and, initially, FAO<sup>56</sup> on the form of such a project. According to those interviewed by the TE, no serious consultations with any national partners took place during the project design period, so genesis of the original idea for the GEF project (pre-PIF) can be said to rest with UNFFS and GEFSEC with some FAO input, although these discussions came out of dialogue within the UNFF as a policy forum.

**163.** It was recognized by the proponents that the 'project' did not fit the usual model for a GEF Biodiversity or Land Degradation focal area project as it was helping to deliver implementation of a process (the FP), and some 'flexibility' in project design and funding was needed to accommodate the 'projectisation' of the work of the FP. Consequently, it was agreed that a MSP should be developed as the project was seen as innovative and catalytic.

**164.** There was no STAP review of the PIF and the GEFSEC review was rather minimal. The TE was informed that 'STAP do not always review every PIF (FSP or MSP) but rather use a risk-based approach'. It appears then that this project was considered too low a risk by GEFSEC to warrant a STAP review, although in the TE's view, the ambitious nature of the Project – activities to take place in 78 countries, initially over a two-year period, with GEF funding of just US\$950,000 and no national co-financing, executed by a UN agency with known capacity issues and no former experience in project design or management, would probably constitute a 'risky' project. In the TE's view, it is a pity the STAP review did not take place as this would have almost certainly picked up some of the weaknesses in the Project's design at the PIF stage and probably would have led to a better designed and more effective project with more and better quality results delivered.

**165.** However, it should be pointed out that the implementing Agency (UNEP in this case) plays the major role in trying to ensure a coherent, rigorously designed project before submission for approval by the GEF. The UNEP TM did spend a considerable amount of time advising the team on project design, including choice of indicators and targets, implementation arrangements, etc., but much of the project's direction and framework had already been agreed before UNEP took on the role of IA and the situation was not

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<sup>56</sup> FAO was initially interested in the role of Implementing Agency and involved in some of the very early discussions but the Evaluation understands it withdrew as it did not view the project as of sufficient size to justify their investment. UNDP was also approached but was similarly not interested in the role of IA.

helped by the poor initial relationship between the UNFFS team and the UNEP team, partly caused by differences in opinion over the level of capacity and role of the UNFFS in executing the project and over budgeting issues, e.g. costs of workshops, during the design phase (see section 2.15.7).

**166.** Although considerable advice and guidance was given to the design team by the UNEP Task Manager during the design stage<sup>57</sup>, this guidance was not always followed. For instance, there was an early question over whether it would have been better for the UNFFS to take on a project advisory role rather than executing agency role given the lack of project design and management experience and capacity of the UNFFS<sup>58</sup>. The suggestion was to leave project execution to another body, perhaps a CPF partner, with better experience of project delivery and the UNFFS playing a more technical support and coordination role. However, the UNFFS decided to act against the UNEP advice and take on a full executing agency role for the GEF project. Understandably, it wanted the experience of being an executing body, but this decision has affected the delivery of the project since (weak design, slow delivery, bottlenecks in capacity, etc.).

**167.** The original 2-year timeframe was clearly unrealistic, especially as the Project attempted to target all 78 SIDS and LFCC countries of the FP (given as a target for one of the outcomes in the logframe). The decision to stick with so many countries was explained to the Evaluation as a “politically motivated choice” because the members of UNFF were “expecting something” from the FP and, as its first project, it was felt that the GEF Project needed to include all the countries, even if limited funds and low capacity of the UNFFS meant that it would be impossible for all 78 countries to fully participate in the Project. Apparently, the UNFFS needed to ‘sell the project to the Forum’ and if only a small number of countries had been included it was considered unlikely it would have had the full backing of the Forum. Thus the logframe targets were ideal aims, not designed to be realistic but to show that UNFF was addressing concerns of all the members. There was also a feeling at the UNFFS that the FP Resolution required the UNFFS to work with all SIDS and LFCCs, or at least to invite all to participate in the Project. Thus, this Project has been seen by UNFF member states as more about supporting delivery of the FP than a GEF project with discrete deliverables leading to immediate concrete changes (indeed some interviewees outside of the UNFFS were unaware that the Project was funded by GEF, or that it was even a project!), and, from UNFFS’s point of view, the Project was seen as a first step in a much longer process using initial seed money from GEF, that was not expected to have outcomes and impacts during lifetime of the Project.

**168.** Whilst the TE understands the ‘political’ reasons for including all 78 countries, the Project would probably have delivered better results and with less delays if it had taken a ‘hub approach’, targeting a small number of (‘hub’) countries (say two SIDS and two LFCCs) where the majority of activities would take place, including some piloting/demonstration activities e.g. development of national networks and preparatory reports on SFM financing (funded through the Project’s budget), while the other countries took part in a smaller number of project-wide activities, such as communication activities to promote the need for SFM and its financing. If successful, pilot activities could have been expanded later to other countries under a separate follow-up GEF project. In the TE’s opinion, this would have produced deeper, more meaningful results with probably less demands on the UNFFS (which already had severe capacity issues at start of the project).

**Lesson 1.** *A weak project design with unclear objectives, outcomes and causal logic and poor ownership often leads to difficulties in implementation and for delivery of project results and reduces the likelihood of achieving the environmental change sought. Although this is a common lesson among GEF projects, it particularly applies to this*

<sup>57</sup> Selected correspondence between UNEP and UNFF Secretariat for 2009-2014 viewed by Evaluation.

<sup>58</sup> Also, the role of UNFFS as an executing body was considered ‘sensitive’ in 2009/2010 as a number of UNFF members believed the Secretariat should remain servicing the political process (UNFF) and not engage in capacity building and other executing agency activities. However, there has been increased recent support from inside UNFF for the Secretariat to take on executing agency roles and this is in line with recommendations made by the recent independent assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests (2014) which also argues for increased capacity to help UNFFS to deliver projects itself.

**Project.** Projects need to ensure that the project design period is participative and relevant technical and project management expertise is brought in where capacity and experience are lacking. It is important for executing agencies to ensure that they take a collaborative approach (this was particularly lacking in this project, given the project design (including GEF) experience among other CPF partners that could have been drawn on). Projects should be reviewed again during their inception period (first three months of implementation). National ownership and input at the design stage is particularly critical. GEF projects that seek to implement global-level processes need to pay special attention to project design. They need to resist 'political pressure' to set unrealistic aims, boundaries and targets, even if they are essentially delivering enabling activities.

**169.** The fact that a 1-year extension was needed to deliver the Project, then a further 6-month period (and even then that was insufficient) is evidence that the original timeframe was not properly considered. The Evaluation understands that the initial timetable was largely set to meet UNFF processes and events, e.g. delivery of some results by UNFF10 in 2013 and processes. Unfortunately, a capacity needs assessment of the UNFF Secretariat was not undertaken during the PPG (but should have been) - apparently it was not deemed necessary as the UNFFS is a UN body and consequently assumed to have sufficient capacity (a false assumption in this case). It should be noted that the PM did receive training in project management provided by the UN's Office for Human Resources Management in New York, including training in development of logframes, indicators and targets, but not until the third year of the project (apparently UN courses were not available to him during the first two years, although why he could not have been sent on an equivalent course, e.g. PRINCE2 course ([www.prince2.com](http://www.prince2.com)) is not clear).

**Lesson 2.** The capacity of executing bodies needs to be sufficient to deliver a GEF project and it should be formally demonstrated that it has the required capacity during the project design stage, irrespective of the type and status of the executing agency. IAs need to ensure that executing agencies, even if they are a UN body, have a formal assessment of their capacity to undertake a GEF project during the PPG stage. Where capacity is lacking this needs to be built rapidly during the project's inception stage, but this can only be done if an honest assessment of capacity of the executing agency is undertaken. (It is understood that a formal capacity assessment is now undertaken by UNEP through their Project Review Committee process)

**Overall, the project preparation and readiness was Unsatisfactory**

### 2.15.2 Project implementation and management

**170.** Project Management is treated as a separate component (Component V) by the Project, which was intended to highlight its importance, but the TE considers this unnecessary as project management is a means to an end and not an outcome in itself and there should have been no outcomes or component associated with project management in the logframe.

**171.** Project execution arrangements were clearly identified at the project design stage, although information on the involvement of stakeholders at national level was rather superficial and generic (more of a wish list), and activities to identify specific partners to be involved during the PPG phase appear to have been very limited. For instance, it is not clearly explained who was to be responsible for completing the proposed national reports (in questionnaire format).

**172.** Roles and responsibilities of internal partners (UNEP, UNFFS, UNDESA) were generally clear, but as mentioned no assessment was undertaken of UNFFS capacity to deliver the project which is considered a shortcoming of the project design process, especially as it was known at the time that this was the first GEF (and major donor) project that the UNFFS had executed and there was very limited project management

experience within the UNFFS. UNFFS's capacity building could have been built into the project design to some extent if it had been properly recognized at the design stage.

**173.** According to the project document, the Project Manager was originally to be employed part-time on the Project, supported by general services support staff within the UNFFS (by one administrator/financial manager and one secretary, both part-time). This level of management input was clearly much too low for a proposed 2-year project that was to involve 78 countries given the Project's objectives and intended outcomes. Indeed, the Project Manager spent an estimated 90% of his time during the first year on the project, and was especially busy in the run-up to inter-regional workshops, although this has since averaged out at around 60-70%. However, when the workload was particularly high, such as before workshops and major events, the PM was usually able to call on additional professional support and general services support staff from within the UNFFS, although the support staff were not exclusive to the GEF Project but part of a general 'pool' available to several staff so not always available to the Project.

**174.** The biggest challenge facing the PM was his limited experience in project design and management and availability of specific support from others at the UNFFS (who similarly lacked project design and management experience). Nevertheless, the PM did extremely well to deliver as much as he has during the three+ years of the Project, and he deserves credit for his commitment to its delivery under very difficult circumstances and what has been an innovative project (trying to deliver a process). It would certainly not have been delivered to the extent it has without the extra effort on his part.

**175.** Due to the limited project management experience within the UNFFS it took time to learn to build and work as a team on the SIDS-LFCC Project, although it was clear from TE interviews that the UNFFS staff have a good 'learning culture', examine the way they work, are open to improving this and feed lessons learnt back into their work (particularly the Project Manager), which in the evaluator's experience is unusual for GEF projects). For instance, as noted, experience on the SIDS-LFCC project has been used to design more effective projects following from the GEF project, notably the Africa-LDC and Climate Change Financing projects. However, UNFFS's ability to address its weaknesses is largely dependent on external funding due to staffing constraints.

**176.** Delays were also introduced by secondment of the PM to other UN agencies in New York for two periods<sup>59</sup> – September-December 2013 (3 months) and May-September 2014 (6 months). During these spells another member of the UNFFS took over the PM's role although she lacked the technical background on forestry financing and had a very heavy workload herself (unfortunately, attempts to recruit a temporary replacement for the PM from within the UN agencies were unsuccessful, and external candidates were not sought due to the requirement to be familiar with UN processes). Despite continuing support from the PM during these periods, this arrangement introduced further delays, and interviewees commented that the UNFFS was always 'playing catch-up'.

**177.** Project governance arrangements were considered at the design stage, and an International Steering Committee (ISC) was to be created for the project implementation period. Outline Terms of Reference for the ISC are presented in the project document, although there was no separate budget for ISC meetings identified at the project design stage, and none made available during implementation. Membership was restricted to only global- or regional-level stakeholders and was consequently very limited (mostly members were either of UNFFS, UNEP or ECLAC or ESCAP, with less frequent appearances from FAO (once)). The ISC did not include representatives from any of the national partners to be involved in the Project. Three steering committee meetings were held. However, the first one took place in 2011 only in the form of a teleconference (it is not clear why there was no serious attempt to have a face-to-face meeting). The second one was held in July 2012 in Nadi, Fiji, and the third one was held in April 2013 during UNFF10.

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<sup>59</sup> These presented valuable opportunities for career development, which is very limited within the UNFFS.

**178.** The ISC was generally considered as ineffective, of limited value (reported as “a waste of time” by one interviewee), and it made minimal input to project decision-making. At the first meeting it was agreed that each steering committee member should send an email officially approving budget and workplan for the coming year, although it is not clear whether this occurred (incomplete steering committee meeting minutes and related correspondence was sent to the TE). There seems to have been a lack of appreciation of the function and potential usefulness of the ISC by UNFFS, made worse by the lack of a specific budget for ISC meetings. In addition, UNEP only attended two ISC meetings – the first – as mentioned, held as a telecom (no face-to-face meeting), the second being the last ISC meeting held in Fiji.

**179.** The ineffective ISC is a pity as an engaged, functional project oversight group could have helped identify and address some of the weaknesses in the Project’s design and delivery, e.g. poor logframe, lack of baselines, unclear objectives, etc., especially if it had been first convened, as is usual for many GEF projects, during the PPG stage.

### **Risk identification and mitigation**

**180.** Risks were identified and mitigation measures suggested in the project document. ‘High level’ risks were identified as weak national and local capacities in some countries, lack of commitment of some governments after the Project ends (given the low ‘political visibility’ on forest-related issues), and the fact that the ‘project deals with theoretical issues at the global level and does not reach practical implementation in SIDS and LFCCs’. Not all the risks identified in the logframe match those in the main text and the project’s overall risk assessment was rather weak.

**181.** The risk of low continued ‘engagement, interest and capacity of key stakeholders (with consequences of SFM decline not immediately noticeable)’ is increased because of the huge number of countries (78) targeted with the minimal resources (<US\$1 million GEF financing, little co-financing for activities during implementation period), a number that was clearly, even at the design stage, way beyond the Project’s capacity to deal with (and not recognized and properly addressed by any of the project reviewers at GEFSEC, UNEP or UNFFS). Reducing the number of countries to a manageable number and selecting those with already good awareness, capacity and national interest would have greatly reduced this risk.

**182.** Potential negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the Project are not discussed in project design documents. A detailed environmental and socio-economic impact assessment was not considered necessary due to the Project’s expected (indirect) positive benefits, with which the TE agrees. However, a summary UNEP checklist on Social and Environmental Risks was to be developed and provided separately to GEFSEC but it is unclear whether this was delivered (not included in documents given to the TE).

**The project’s performance in implementation and management is rated Moderately Satisfactory.**

### **2.15.3 Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships**

**183.** A stakeholder analysis conducted during the Project’s design phase identified several general groups of stakeholders that were to be engaged with during implementation of the full project. However, there was no consultation with national stakeholder groups during the PPG period and even national UNFF Focal Points had very limited input to the project design, although some countries did approach the UNFFS informally with offers to help with workshops e.g. Iran and Jamaica. One of the UNFF Focal Points interviewed stated that he only became aware of the Project when he received an invitation to participate in the inter-regional workshops. On the other hand, the Project enabled the UNFFS to reach out to countries with which it had not had prior contact due to limited national political commitment to forests or limited capacity at national level, and in a number of cases, the country representatives invited to the Project workshop then proceeded to facilitate the nomination of a national UNFF Focal Point, enabling their

country to become actively involved in the UNFF (this could be considered an example of catalysis but no specific details were provided to the TE).

**184.** Choice of national representation was left to the discretion of participating countries, as required by UN protocol. However, this meant that national practitioners involved in one event were sometimes replaced by a colleague for another event, which limited the continuity of the relationship that the UNFFS had with participating countries.

**Lesson 3.** *Projects need to be owned by the participants, and conditions need to be created for national partners to participate effectively (which was not a case here). It is not reasonable to expect national input/participation from low capacity countries (most SIDS and LFCCs, which were partly targeted because most had limited capacity) to participate in a project without their consultation and buy-in during the design phase and sufficient financial resources to enable them to take part in activities. For UNFFS-executed projects, UNFF focal points need to have particularly good 'ownership' of the project.*

**185.** At international level, some of the key stakeholders identified during the design stage as potential partners, notably FAO and UNCCD, did not engage with the Project in any meaningful way during its implementation despite repeated invitations from the UNFFS. This was disappointing, especially because there are clear synergies with UNCCD and its Global Mechanism with its focus on Sustainable Land Management (SLM), and they have many target LFCCs in common. Indeed, the first workshop in Iran was co-organised by UNFF and UNCCD but UNCCD staff did not attend and following this there was little direct input from UNCCD. Although there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNFF and UNCCD secretariats, this is very general and there is no specific mention of collaboration on the SIDS-LFCC Project. Both FAO and UNCCD were also invited as members of the ISC, but FAO only participated in the first (telecom) ISC meeting. Also, disappointingly, no co-financing was provided by either FAO or UNCCD (through the General Mechanism) which might have been expected given their mandate. The apparent lack of interest on FAO's part is particularly surprising given its initial involvement at the concept stage in 2009, and the fact that it does have other joint projects with the UNFFS. It also has an Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries<sup>60</sup> so greater engagement with the Project would have been expected.

**186.** The UNFF is a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF<sup>61</sup>) and the FP website links to the CPF funding sourcebook. However, other than UNEP, there was little direct contact and no active collaboration with other CPF members<sup>62</sup>. CIFOR, for instance, is known to have a good communications team that could have been approached to review the Project's communications strategy and materials and it would certainly have helped if there had been joint discussions with CPF members with more project design and implementation experience during the early stages of the SIDS-LFCC Project.

**187.** The project document lists a large number of GEF and non-GEF projects, across the world (including REDD+ projects), many of which are in SIDS and LFCC countries, which are implementing SFM in its various expressions, including biodiversity conservation, water management and erosion control, timber production and plantations, etc., and thus helping to address the issue of forest financing. The intention was to explore synergies and linkages with some of these where appropriate. However, other than invitations to attend Project workshops, no mechanism was developed to link and work with them, and few direct collaborations seem to have taken place. In the evaluator's experience, this is common among GEF projects – much is made of potential linkage to other relevant GEF and non-GEF projects in project

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<sup>60</sup> [www.fao.org/forestry/industries/9530/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/industries/9530/en)

<sup>61</sup> The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is a voluntary partnership of 14 international bodies whose mission is to promote SFM of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. CPF has created the CPF Network, which facilitate communication and cooperation with NGOs, indigenous groups, the private sector and other major groups. See [www.cpfweb.org](http://www.cpfweb.org).

<sup>62</sup> The UNFF Project manager noted that a resolution was passed at UNFF11 in May 2015 to strengthen collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in terms of implementing the upgraded facilitative process, which is relevant here.



documents but when it comes to implementation there is little, if any, interaction (and usually no specific budget for this). This is an area that UNEP should pay greater attention to. For instance, the SIDS-LFCC Project was aware of UNEP's non-GEF work on forests, which is coordinated from its headquarters in Nairobi, but no substantive contact or collaboration was established and maintained beyond exchanging information about relevant projects/initiatives<sup>63</sup>. Other obvious linkages that could have potentially benefited the Project include with the UNEP's Ecosystems Services Economics Unit<sup>64</sup>, which could have provided information (or linked with others who could have provided it) on the economic (and social) cost-benefit analysis of forests and their management that could have been used in the first year of the Project as part of background material to advocate for increased funding for SFM. Specific UNEP projects that would be useful for the SIDS-LFCC Project to explore linkage with include UNEP's The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project<sup>65</sup>, and the UNEP-GEF Project for Ecosystem Services (ProEcoServ) project<sup>66</sup> which has Trinidad and Tobago as one of its four focal countries (so has obvious potential ties with the SIDS-LFCC Project).

**188.** There was also very little engagement of the private sector in the Project. This reflects the wider issue of the relationship between UNFF and the private sector which has still to be officially clarified and decided. Although many forest lands are privately owned, private sector involvement in SFM is generally very limited as these businesses are usually more concerned with making maximum profit, and it is generally difficult to attract private sector investment to SFM schemes, e.g. community level forest management. Although invitations were sent to potential private sector participants for the first two workshops, little interest was expressed.

**189.** Involvement of the NGO community and academia was also poor for this Project. It is suggested that the UNFFS investigate linkage to the UNEP-supported Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)<sup>67</sup>, which seeks to increase the mainstreaming of environment and sustainability practices and curricula into universities around the world as this might offer opportunities to mainstream some of the Project's results (notably the FSS) more widely.

**190.** Overall the Project had a poor partnership approach. One of the weaknesses of the Project has been the lack of a specific partnership strategy which set out who would be involved (and why), how, when and with what resources (with a budget to facilitate involvement), which would have been expected to have been developed at the beginning of project implementation. This would have helped focus greater attention on partnership development from early in the Project<sup>68</sup>.

**191.** However, 45 out of 78 countries did send representatives to Project meetings, which given the restrictions and challenges facing the project team can be considered an accomplishment.

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<sup>63</sup> The UNEP TM commented that UNEP did provide a presentation at the Fiji workshop on 'GEF Support to Forest in a Green Economy – which offered participants insight in GE mechanisms, GEF SFM related funding options etc. Additionally, another UNEP member of staff from the same UNEP Division as the GEF TM, attended the CPF meeting in Rome, as well as in NY(?) two years prior to that, both providing an opportunity for contact with UNFF on the project and forest collaboration.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.es-evaluation.org/index.php/es-eunit>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.teebweb.org/>. This is a global initiative focused on drawing attention to the economic benefits of biodiversity including the growing cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. TEEB presents an approach that can help decision-makers recognize, demonstrate and capture the values of ecosystem services & biodiversity.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.proecoserv.org/>. The project aims to pilot the bundling of ecosystem services and the integration of ecosystem services approaches into resource management and decision-making. The overall goal of the project is to better integrate ecosystem assessment, scenario development and economic valuation of ecosystem services into sustainable national development planning.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.gupes.org/index.php?classid=3234>

<sup>68</sup> A specific partnership strategy, to be included as part of the project document, has been a requirement of UNEP-managed projects since November 2014.

#### **2.15.4 Communication and public awareness**

**192.** Judging from TE interviews, the profile of the Project was very low among stakeholders and its results were not well known, suggesting communication of the Project's messages and results has not been well delivered. Some interviewees stated that they were unaware of the website or communications materials. This was not helped by the failure to deliver the planned Project newsletter by the end of the Project. Part of this may be because the Forest Instrument and FP themselves are not well known and understood (as mentioned above, the Project has been seen by some as delivering the FP). Indeed, there was a comment made by one of the chairs of the AHEG2 meeting that the title 'Facilitative Process' tells you virtually nothing and could be associated with almost anything (it doesn't even contain the word 'forest').

**193.** The Project had a specific Component (III) targeted at communications activities that represented a significant proportion of the budget (see section 2.15.6), and indeed spent 28% more than originally anticipated). The focus of this Component was the development and partial implementation of a Communications Strategy that would help both promote Project messages and results and help build and maintain linkages and networks, but also the production of background papers (from Component I), a set of policy briefs (for different audiences) and development of a website to host the Project results within the larger UNFF FP website.

**194.** The Communications Strategy was developed largely by the UNFFS team (principally the PM) but had input from two external consultants (one with some background in communications materials the other in web design and journalism). No baseline was collected during this period, and there seems to have been no assessment of what media would be most effective for each target group or the capacity of target groups to take up messages. The Communication strategy was developed in the third year of the Project but a first version should have been developed soon after implementation began using information already generated by the Project (Component I) which could have helped raise awareness of the value of SFM and need for increased financing in target countries.

**195.** Although the Project had started to expand the communication channels with examination of the use of an interactive function to the website (social media, blog), the TE feels that in order to be effective there still needs to be a better assessment and presentation within the Communications Strategy of the needs of the different audiences to which the communication activities are aimed at, a clear statement of key messages and a better understanding of the best media to use for the different target audiences. National Government personnel (forestry and non-forestry), funding agencies, the NGO community, private sector, academia, politicians and other relevant decision-makers and partners all require different approaches and media, which means that communication materials need to be better tailored. Nor does the Communications Strategy adequately examine existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders that could be co-opted. The UNFFS should perhaps ask a selection of individuals in each stakeholder group what would be the most appropriate and effective means to communicate Project results for them. For instance, interviewees commented that governments still don't see the financial/economic contributions of SFM in SIDS and LFCCs, so there is still a need to promote the cost-benefit analysis for SFM more forcefully in order to raise its profile with decision-makers. The UNFFS team tried to engage finance ministries in the Project but had limited success with participation restricted to governments hosting the workshops, and no good evidence of uptake or continued interest. A different approach is needed to communicate with this target group (workshops and short web-based films, are not the key to dissemination and generating interest and ownership among this group), and the UNFFS possibly needs to seek specialist advice.

**196.** However, as stated earlier, the effectiveness of these public awareness activities undertaken (see section 2.12.1) is questionable as there was no baseline assessment and no specific outcome indicators to measure changes in awareness and uptake of information. There has also been little in the way of feedback from stakeholders covered in Project reports (it is not clear whether the Project provided adequate channels for feedback as stakeholder comments were not presented and reported on in Project reports seen by the TE). There was also a feeling expressed by some interviewees that the initial background studies (Component I) which were already available at the beginning of project implementation could have been used more effectively, as background sources to produce communications materials to greater highlight the importance and value of SFM so help raise the profile of forestry departments in SIDS and LFCCs, with awareness raising materials targeted at the SIDS and LFCCs right from the start of the Project.

**197.** It should be mentioned that the UNEP TM: (i) raised repeated concerns that the Project needed to design the communications strategy early on in the project implementation (to have any meaning and impact); (ii) approved considerable reallocations for communications specialist consultant funds, although these appear to have been only partly used for the purpose; (iii) requested a significant improvements to the draft communications plan once it was drafted by UNFF (it was considered inadequate for its purpose), and (iv) repeatedly push for baseline data to be collected.

**198.** It is also suggested that a presentation is given on the Project's results at a UNFFS side event at the upcoming UNFF11 meeting in May 2015 to showcase the SIDS-LFCC Project's results.

**The project's performance in ensuring communication and public awareness is rated Moderately Satisfactory.**

#### **2.15.5 Country ownership and driven-ness**

**199.** There was little national-level consultation during the PPG design period - four national consultants were contracted to help develop the arrangements for the four inter-regional workshops in Iran, Niger, Trinidad and Tobago and Fiji (the countries most involved during the design phase), but little tangible seems to have been delivered from these contracts and the organization of the four workshops only really took place once implementation began. Surprisingly, there was no widespread consultation and involvement of the UNFF Focal Points during the project design phase. There were also challenges, on occasion, engaging individuals who would have been expected to be interested in the Project. For instance, film team had difficulty engaging forestry staff when visiting Trinidad and Tobago to make the turtle documentary even though one of the inter-regional workshops had been held on the islands.

**200.** As mentioned above, there were also no national preparatory workshops and no resulting national reports. The TE considers this a missed opportunity to incorporate the national views and aspirations at the onset of the Project. However, it should be noted that the UNFFS set up a separate project to integrate national forest financial reporting into the biennial national reporting on the implementation of the Forest Instrument, which helped capture some of the relevant information from some countries.

**201.** In addition, concerns were expressed by some interviewees about the level of input from the UNFFS on workshop recommendations, with the accusation that for some of the inter-regional workshops the Secretariat staff had 'too heavy a hand' in deciding on the final outcomes of the meetings. However, interviewees were generally happy with the common FFS and felt there had been a good and open debate at the Addis Ababa workshop and the final product (FFS) had good ownership by the participants.

**202.** Essentially the Project was generated from ideas and a general request that came out of the UNFF9 meeting rather than directly by national stakeholders. Rather it was a global project that had relatively little national-level input during the design stage.

**Country ownership and driven-ness is rated Unsatisfactory**

## 2.15.6 Financial planning and management

**203.** The estimated and actual costs as well as the expenditure ratio (actual/planned) of the Project are summarized in Table 10 below. As can be seen from the figures in the table, the actual project costs up to 31 December 2014 were only 78.5% of the original budget and the project had US\$203,823 of GEF financing remaining. This remainder reflects the slow spending and delivery of the project which is very low compared with other similar MSPs in the Evaluation consultant's experience (for the reasons outlined earlier).

**Table 10: Summary of project expenditures**

Component/ Sub-component/Output	Estimated cost at design	Actual cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
COMPONENT I Analysis of current financial flows, gaps, needs as well as governance structures for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs	0	0	N/A
COMPONENT II Establishment of national ownership, review of thematic papers and consultations on way forward	599,734	349,409	58.26%
COMPONENT III Communication strategy for facilitation of SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs	236,766	303,373	128.13%
COMPONENT IV Project monitoring and evaluation	28,000	28,040 <sup>69</sup>	100.14%
COMPONENT V Project management	85,500	65,355	76.44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>950,000</b>	<b>746,177</b>	<b>78.5%</b>

**204.** As it stands, the remaining funds need to be returned to GEF. However, there are a number of recommendations in this report that will require finance. The Project has already had one 12-month NCE and been given an additional 6 months to wrap up Project activities by UNEP so a further NCE for the Project is not appropriate. Furthermore, NCEs involve additional costs/overheads for UNEP, which it has to meet from its own funding (there are no additional GEF financing for this), and UNEP has already made substantial additional investment in the delivery of the Project. In addition, implementation of a new administration/IT management system within UNEP (UMOJA) means that no new contractual arrangements will be possible until at least August 2015, which would represent a gap in project activities of almost a year. Consequently, GEFSEC should decide what to do with the remaining (still substantial) funds for this project.

**Recommendation 8.** *It is recommended that a discussion is held between GEFSEC and UNFFS on the fate of the remaining GEF funds, and whether they could be used to fund some of the recommendations in this report as a follow-up project through a direct access arrangement between GEFSEC and UNFF (so not involving the IA in any future management/administration role). A proposal for the use of such funds should be set out in a new project document, with clear targets, indicators, etc, and follow standard World Bank fiduciary standards. Responsibility: GEFSEC, UNDESA, UNFFS/PMU, UNEP (UNEP first needs to close the*

<sup>69</sup> Assuming that the fees and expenses of the independent evaluator totalled US\$ 20,000 as planned in the Project Document budget.

*Project and confirm the remaining funds for return to GEFSEC before any request to GEFSEC can be made).  
Timeframe: Written agreement on fate of remaining GEF funds before end July 2015.*

**205.** Original costs of the four proposed inter-regional workshop and associated consultant costs were relatively high as a proportion of the total budget (> USD400,000). The New York workshop on capacity building for financing SFM (not covered in the original project design period, but added later during implementation) seems better value.

**206.** There were obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning, with particularly limited funds for national partners to participate in the Project - no specific funds were identified for the proposed national preparatory meetings and national reports, there was no specific Project budget for establishing and maintaining the proposed national SFM financing networks, and funds were limited to two representatives per country to attend inter-regional workshops. This is a consequence of the small size of the GEF grant, the large number of countries that had to be involved, and the lack of significant co-financing available during the project implementation period itself<sup>70</sup>.

### **Project co-financing**

**207.** In terms of project co-financing (Table 11), the total of US\$1,000,000 was confirmed as being available when the project document was signed. However, this figure included US\$624,750 for activities under Component I originating from a grant awarded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which had already been spent by November 2010 (so BEFORE the project started). The TE encountered conflicting views on this arrangement but understands that this potential co-financing needed to be used within a certain timeframe or would not have been available to the Project and UNFFS but that it was included under the main project as it represented valuable cash co-financing (the single largest proportion of cash and also overall co-financing) and the Project was not able to identify other major sources of cash co-financing during its design phase.

**208.** The view of GEFSEC was that there should be flexibility over the need for matching co-financing for small, innovative projects and those that “don’t fit the usual mould”, such as the SIDS-LFCC Project, particularly where there is a focus on enabling and capacity building activities and the project is ‘innovative’ and consequently it would be difficult to attract traditional co-financing. Co-financing for this project was largely seen as the government in-kind contributions (although these were not captured in the project document). The TE largely agrees with this view, but it should be noted that there is a risk of setting a precedent with other GEF projects using funding for previously completed projects as a source of co-financing. Considerable pressure is put on GEF project design teams to secure co-financing (and particularly cash co-financing), and achieve a target 1:3 ratio or higher of GEF : co-financing for project implementation. Consequently, if it becomes known that projects can include funding received for previously completed (but relevant) projects, this practice may become widespread.

**209.** It is important to note however, that UNFFS also leveraged substantial additional co-financing of an estimated US\$150,000 from the United Nations Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) after implementation began, associated with the joint workshop held in Addis Ababa, to pay for representatives from the SIDS and LFCCs (and participants from the Africa and LDC project) to attend and develop the common forest financing strategy.

**Table 11: Summary of project co-financing**

Co-financing Source	Amount (USD)
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<sup>70</sup> The UNEP TM commented that additional funds could have been made available for national-level activities if less had been allocated to the various workshops (which the UNEP TM advised on a number of occasions).

	Planned	Actual
Cash		
UNDESA	189,200	327,526
DFID	624,751	614,751
In-kind		
Participating governments	0	63,150*
UNDESA	186,050	312,200
Totals	1,000,001	1,317,627

\*estimated value of in-kind contribution

### In-kind contributions

**210.** Strangely, no attempt was made to capture in-kind co-financing from the participating nations who have had to fund their own staff's time to participate in workshops, review reports, etc., in the project document. However, figures provided by the PM to the TE suggest that this could have been substantial. The PM estimated a contribution at over US\$63,000, based on US\$50/day as in-kind contribution, although in the TE's opinion this is probably too low and the total in-kind national government contribution was probably much greater.

**211.** The workshop hosts also offered in-kind financial support and logistics, e.g. Iran, although again this co-financing was not captured in the project document or reported on since in project reports.

**Table 12: Estimated in-kind co-financing from national governments (based on an average government staffing cost of US\$50/day)**

Workshop Location	Number of government representatives	Number of workshop days including travel	Total in-kind cost of government representatives (US\$)
Iran	30	8	12,000
Niger	29	7	10,150
Trinidad & Tobago	28	7	9,800
Fiji	41	7	14,350
Ethiopia	45	5	11,250
USA	16	7	5,600
<b>TOTAL</b>			63,150

**212.** The in-kind contribution from UNEP from its personnel, who provided oversight of the various Project activities, meetings, workshops and reviewed documents, as well as carrying out financial management, is likely to have been significantly more than originally expected as the Project was awarded a 12-month then a further 6-month NCE. Again, this has not been captured in any project reports.

### Financial management

**213.** The CDO of UNDESA has handled the financial management for the Project. According to interviewees, this has been relatively straightforward, although there was a significant delay in the initial transfer of funds from UNEP (due to delays in UNDESA/UNFFS signing the project contract with UNEP). This apparently affected the ability of the UNFFS to contract a consultant to collect baseline data at the beginning of project implementation.

**214.** The UNFFS uses the Integrated Information Management System (IMIS), the same financial management system as UNEP. However, UNFFS's system is completely separate from UNEP's which also led to some delays related to the transfers of funds and financial reporting.

**215.** According to interviewees, the usual UN procurement processes were applied by the CDO at UNDESA. However, these caused frustration on occasions as procurement can take up to two months for any as contract greater than US\$4,000 which introduces delays and has a risk that preferred consultants will chose other work in the meantime.

**216.** It was necessary to use UNDP Country Offices (COs) for arranging financial transfers for some of the Project's inter-regional workshops as UNFF has no national or regional offices. This often took a significant time as UNDP COs were not always very responsive to requests for logistical support, and reporting by UNDP COs could also be very slow (suggesting weak UN interagency cooperation). Unfortunately, these delays from UNDP COs created reputational damage for the UNFFS so a decision was taken to use the UN's ESCAP office for the final workshop in Fiji, which also helped with logistics.

**217.** However, the biggest financial management challenge for UNEP for this Project has been the difficulty in identifying exactly how much of the GEF funding is available at any one time. This is because the UNFFS provides UNEP with accounts that include 'obligated' funds, which are funds that have been allocated (often with contracts already negotiated) but which have yet to be dispersed (or fully dispersed), thus 'expenditure' in financial reporting can include a significant amount of obligated funds that have yet to be spent.

**Overall project financial planning and management was Moderately Satisfactory.**

#### **2.15.7 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping**

**218.** UNEP supervision was largely provided through a Task Manager based in Bangkok, who had many years experience of design and implementation of GEF BD and LD projects and is considered a highly technically competent TM within the UNEP. He provided many useful suggestions and constructive criticism of the project design and implementation although his advice was not implemented on occasion and much of the basic structure and content of the GEF Project was already largely determined before UNEP became the IA in 2009 so there were clear limits to UNEP's influence on the Project's design.

**219.** There was sometimes erratic and occasionally rather confrontational communication between the UNFFS and UNEP, and in the TE's opinion, a low level of engagement between the executing and implementing agencies early on in project implementation. These initial misunderstandings created some strain in the relationship between the executing and implementing agencies. For instance, there was no face-to-face meeting between the Project Manager and the UNEP Task Manager during the whole project period, the PM and TM have only talked twice over the phone/skype (almost all contact has been through email which can be easy to misinterpret particularly across cultures), the first ISC meeting was held virtually and the UNEP TM did not attend the remaining two ISC meetings (which in the TE's opinion was a mistake, although other (briefed) UNEP staff members attended in his place), so there was never an opportunity for both parties to sit together to discuss issues. Both parties agree that communication and understanding between the two agencies improved substantially over time. However, this could perhaps have been largely avoided, or at least minimized, if there had been an active effort on both parties (UNFFS staff and

UNEP TM and/or his manager) to meet in person in New York, Bangkok or Nairobi if meeting at a project venue as part of a ISC meeting was simply impossible. Whilst this would have required funding, it would, in the TE's opinion, have been a worthwhile investment that could have helped to strengthen the Project's structure and deliverables, as well as providing an opportunity to build a better working relationship.

**Lesson 4.** *Failure to meet and resolve disputes face-to-face can contribute to poor project delivery. It is essential to have an initial face-to-face contact between key GEF Implementing and executing agency staff during the design and/or early inception period to build working relationships and review project implementation – there is no substitute for such meetings especially when there are conflicting views/opinions on aspects of project design and implementation.*

**Overall UNEP supervision and backstopping were Moderately Satisfactory.**

### 2.15.8 Monitoring and evaluation

#### M&E design

**220.** Project M&E is treated as a separate component (Component IV) by the Project, which was intended to highlight its importance, but the TE considers this unnecessary as M&E is a means to an end and not an outcome in itself and there should have been no outcomes or component associated with this in the logframe.

**221.** The M&E was designed according to UNEP's standard monitoring and evaluation procedure. The Project logframe included objectively verifiable indicators of achievements, sources and means of verification for the Project outcomes and outputs, and the timeframe for monitoring activities is specified in Project's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Organisational arrangements and responsibility for project level progress monitoring were clearly specified in project documents. The Project identified a specific budget for M&E under Component IV, which was used to monitor project progress in implementation against outputs set out in the logframe.

**222.** Most of the milestones set out as mid-term and end of project targets in the Project's logframe and list of key deliverables and benchmarks in Appendix 6 of the project document are relevant as indicators of the delivery of project outputs they are not formulated to gauge progress towards the Project's outcomes and higher-level objectives. Milestones for Component I outputs were not appropriate as these were delivered before project implementation began.

**223.** As mentioned previously (see section 2.15.1), there were few outcome level and no project objective indicators in the logframe, and no targets for outcome level achievement, and consequently progress towards achievement of outcomes and higher-level aims was poorly measured and largely subjectively recorded in project reports, e.g. the project's Terminal Report.

**224.** Baseline data for the indicators given in the logframe are generally qualitative and were not properly assessed during the Project's design stage, but this is partly a reflection of the choice of indicators and the inclusion of 78 countries within the Project. Quantitative baseline information at outcome and objective levels is missing, particularly on 'levels of awareness' and capacity for improving SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs. Baseline data gaps were to be addressed within the first two months of project implementation and a plan for collecting the necessary baseline and monitoring data is presented in Appendix 7 of the project document. However, this did not take place and the TE found that there had been little understanding of the value or need for a baseline among the UNFFS staff during design and the first two years of implementation (it is clearer to the UNFFS staff now).



**225.** Component IV of the logframe, gives an M&E end-of-project target as ‘UNFF impact monitoring system and activity monitoring system established’ (by September 2011). However, this is not explained in project documents, and it is not clear what the ‘UNFF impact monitoring system’ refers to. There was no end of project impact assessment undertaken by the Project, although a subjective assessment is presented in the Project’s Terminal Report.

**The M&E design is rated as Unsatisfactory.**

### **M&E plan implementation**

**226.** Monitoring of project progress has been adequate as most indicators are at output level and easily tracked, but monitoring of performance (in terms of achievement of project outcomes and project objective) was poor due to inadequate indicators (see above). The budget was sufficient to carry out the M&E plan as presented in the project document.

**227.** Reporting requirements were largely fulfilled throughout the Project, with quarterly expenditure reports and cash advance requests, 6-monthly progress reports and Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) submitted largely as planned (although there were some delays on some 6-monthly progress reports). There was generally good reporting on activities and outputs in project reports, particularly in the PIRs, but on achievement of outcomes and project objective less so, again largely due to the lack of appropriate indicators.

**228.** The information provided by the M&E was used by the PMU to improve project delivery and to adapt to changing needs. The action of compiling the annual PIRs and feedback from the UNEP TM on these was considered particularly valuable to the UNFFS team as they “highlighted what was useful and unsatisfactory and needed corrective actions”. As mentioned above, there were three ISC meeting held, but the ISC played relatively little role in the M&E of the project and had little influence on project delivery or reporting.

**229.** The project’s Terminal Report is comprehensive and detailed, especially on delivery of outputs but analysis of progress on outcomes weak (due to absence of appropriate indicators), there is no overall assessment of achievement of the Project’s objective, and a financial summary is not presented. The analysis of the main challenges (‘Self-Evaluation’) and lessons learned sections are, given that they were drafted by the PM, rather subjective and the project team would perhaps benefit from a joint structured lesson learning exercise, ideally with an external (non-UNFFS) facilitator. The Terminal Report would also benefit from an annex listing all reports and publications produced by the Project over its lifetime.

**Recommendation 9.** *The Project’s Terminal Report should be revised with a clear analysis of the achievement of the Project’s objective and outcomes and a financial summary statement<sup>71</sup>, and it is recommended that the ‘self evaluation’ and lesson learning sections are revised based on a formal UNFFS lesson learning exercise for the Project (following operational completion, after the implementation of the recommendations of this report). It would also be useful to produce a separate, shorter and more ‘glossy’ version of the Terminal Report to present the Project’s main results to those who have been involved and to complement materials on the web page (not everyone will read documents on the internet. Such an appropriate would be appropriate for any future final reports for UNFF projects (so also a lesson learned). Responsibility: UNFFS/PMU, facilitator. Timeframe: At the end of operational completion of the Project (before end 2015).*

<sup>71</sup> According to the UNEP TM this will be included as part of the project’s closing revision conducted on all projects by UNEP. However, in the evaluation consultant’s opinion, it would still be useful to have a financial statement in the project’s Terminal Report that goes to stakeholders, partners, and donors.

**230.** A Mid-term Review (MTR) was considered unnecessary due to the initial short duration of the Project (2 years), although the Project underwent an informal review by the UNEP TM as part of the process of arranging for a NCE for a third year of activities. Consequently, it was felt that there should be a thorough TE to meet GEF requirements given that the Project was granted a NCE. The initial budget for the TE (US\$ 20,000) was judged too low but increased to allow the Evaluator to visit the UNFFS office in New York, attend the AHEG2 meeting at UN Headquarters and interview some of the delegates attending the AHEG2 meeting who had participated in the Project, and also to visit Washington to interview GEFSEC staff and the former head of the UNFFS.

**The M&E plan implementation is rated as Moderately Satisfactory.**

### **3 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED**

#### **3.1 Conclusions**

**231.** The Project originated from calls from the UNFF for action to address a decline in financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs as funding has shifted in recent years to countries with larger areas of forest cover and is dominated by initiatives such as REDD+ (which do not benefit countries with small areas of forests). The Project was designed to ‘kick-start’ the UNFF Facilitative Process (see paragraphs 18 and 52), and its boundaries were partly set by the need to meet expectations of the UNFF member states (see paragraphs 167 and 168).

**232.** The Project has been largely concerned with enabling and capacity building activities, rather than seeking to engender behavioral change and changes in environmental state. It was considered an unusual and innovative project by the GEF that ‘didn’t fit the usual model’ for GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation projects in that it was intended to help implement a process that did not have clear targets at the time that could easily fit into a two-year MSP project, so some flexibility was allowed over its design and funding arrangements by GEF and UNEP (paragraph 163). There was also an opportunity to access some unallocated GEF funding at the end of GEF-4 under the Biodiversity and Land Degradation focal areas that could be assigned for SFM and to the Project. However, the Project’s causal logic suffered as a result with a focus on output level (e.g. delivery of workshops, communication materials), and it lacks coherence with particular confusion and overlap at the Project’s outcome and higher objectives levels (with poor logframe and many non-SMART indicators, absence of baselines, unrealistic targets, etc paragraphs 152 and 153). For instance, the Project had a whole component with two associated ‘outcomes’ focusing on production of a communications strategy, but communication is a means to an end not an end in itself.

**233.** The Project’s design, involving 78 countries and to be delivered in an (initially) two-year period, with limited financing for its implementation (US\$950,000 from GEF and only US\$180,000 in co-financing) executed by an agency (the UNFFS) with little experience of the design of large donor-funded projects (paragraph 156), can only be described as unrealistic and overly ambitious, and illustrates a weak project design and undue influence of ‘political considerations’ during the Project’s design stage. Unfortunately, there was no STAP review and the Project’s overall framework had already been largely decided before UNEP took on the role of the Implementing Agency so its input to project design was constrained.

**234.** The Project’s stated objective was ‘to enhance understanding on opportunities for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCC countries through analysis and strengthening stakeholder capacity in financing mechanisms for SFM’. Increasing awareness and understanding was to be achieved largely through a series of national preparatory workshops (which did not take place) and inter-regional workshops (which did), supplemented by general communication materials, delivered through a Communication Strategy, developed in the third year of the Project (such as four films on successful examples of cross-sectoral SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs). The Project had significant background information available for some SIDS/LFCC countries (7 target countries) and regions (4 regional reviews) from previous case studies (collected under Component I,

completed before the Project began), on which to draw for outreach materials. These reports, which bring together information on SFM and its financing as well as some basic data on the socio-economic, institutional, policy and legal environment, for target countries/regions, are available on the Project's webpage. This is the first time such information has been collected and presented in a coherent manner and can be considered a valuable contribution. However, overall, the communications and outreach material could have been better designed for the main target audience (decision-makers and donor agencies) with a better understanding of the most effective approaches and means to get key messages across (this still needs to be understood and demonstrated by the Project).

**235.** Unfortunately, the Project lacked indicators for the objective and the baseline was only known in general qualitative terms before the Project started (paragraph 153), and the Project failed to measure levels of awareness and knowledge before most of the Project's workshops (section 2.11.3) or whether new knowledge has been retained and used after these. Consequently, assessing changes in awareness and understanding of SFM financing issues is challenging. TE interviews suggest that awareness has been raised but few non-forest sector participants attended the Project's workshops; in other words the Project has been largely 'preaching to the converted' (and targeting decision-makers through workshops is perhaps not the most effective way). More could have been made of the information collected under Component I (section 2.11.1), and it would have helped 'sell the project's case' to decision-makers (increase 'political attention') if greater emphasis had been paid to promoting the socio-economic benefits of SFM in the first two years of the Project, and linking with existing UNEP initiatives in this area could have helped (paragraph 187), but unfortunately most of the Project's communication activities were only designed to be delivered late in the Project.

**236.** The Project's webpage, now hosted on a recently upgraded UNFF Facilitative Process website, presents most of the Project's results as well as other relevant information to help raise awareness and understanding among stakeholders, and hosts an online forum that aims to exchange views, and share experiences, promote access information on funding opportunities, and help maintain and build an informal 'community of practice' for SFM financing at global level (paragraph 78). Consequently, the website offers a potentially effective way to strengthen understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and opportunities for SFM and its financing, but again this was only delivered at the end of the Project and it is too early to determine whether it will deliver on this aim.

**237.** The Project had very limited national ownership, especially at the beginning of the Project, with the lack of funding for national level events (almost non-existent during the design phase and very limited for implementation, and there seems to have been an assumption that national partners would pay for any national-level activities) a particular weakness (paragraph 183). This weakness was known at the design stage - indeed, there were specific activities within Component II to 'build national ownership' during implementation- but this was not properly appreciated by the design team and no capacity assessment was undertaken on whether countries could participate in the Project. Nevertheless, 45 out of the 78 target countries did take part in Project activities (at least one workshop), which must be considered as a significant achievement given the constraints and challenges, and the UNFFS team deserves credit for this. However, national ownership of project results still remains generally low and patchy and will likely continue until the results of the common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) have been integrated at the national level (this is expected through a UNFFS follow up project, although there is no funding for this as yet).

**238.** Another aim of the Project has been to build and strengthen stakeholder cooperation through building networks. This has happened to some (unmeasured but limited) extent at the inter-regional level, largely through casual contacts (paragraphs 183 and 184) made between participants attending the workshops, and the workshops do appear to have offered a space for 'like-minded' countries to exchange views, experiences and information, opening potentially new dimensions of South-South cooperation and catalysis, such as between Trinidad and Tobago and Fiji on a 'Green Fund' (paragraph 60), but more could

have been made of these opportunities by direct follow-up by the project team. Again, it is hoped the FP website's online forum will help strengthen and formalize these loose social contacts/networks. However, national stakeholder networks were not built as this was simply too ambitious without deeper initial involvement of national partners and specific Project financing, especially given the number of countries to be involved in the Project. Indeed, it is clear that the project design team underestimated the challenges of delivering the project's proposed national-level activities.

**239.** Perhaps the most notable achievement of the Project has been the production of a common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) (para 90), developed by representatives from SIDS, LFCC, African and LDC countries at a workshop held in Addis Ababa in 2013. This was based on the results of the Project's four inter-workshops and two others held under a UNFFS sister project (African-LDC Project). Whilst the FFS is not a prescription for individual countries to follow it can be seen a guide or 'blueprint' for countries to develop their own strategies or strengthen policies for financing SFM. However, this document, although available on the Project's webpage, has had a relatively low profile within the Project and its recommendations need to be better promoted, particularly to potential donor institutions, non-forest sector decision-makers, and at the global level e.g. post-2015 agenda discussions. Most importantly, it needs to be translated to the national level. In many cases, this is likely to be best achieved through mainstreaming of key recommendations into existing policy processes rather than developing specific (and costly) national forest financing strategies. Given it was endorsed by participants from many countries it has a genuine level of legitimacy. Again, the UNFFS project management team deserves credit for delivering this product.

**240.** By contrast, the Project's direct capacity building activities have been rather limited, focused on a single workshop held in New York in September 2014 (paragraph 82) to train participants in how to use the new FP website ('online media literacy') and how to write effective grant proposals (to raise funds for SFM). Unfortunately, only 16 people were able to attend this event and some already had substantial experience in (successful) fund-raising so there is a question over its effectiveness and 'value-for-money'. However, the new FP website offers a potentially very useful capacity building tool (helping to meet a project aim of 'improved capacity building processes') through providing information on funding sources and a forum for interested parties (including donor agencies) to post news of funding opportunities or requests for funds (online 'market place'). Questions over the sustainability of the website remain and it needs to be considered a priority for further financing.

**241.** Although the Project has delivered some valuable products, project implementation has been especially handicapped by the poor design of the project and low capacity of the UNFFS team (particularly in the area of project design and management). In addition, the difficult initial relationship between the executing and implementing agencies did not help and delivery of results may have been stronger if a better working relationship had developed earlier between the two bodies. The lack of an effective International Steering Committee was also disappointing and weakened project supervision and oversight, and lack of engagement of key external partners, notably FAO and UNCCD, which have a strong interest in SFM, has limited opportunities for promotion and mainstreaming of results or leveraging of further co-financing.

**242.** The Project is considered to have made some useful contributions to delivering the UNFF Facilitative Process – it represents its first FP 'project', has produced a framework for developing national level forest financing strategies (the FFS), and has involved many of the countries that are looking to benefit from the Process. Whilst it is now recognized by the UNFFS that the Project was overly ambitious in design, the Project has been seen as a learning experience by the UNFFS team, who have done well to deliver what they have - given the constraints and challenges they have faced (the Project Manager deserves special praise here for his efforts). Encouragingly, the experiences from this project have been used to better design and implement other UNFF projects executed by the UNFFS.

**243.** The initial timeframe for the Project appears to have been set to match planned UNFF meetings/processes rather than what was realistically needed to deliver a project targeting 78 countries. The design team considerably underestimated the challenges and resources needed to deliver the Project (a reflection of the inexperience of the UNFFS). The inter-regional workshops in particular required a great deal more time and effort than the UNFFS team had expected. Although the Project was extended to three years through a No Cost Extension it was still insufficient and with hindsight, the Project should have been treated as a 4-year project and/or, with a reduced number of countries with average of 250,000/year spent, which would have been far more realistic and credible given the innovative nature of this project and the capacity issues affecting the UNFF Secretariat. In the TE's opinion, the three key institutions involved at the design stage – UNFFS, GEFSEC and UNEP – all share equal responsibility for the poor design of this Project.

**244.** For many stakeholders, most direct benefits have been on an individual participant level, with the inter-regional workshops, offering the opportunity to meet like-minded others, exchange experiences and develop their personal networks. Some participants saw the lack of any increased funding for forest-related activities through the Project as a failure, but this may have been because of false expectations (the Project never intended to mobilize resources directly).

**245.** The overall impact of the Project has been minimal to date. As many results were delivered late, there has been little opportunity for mainstreaming to take place. However, the delivery of the FSS and the development of the FP website, particularly the hosting of information on potential funding sources for SFM and its online forum with the potential to develop a 'community of practice' for SFM financing, offer the possibility for significant future impact if funding for these elements can be secured. The linkage of the Project with the UNFF FP and UNFFS's position within UNDESA in New York, offers clear opportunities for mainstreaming the Project's results to a wider audience and wider UN policy processes and it the project team needs to develop suitable outreach materials for these. Increased 'political attention and awareness' on forest financing, including increased financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs, will only be visible in the coming years, principally after the recommendations of the FSS and other Project results are applied at national level and integrated into wider environment and development processes, e.g. Aichi Targets, and if the interactive FP website is successful in creating and maintaining a 'community of practice' for SFM financing practitioners.

**246.** The overall rating for the Project is **Moderately Satisfactory**. A summary of the evaluation criteria, assessment and ratings is given below.

**Table 13: Summary of Evaluation criteria, assessment and ratings**

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	Project was designed to 'Kick-start' the UNFF Facilitative Process and helps implement the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work 2007-2015 and is most relevant to these, although it is consistent with GEF BD and LD Focal Areas principally through its support for enhanced financing for SFM, and is also relevant (mostly indirectly) to UNEP's mandate, policies and programmes, particularly the Ecosystem Management and Climate Change subprogrammes. Interviewees stated that there is still a great need for increased financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs so the Project and its results remain relevant to national governments.	2.10	S
B. Achievement of outputs	Most outputs were delivered, including four inter-regional workshops, and 45 out of 78 countries participated in at least one workshop. However, there were no national preparatory workshops or national reports and few baseline studies were undertaken. Background studies, compiled under Component I, are the first time such information has been compiled for SIDS and LFCCs. An important product has been a common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) for the SIDS, LFCCs developed	2.11	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	jointly with African and Least Developed Countries. The Project helped develop the Facilitative Process website, which provides useful information on SFM financing sources with linkage to donors and aims to create a 'community of practice' among those involved in SFM and its financing.		
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results	The Project has delivered many outputs but assessing progress on achievement of outcomes and higher aims is problematic and evidence suggests that the Project has produced relatively little change or impact to date.	2.12	MS
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed TOC	There is some (largely anecdotal) evidence of improved awareness of the need for increased SFM financing, and 'political attention' may have been increased in a small number of countries. The development and endorsement of a common Forest Financing Strategy (FFS) which is intended to act as a guide for the development of national level forest financing strategies, is a significant achievement, although this remains to be integrated at national level. A loose network of stakeholders is beginning to be established at global level through the FP's interactive website. There was some successful but limited capacity building on writing effective grant proposals. The FP website provides a potentially important capacity building tool.	2.12.1	MS
2. Likelihood of impact using ROTI approach	Not all the outcomes were fully achieved, due in part to the overly ambitious nature of the Project, although some project results will feed into a continuing process after the Project ends. Progress towards intermediate states has started and is helped by the fact that the project addresses the implementation of the Facilitative Process, thus presenting clear opportunities for mainstreaming results into global, regional and national processes supported by member states of the UNFF. The Project has not achieved documented changes in environmental status during the Project's lifetime.	2.12.2	MU
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	It is difficult to assess the degree of attainment of the Project objectives due to lack of appropriate indicators, baselines and targets, but evidence suggests that there has been some increase in understanding of the need for increased SFM financing although this is probably restricted to the main forest-sector stakeholders. However, the newly launched interactive FP website offers potential for improving uptake. The Project's goal of increased financing for the SFM certainly not achieved during lifetime of the Project, but understandable in Project's short time frame and its limited resources.	2.12.3	MU
D. Sustainability and replication			
1. Socio-political sustainability	There are concerns over the sustainability of the Project's results. Additional efforts are needed to ensure the mainstreaming of project results, especially the FFS which needs to be mainstreamed at national level. The future of the FP website is also uncertain as the new FP website has only recently been launched and it is not clear whether it will be sufficiently used.	2.13.1	ML
2. Financial resources	Further financing will be needed to ensure that some key Project results are sustained, notably the FP website to allow the 'community of practice' for SFM financing to grow, and for take-up of the recommendations of the FFS either directly through national level forest financing strategies or through mainstreaming of key recommendations/results through existing processes. Without additional financing sustainability of project results is unlikely.	2.13.2	MU
3. Institutional framework	Capacity issues are a major issue for some countries, especially SIDS. The Project has had very limited direct capacity training efforts	2.13.3	MU

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	(through one specific workshop) and it is not clear to what extent the new skills and knowledge are being used. The UNFFS currently has very limited capacity to deliver projects or any follow-up.		
4. Environmental sustainability	No negative environmental impacts were expected and the Project, if successful, is likely to improve the state of the environment, e.g. through reducing GHG emissions, and positive local socio-economic impacts through increased application of SFM, although long term expected climate change may negatively impact some of the target countries.	2.13.4	ML
5. Catalytic role and replication	There has been limited evidence of catalysis or replication to date, although this is not surprising given the slow delivery of the project. However, the Project did influence the design and implementation of two other UNFFS-executed FP projects, improving delivery of both, and it contributed indirectly to improving a multi-country Pacific-wide GEF project (Ridge to Reef Project).	2.13.5	MU
E. Efficiency	There were no specific cost- or time-saving measures initially proposed for the Project, and there is a question whether some project activities offered good 'value for money'. The Project principally built on UNFF agreements and its scheduling was initially arranged to coincide with UNFF meetings, e.g. delivery of reports in time for presentation at UNFF10 in 2013.	2.14	MS
F. Factors affecting project performance			
1. Preparation and readiness	The Project was largely focused at delivery at the output level (workshops, reports, communication materials, etc), and not at the outcome level or above, there was no indicator for the project objectives and formulation of outcomes was confused and overlapped. The overall logic of the project was unclear. The project was designed to kick-start a process – the 'Facilitative Process' – and it was recognized that it didn't fit the usual 'GEF BD and LD project model'. Unfortunately, there was no STAP review, important suggestions on project design made by the UNEP TM were not acted on, there was very little experience of project design with the UNFFS project team and the first GEF project design consultant had to be replaced for non-delivery. Consequently, the Project has been stuck with a very poorly designed framework that has handicapped implementation and meant that the Project has not been able to deliver results effectively and on time, e.g. requiring a 18 months extension beyond the original closure date (and even then some activities only just delivered).	2.15.1	U
2. Project implementation and management	Low capacity within the UNFFS (part-time PM and little direct experience of design or management of major donor projects) slowed delivery especially when the PM was seconded to other UN offices in 2013 and 2014. An International Steering Committee was established ostensibly as an oversight body but was ineffective and its first meeting (the most important) was held as a telecom rather than a face-to-face meeting at a project event. However, the Project Manager in particular deserves credit for his commitment and efforts, without which the Project would have delivered much less.	2.15.2	MS
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships	National partners were identified by the Project but only at a general level and there was no detailed Partnership Plan for the project. Furthermore, no national preparatory meetings took place before inter-regional workshops which would have allowed greater participation. Also, due to UN protocol choice of national representation was left to the discretion of participating countries,	2.15.3	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	<p>which meant that participants involved in one event were sometimes replaced by a colleague for another event. At international level, some of the key stakeholders, notably FAO and UNCCD, did not engage with the project in any meaningful way during its implementation despite repeated invitations from the UNFFS, nor did other members of CPF, such as CIFOR, who could have provided valuable support to the Project. Potential linkage to other SFM projects (GEF and non-GEF) was identified during the project design stage but there was little linkage during implementation. There was also very little engagement by the private sector or NGO community or academia in the Project. Nevertheless, 45 out of 78 countries did send representatives to Project meetings, which given the restrictions and challenges facing the project team can be considered a notable accomplishment.</p>		
4. Communication and public awareness	<p>The Project's communication and public awareness raising activities are set out in a Communication Strategy that was developed only in the third year of the Project. The strategy has some weaknesses, particularly in relation to identifying key messages, specific audiences in target countries, and identification of the most effective means to promote the Project's findings, and it does not adequately examine existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders that could be co-opted. Unfortunately, there is an almost total absence of baseline data with which to assess the effectiveness of the Communication Strategy and associated materials developed by the Project.</p>	2.15.4	MS
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	<p>There was very limited national ownership of the Project, particularly at the beginning of the Project, with few formal discussions with national partners at the design (PPG) stage and a general lack of buy-in from national governments, who knew little about the Project before implementation had begun. Essentially the Project was generated from ideas and a general request that came out of the UNFF9 meeting rather than directly by national stakeholders.</p>	2.12.5	U
6. Financial planning and management	<p>Financial planning was handicapped by the relatively small project budget and lack of co-financing during the implementation period. The single biggest cash co-financing was spent before the Project began, but this arrangement was approved by both GEFSEC and UNEP. There was very limited funding for national participation, which was largely a consequence of the small size of the GEF grant, and the large number of countries that had to be involved.</p>	2.15.6	MS
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	<p>The UNEP TM made considerable efforts to advise the UNFFS team on the development and delivery of the GEF project and was aware of their capacity limitations. However, the relationship between the UNEP and the UNFFS was troubled initially with misunderstandings on both sides, not helped by communication being limited to emails with no face-to-face meetings between the UNFFS team and the UNEP TM during the entire project period. However, the UNEP TM provided much useful technical advice on project design and implementation although his advice was not implemented on occasion and much of the basic structure and content of the GEF Project was already largely determined before UNEP became the IA.</p>	2.15.7	MS
8. Monitoring and evaluation	<p>The project's M&amp;E system followed UNEP's standard monitoring and evaluation procedure, although it suffered from a weak design (non-SMART indicators and targets with absent baseline data). Reporting requirements were largely fulfilled throughout the Project.</p>	2.15.8	MU
i. M&E design	<p>The M&amp;E was designed according to UNEP's standard monitoring and evaluation procedure. However, indicators and targets in the logframe</p>		U



Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	are almost all set at the output level and tracking of progress of the Project's outcomes and higher-level aims has been poor and largely subjectively measured and recorded in Project reports. Baseline data has been particularly absent with a lack of appreciation of the need for baseline among the UNFFS project team		
ii. M&E plan implementation	Monitoring of project progress has been adequate as most indicators are at output level and easily tracked, but monitoring of performance (in terms of achievement of project outcomes and project objective) was poor due to inadequate indicators. Reporting requirements were largely fulfilled throughout the Project, and completing the annual PIR was considered to be particularly valuable as a learning exercise by the project team. There was no Mid-Term review but the project has undergone a TE.		MS
Overall project rating	Moderately Satisfactory		

### 3.2 Recommendations and Lessons

**247.** The main recommendations and lessons learned generated from the evaluation findings have been specified in the main body of the report are presented in the Executive Summary.

## 4 ANNEXES

1. Evaluation TORs (without annexes)
2. Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluators
3. Evaluation program, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) and contacts (Email) of people met
4. Bibliography
5. Brief CVs of the consultant

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project “Facilitating Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)” (GFL-2328-2713-4B56; GEF ID: 4235)**

**5 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

**5.1 Project General Information**

Table 1. Project summary

<b>GEF project ID:</b>	4235	<b>IMIS number:</b>	2328-2713-4C23
<b>Focal Area(s):</b>	Biodiversity and Land Degradation	<b>GEF OP #:</b>	GFL-2328-2713-4B56
<b>GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:</b>	SFM-SP4; SFM-SP7	<b>GEF approval date:</b>	27 May 2011
<b>Approval date:</b>	1 August 2011	<b>First Disbursement:</b>	06 February 2012
<b>Actual start date:</b>	1 November 2011	<b>Planned duration:</b>	22 months
<b>Intended completion date:</b>	August 2014	<b>Actual completion date:</b>	n/a
<b>Project Type:</b>	MSP	<b>GEF Allocation:</b>	US\$ 950,000
<b>PPG GEF cost:</b>	US\$ 49,222.74	<b>PPG co-financing:</b>	US\$ 50,000
<b>Expected MSP Co-financing:</b>	US\$ 1,000,000	<b>Total Cost:</b>	US\$ 2,049,222.74
<b>Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):</b>	n/a	<b>Terminal Evaluation (actual date):</b>	September 2014
<b>Mid-term review/eval. (actual date):</b>	n/a	<b>No. of revisions:</b>	2
<b>Date of last Steering</b>	10 April 2013	<b>Date of last Revision*:</b>	23 January 2014

<b>Committee meeting:</b>			
<b>Disbursement as of 30 June 2014:</b>	US\$ 759,983.96	<b>Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2014:</b>	US\$ 538279.66
<b>Total co-financing realized as of June 2013:</b>	US\$ 1,116,810	<b>Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 30 June 2014</b>	US\$ 483334.16

Source UNEP/GEF PIR Fiscal Year 2013

## 5.2 Project rationale

2. The UNEP/GEF project “Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)” was implemented in 2011-2013 in 78 countries in order to address a decline in financing for sustainable forest management (SFM) in SIDS and LFCCs. The project was set against the recognition that financing for SFM had been in decline during the late 1990 and early 2000 and that the decline in financing for SFM was particularly pronounced in SIDS and LFCCs. In 2009, the UN member states decided to take action and created the Facilitative Process to assist developing countries mobilise funds for forests. This UNEP/GEF project was designed to kick-start that Facilitative Process. The project aimed at facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in SIDS and LFCCs (a total of 78 countries), with an aim to enhance understanding of opportunities for financing sustainable forest management in SIDS and LFCCs through analyses and strengthening of stakeholders capacity under the non-legally binding instruments on all types of forests, also known as the Forest Instrument.

3. The need for sustainable forest management in SIDS and LFCCs is of particular importance. Forest landscape restoration has long been identified as a solution to the greatest environmental threat faced by LFCCs, namely desertification. For the low-lying SIDS, such as several Pacific and Indian Ocean Islands, coastal forests, particularly mangroves, are a major barrier against loss of land surface area due to rising sea-levels. Forests strongly contribute to preventing erosion among SIDS, and the geographical isolation of SIDS also means that their forests act as hotspots for both, biodiversity and endemism. For both clusters of countries, forests act as a key element in climate change mitigation and they protect critical watersheds. Therefore, due to the high level of deforestation and forest degradation in SIDS and LFCCs, there is a need to strengthen forest management and to assure that SFM practices are applied in all remaining forests. These practices include forest conservation such as REDD+ initiatives, as well as potential reforestation processes. The UNEP/GEF project document defined sustainable forest management as all forms of forest management which maintain or enhance the multiple values of forests, as well as avoid or mitigate any negative socio-economic impacts both on site and off site<sup>72</sup>. The measures thus range from strict conservation in the most fragile ecosystems to sustainable logging and use of forest products by communities. However, SFM is often not implemented. The UNEP/GEF project document identified the reasons behind this as inappropriate governance and incentives, unclear land tenure systems, resource allocation conflicts, poverty, and the failure of markets to capture the values of forests to provide sufficient economic incentives against land conversion and alternative forms of land use.

4. Financial resources are, however, needed to implement SFM, both to directly invest in SFM but also to contribute to changes in policies and strategies at national and local levels. According to the UNEP/GEF project document, forest financing can be attracted from i) national sources, mainly through national budgets but also through NGOs and national industries; ii) international sources, mainly through bilateral and multilateral ODA, UN Agencies, the GEF, bilateral donors and international NGOs; and iii) through innovative sources that comprise of previously untapped funds such as private foundations, private sector and different market-based mechanisms such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and carbon markets.

5. In 2007, the Seventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) adopted the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (the “Forest Instrument”), which is the first international instrument for sustainable forest management agreed by the UN Member States. In 2008, an analysis was undertaken of the financial flows and

<sup>72</sup> Known as ‘leakage’ in environmental economics.

needs to implement the Forest Instrument and the analysis noted that there were significant funding gaps in external financial flows in support of SFM. In geographical terms, the analysis found funding gaps to exist in SIDS and LFCCs, in addition to several other regions. According to the UNEP/GEF project document, inadequacy of financial resources for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs is due to a variety of factors, of which many are local and context specific. Particularly in LFCCs, there is limited national political interest in SFM regardless that the rare forests play a crucial role in local economies and livelihoods. In SIDS, the geographical isolation and small size of many of the Island States could contribute to inability to attract external funding.

6. At the Ninth Session of the UNFF, the issue of financing gaps was recognized by the Member States as the largest obstacle to the implementation of the SFM. As a response, the Member States decided that a facilitative process would be created to assist developing countries in mobilising existing as well as new and additional funding to finance SFM. This UNEP/GEF project was designed to launch the facilitative process. The project was implemented in 78 countries including 39 SIDS and 48 LFCCs, namely Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Djibouti, Barbados, Yemen, Burundi, Haiti, Marshall Islands, Jamaica, Jordan, Algeria, Bahamas, Uruguay, Fiji, Micronesia, Belize, Mauritius, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Namibia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Niger, Tunisia, Tonga, East Timor, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Lesotho, Togo, Chad, Egypt, Samoa, Libya, Guinea-Bissau, St. Vincent and Grenadines, UAE, Antigua and Barbuda, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain, Iceland, Iran, South Africa, Syria, Grenada, Israel/Pal areas, Pakistan, Morocco, Ireland, Cape Verde, Cuba, St. Lucia, Solomon Islands, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Uzbekistan, Suriname, Mali, Kiribati, Mongolia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Qatar, Malta, Maldives, Kuwait, Mauritania, Seychelles, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Nauru, Singapore and Vanuatu.

### 5.3 Project objectives and components

7. This UNEP/GEF project was designed to enhance understanding of funding needs and gaps for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs. The project also aimed to enhance understanding of the challenges and opportunities to effectively utilize available resources and to improve the enabling environment for public and private financing. Through this work, the project was designed to contribute to the achievement of the Forest Instrument, as well as objectives in existing National Forest Plans (NFPs) of SIDS and LFCCs. The project was also designed to contribute to the work of UNFF with regards to forest-related funding mechanisms such as REDD+ financing and other payments for ecosystem services.

8. According to the project document, the project’s vision was formulated as *“SIDS and LFCCs are applying SFM principles whereby healthy forests sustainably contribute to local livelihoods, economic development and ecological stability”*. The project’s overall development goal was *“Financing mechanisms for SFM are identified and mobilised whereby forests are locally managed to sustainably contribute and improve local livelihoods and economic development, including delivering and ensuring ecosystem services such as biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaption, watershed and productivity on all levels (local, national and global)”*. The project’s objective was formulated as *“To enhance the understanding on opportunities for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCC countries through analysis and strengthening stakeholder capacity in financing mechanisms for SMF”*.

9. The project had three technical components and two management components as presented in table 2. The first component focused on fact-finding and analysis of the situation and prospects with regards financing for SFM in seven countries (3 SIDS and 4 LFCCs) as well as four macro-level inter-regional studies (2 for SIDS and LFCCs respectively). The second component focused on establishment of national ownership, review of thematic papers and consultations on the way forward through a national preparatory meeting (in SIDS and LFCCs) and four inter-regional workshops. The third component focused on the design and implementation of communications activities at the national and inter-regional levels in order to help strengthen awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCC countries to address SFM funding gaps and increase political attention on innovative approaches on financing for SFM. The components IV and V focused on monitoring and evaluation of the overall project and production of progress reports, respectively.

Table 2. Project components and component objectives

Components	Component Outcomes
Component I Analysis of current financial flows, gaps, needs as well as governance structures for financing SFM in SIDS and LFCCs	CI.1. Enhanced understanding of the specifics of SFM in SIDS or LFCCs and its socio-economic and ecosystem services potential.  CI.2. Improved understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and prospective mechanisms for enhanced SFM financing in SIDS and LFCCs.

<u>Component II</u> Establishment of national ownership, review of thematic papers and consultations on way forward	CII.1. Strengthened national awareness and ownership as well as strengthened inter-regional and regional cooperation through networks on SFM financing.  CII.2. Enhanced insight and agreement on common way forward towards the elaboration of a SFM financing communications strategy and overall approach to SFM.
<u>Component III</u> Communications strategy for facilitation of SFM financing of SIDS and LFCC countries	CIII.1. Improved processes towards building / strengthening awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCC countries to address SFM funding gaps.  CIII.2. Increased political attention and awareness on innovative approaches on financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs through improved dialogue.
<u>Component IV</u> Project monitoring and evaluation	CIV.1. Successfully monitored and evaluated SFM financing project.
<u>Component V</u> Project management	CV.1. Successfully managed and reported SFM financing project.

Source: UNEP Project document.

## 5.4 Executing Arrangements

10. The GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for this project was the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Formally, the lead Executing Agency (EA) was United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), which was represented by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat on day to day project execution. UNEP was responsible for technical oversight and monitoring of the quality of project implementation and management, as well as ensuring consistency with the GEF and UNEP policies and procedures. It was UNEP's responsibility also to enable that the project coordinated with related UNEP and GEF activities. The responsibilities of UNFF included executing the project in accordance with objective, outcomes, outputs and deliverables as described in the project document and the project's Logical Framework matrix (Logframe).

11. According to the project document, the project was to have an International Steering Committee (ISC) providing overall guidance and direction for the project, as well as approving the project's annual work plans and budgets. A Project Management Unit (PMU) was to be established within UNFF Secretariat, where one member was to be assigned the role of Project Manager (PM). The PM's responsibility was to mobilise project resources and ensure that the project was initiated and executed as efficiently as possible following the agreed project design, as well as to mobilise country and regional project partners, compile and disseminate lessons learned, apply adaptive management, and function as a facilitator on actions to be taken in the involved countries. In addition, the PM's responsibilities included preparation of annual work plans and budgets, and ensuring that the project execution includes proper financial management, timely delivery of outputs and full engagement of the national focal points in the project.

12. The stakeholder analysis conducted during PPG identified several groups of stakeholders that the project attempted to involve in implementation of the project. At the national level, the key stakeholders were governmental ministries and authorities; NGOs; community-based organisations and smallholder associations; private sector including professional associations; academic organisations and universities; and media. At international level, the identified key stakeholders were international organisations, such as UN agencies and bilateral donors; international agencies and research institutes, such as CIFOR; and international NGOs, such as IUCN and WWF. In addition, the project identified key stakeholders at inter-regional and regional level, such as inter-governmental cooperation agreements (e.g. SADC and AU), as well as different partnership funds.

## 5.5 Project Cost and Financing

13. The Project Preparation Grant (PPG) was US\$ 50,000 from GEF and US\$ 50,000 as co-financing. Table 3 presents a summary of expected financing sources for the project as presented in the Project Document. The GEF provided US\$ 950,000 of external financing to the project. This placed the project in the Medium-Size Project category. The project was expected to mobilize another US\$ 1,000,000 in co-financing (in-kind and cash), through UN-DESA, UNFF Secretariat and UK-DFID, bringing the project's total cost to US \$ 1,950,000.

Table 3. Estimated project costs per component and financing source

<b>Component</b>	<b>GEF Grant</b>	<b>Co-financing</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Component I</b> – Analysis	0	571,186	571,186
<b>Component II</b> – Ownership	607,734	189,200	796,934
<b>Component III</b> – Communications	236,766	119,614	356,880
<b>Component IV</b> – M&E	20,000	20,000	40,000
<b>Component V</b> – Project management	85,500	100,000	185,500
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	950,000	1,000,000	1,950,000

Source: UNEP Project Document

Table 4. Sources of co-financing at the time of project approval

<b>Name of co-financer</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>UN-DESA</b>	0	189,200	189,200
<b>UNFFS</b>	186,050	0	186,050
<b>UK-DFID</b>	0	624,750	624,750
<b>Total Co-financing</b>			1,000,000

Source: UNEP Project Document

## 5.6 Implementation Issues

14. The original planned project duration was from November 2011 to February 2013, but according to the Project Implementation Review (PIR) for the Fiscal Year 2013 (1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013) the project experienced delays with its start-up. The actual project initiation date was 1 November 2011, and the project was granted a non-cost extension until 31 August 2013. The project further requested a 12 month extension to 31 August 2014 with a cost of US\$ 461,171 but without additional costs to the project. The justification for the extension was that even though, according to the project extension proposal, all of the project's primary outputs had been delivered, the project was yet to provide evidence of achieving the expected outcomes of Component III (improved process towards strengthening awareness and capacity of SIDS and LFCCs to address SFM funding gaps and increased political attention and awareness on innovative approaches on financing for SFM in SIDS and LFCCs through improved dialogue). According to the justification in the project extension proposal, the extension was to provide an opportunity to strengthen the communication strategy of Component III with two additional activities, but also to strengthen the stakeholder networks that were initiated in Component III, hence increasing the probability that the expected outcomes would be attained. The project did not undergo a Mid-Term Review (MTR) or a Mid-Term Evaluation. According to the PIR for the Fiscal Year 2013 (which was the first PIR done for the project), the Progress rating for Outcomes 1 and 2 was Satisfactory, for Outcome 3 Moderately Unsatisfactory, for Outcomes 4 and 5 Moderately Satisfactory, for Outcomes 6 and 7 Moderately Unsatisfactory, and for Outcome 8 Satisfactory. The overall project progress towards meeting project objective was rated by the project Task Manager as Moderately Unsatisfactory due to shortfalls in regards timely development of the communications strategy.

## 6 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

### 6.1 Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

15. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>73</sup>, the UNEP Evaluation Manual<sup>74</sup> and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations<sup>75</sup>, the Terminal Evaluation of the Project *Facilitating financing for sustainable forest*

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

*management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)* is undertaken after completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and their executing partner UNDESA - UNFF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. It will focus on the following sets of key questions, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultant as deemed appropriate:

- (a) To what extent has the project enhanced understanding of the specifics of sustainable forest management and its socio-economic and ecosystem services potential in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries?
- (b) To what extent has the project improved understanding of the status, obstacles, needs and prospective mechanisms for enhanced sustainable forest management financing in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries?
- (c) To what extent has the project contributed towards strengthened national awareness and ownership, as well as strengthened inter-regional cooperation through networks on sustainable forest management financing?
- (d) To what extent has the project contributed towards enhanced insight and agreement on common way forward towards the elaboration of a sustainable forest management financing and communications strategy and overall approach to sustainable forest management?
- (e) To what extent has the project contributed towards an improved process to building and strengthening awareness and capacity of Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries to address sustainable forest management funding gaps?
- (f) To what extent has the project contributed towards increased political attention and awareness on innovative approaches on financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries through improved dialogue?

## 6.2 Overall Approach and Methods

16. The Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Facilitating financing for sustainable forest management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)" will be conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi), in consultation with the UNEP GEF Coordination Office (Nairobi), and the UNEP Task Manager at UNEP/ROAP (Bangkok).

17. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.

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

- (a) A **desk review** of project documents and others including, but not limited to:
  - Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP and GEF policies, strategies and programmes pertaining to sustainable forest management and financing;
  - Project design documents; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the logical framework and project financing;

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<sup>75</sup> [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE\\_guidelines7-31.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf)



Project reports such as progress and financial reports from the executing partners to UNEP; Steering Committee meeting minutes; annual Project Implementation Reviews, GEF Tracking Tools and relevant correspondence;  
Project Audit report(s);  
Documentation related to project activities, outputs and deliverables;  
Review of media articles concerning the project, including project / UNFF website.

(b) **Interviews with:**

Project management and execution support at UNDESA - UNFF;  
National Project focal points;  
Members of the International Project Steering Committee;  
UNEP Task Manager and Fund Management Officer (Bangkok & Nairobi);  
Relevant authorities in the participating countries;  
Relevant staff of GEF Secretariat; and  
Representatives of other multilateral agencies and other relevant organisations.

(c) **Country visits.** No country visits will be undertaken by the evaluation. However, the consultant may, as possible, attend an event / workshop organized by UNFF.

### 6.3 Key Evaluation principles

19. 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. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

20. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to **a minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The evaluation consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

21. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 2 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

22. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, 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 and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This 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 and trends 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.

23. As this is a terminal evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “*Why?*” question should be at front of the consultant’s mind all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultant needs to go beyond the assessment of “*what*” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “*why*” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category 3). 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*” today.

## 6.4 Evaluation criteria

### A. Strategic relevance

24. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with: i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs; ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation; and iii) the GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation focal area, strategic priorities and operational programme(s).

25. It will also assess whether the project objectives were realistic, given the time and budget allocated to the project, the baseline situation and the institutional context in which the project was to operate.

### B. Achievement of Outputs

26. The evaluation will assess, for each component, the project's success in producing the programmed results as presented in Table 2 above, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain the degree of success of the project in achieving its different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives). The achievements under the regional and national demonstration projects will receive particular attention.

### C. Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

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

28. The evaluation will reconstruct the Theory of Change (ToC) of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The ToC of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) over outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (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 pathways, 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).

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

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of direct 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) approach as summarized in Annex 6 of the ToRs. Appreciate to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute to changes in stakeholder behaviour as a result of the project's direct outcomes, and the likelihood of those changes in turn leading to changes in the natural resource base, benefits derived from the environment and human living conditions.
- (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 original logframe (see Table 2 above) and any later versions of the logframe. This sub-section will refer back where applicable to 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 Matrix (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.

### D. Sustainability and replication

30. 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 sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The reconstructed ToC will assist in the evaluation of sustainability.

31. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main national, regional and international stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?
- (b) *Financial resources.* To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources<sup>76</sup> will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under 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?
- (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?

32. **Catalytic role and replication.** The *catalytic role* of GEF-funded 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 and the GEF also aim 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: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established;
- (b) Provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalysing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) Contributed to *institutional changes*. An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in the regional and national demonstration projects;
- (d) Contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) Contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, the GEF or other donors;
- (f) Created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyse change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

33. *Replication*, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and

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<sup>76</sup> Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

appreciate to what extent actual replication has already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

## 7 Efficiency

34. 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 programmed budget and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions. The evaluation will 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 all within the context of project execution.

## 8 Factors and processes affecting project performance

35. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focuses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders<sup>77</sup> adequately identified? Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? 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 GEF environmental and social safeguards considered when the project was designed<sup>78</sup>?

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

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management by UNDESA - UNFF and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- (c) Assess the role and performance of the units and committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the Steering Committee and UNEP supervision recommendations.
- (e) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project partners tried to overcome these problems. How did the relationship between the project management team (UNDESA - UNFF) and the national focal points develop?
- (f) Assess the extent to which the project implementation met GEF environmental and social safeguards requirements.

37. **Stakeholder participation and public awareness.** The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions, private interest groups, local communities etc. The ToC analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and outcomes to impact.

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<sup>77</sup> 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.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4562>

The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination between stakeholders, (2) consultation between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) The approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders in project design and implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities? 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?
- (b) The degree and effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project; or that are built into the assessment methods so that public awareness can be raised at the time the assessments will be conducted;
- (c) How the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in decision making in the transport sector.

38. **Country ownership and driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the performance of government agencies involved in the project in Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Djibouti, Barbados, Yemen, Burundi, Haiti, Marshall Islands, Jamaica, Jordan, Algeria, Bahamas, Uruguay, Fiji, Micronesia, Belize, Mauritius, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Namibia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Niger, Tunisia, Tonga, East Timor, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Lesotho, Togo, Chad, Egypt, Samoa, Libya, Guinea-Bissau, St. Vincent and Grenadines, UAE, Antigua and Barbuda, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain, Iceland, Iran, South Africa, Syria, Grenada, Israel/Pal areas, Pakistan, Morocco, Ireland, Cape Verde, Cuba, St. Lucia, Solomon Islands, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Uzbekistan, Suriname, Mali, Kiribati, Mongolia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Qatar, Malta, Maldives, Kuwait, Mauritania, Seychelles, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Nauru, Singapore and Vanuatu.

- (a) In how far have the Governments assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the project and the timeliness of provision of counter-part funding to project activities?
- (b) To what extent has the political and institutional framework of the participating countries been conducive to project performance?
- (c) To what extent have the public entities promoted the participation non-governmental organisations in the project?
- (d) How responsive were the government partners to UNDESA - UNFF coordination and guidance, and to UNEP supervision?

39. **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) Appreciate 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 to what extent co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 3).
- (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.

40. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken by UNDESA - UNFF or UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Appreciate whether the measures taken were adequate.

41. **UNEP supervision and 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. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
- (d) The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
- (e) Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

42. **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 appreciate how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
  - Quality of the project logframe (original and possible updates) as a planning and monitoring instrument; analyse, compare and verify correspondence between the original logframe in the Project Document, possible revised logframes and the logframe used in Project Implementation Review reports to report progress towards achieving project objectives;
  - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
  - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?
  - Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were project users involved in monitoring?
  - 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;
  - Annual project reports and Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;

The information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

- (c) *Use of GEF Tracking Tools.* These are portfolio monitoring tools intended to roll up indicators from the individual project level to the portfolio level and track overall portfolio performance in focal areas. Each focal area has developed its own tracking tool<sup>79</sup> to meet its unique needs. Agencies are requested to fill out at CEO Endorsement (or CEO approval for MSPs) and submit these tools again for projects at mid-term and project completion. The evaluation will verify whether UNEP has duly completed the relevant tracking tool for this project, and whether the information provided is accurate.

## 9 Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes

43. UNEP aims to undertake GEF funded projects that are aligned with its own strategies. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:

- (a) *Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and PoWs 2010-2011, 2012-2013.* The UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2010-2013 specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ToC/ROtI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP GEF projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013<sup>80</sup> would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarities may still exist and it is still useful to know whether these projects remain aligned to the current MTS.
- (b) *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*<sup>81</sup>. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
- (c) *Gender.* 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. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?
- (d) *South-South Cooperation.* This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

### 9.1 The Consultant Team

The evaluation will be undertaken by an independent consultant with a Master's Degree or higher in an environment related field, with at least seven years of relevant experience, such as implementing and evaluating sustainable forest management finances – and related global or regional projects. The consultant should have experience in project evaluation, and in planning and implementing sustainable forest management - related projects, preferably in SIDS and LFCCs. The consultant should be fluent in written and spoken English. Familiarity with the GEF and UNEP is an advantage. The consultant will be responsible for coordinating data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the main report for the evaluation. The consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria are adequately covered.

44. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any

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<sup>79</sup> [http://www.thegef.org/gef/tracking\\_tools](http://www.thegef.org/gef/tracking_tools)

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

## 9.2 Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

45. The evaluator will prepare an **inception report** (see Annex 1(a) of ToRs for Inception Report outline) containing a thorough review of the project context, project design quality (see Annex 7) a draft reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) of the project, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

46. The review of project design quality at the evaluation inception stage will cover the following aspects (see Annex 9 for the detailed project design assessment matrix):

- (a) Strategic relevance of the project;
- (b) Preparation and readiness (see paragraph 25);
- (c) Financial planning (see paragraph 30);
- (d) M&E design (see paragraph 33(a));
- (e) Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes (see paragraph 34);
- (f) Sustainability considerations and measures planned to promote replication and up-scaling (see paragraph 23).

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

48. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the evaluation questions under each criterion with their respective indicators and data sources. 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.

49. The inception report will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process, including a draft programme for the possible country visits and a tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed. The inception report will be submitted for review and approval by the UNEP Evaluation Office before the evaluation team travels.

50. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 35 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The consultant will deliver a high quality report in English by the end of the assignment. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

51. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The consultant will submit the zero draft report latest two weeks after the country visits has been completed to the UNEP Evaluation Office and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the Evaluation Office. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the Evaluation Office will share this first draft report with the UNEP Task Manager who will ensure that the report does not contain any blatant factual errors. The UNEP Task Manager will then, after an agreement with the Evaluation Office, forward the first draft report to other project stakeholders, in particular the UNDESA-UNFF Secretariat and some of the national GEF focal points for 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 Evaluation Office for collation. The Evaluation Office will provide the comments to the consultant for consideration in preparing the final draft report.



52. The 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. S(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 Evaluation Office with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

53. Submission of the final Terminal Evaluation report. The final evaluation report shall be submitted by e-mail to the Chief, UNEP Evaluation Office, who will share the report with the Director, UNEP/GEF Coordination Office and the UNEP/DEPI Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will also transmit the final report to the GEF Evaluation Office.

54. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site [www.unep.org/eou](http://www.unep.org/eou). Subsequently, the report will be sent to the GEF Office of Evaluation for their review, appraisal and inclusion on the GEF website.

55. As per usual practice, the UNEP Evaluation Office 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 both GEF and UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 4.

56. The UNEP Evaluation Office will also prepare a **commentary** on the final evaluation report, which presents the Evaluation Office ratings of the project based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultant and the internal consistency of the report. These ratings are the final ratings that the UNEP Evaluation Office will submit to the GEF Office of Evaluation.

### 9.3 Logistical arrangement

57. This Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The evaluation consultant will be contracted for a period of 28 days spread over 3 months. The contract will commence 22 September 2014 and end on 31 December 2014. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the Evaluation Office on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize field visits, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNDESA – UNFF Secretariat will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, transport etc.) for the country visits, allowing the consultant to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

### 9.4 Schedule of payments

58. The consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). There are two options for contract and payment: lump sum or "fee only".

59. **Lump sum:** The contract covers both fees and expenses such as travel, per diem (DSA) and incidental expenses which are estimated in advance. The consultant will receive an initial payment covering estimated expenses upon signature of the contract.

60. **Fee only:** 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.

61. The payment schedule for the consultants will be linked to the acceptance of the key evaluation deliverables by the Evaluation Office:

- |     |                                     |                                 |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) | Final inception report:             | 20 per cent of agreed total fee |
| (b) | First draft main evaluation report: | 40 per cent of agreed total fee |
| (c) | Final main evaluation report:       | 40 per cent of agreed total fee |

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

63. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. within one month after 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 consultants' fees 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

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluator

Factual errors in the draft evaluation report reported by stakeholders were corrected. Where there were differences of opinion between the stakeholder and evaluator these are given as footnotes in the main text and given that there were very few, they are not repeated here.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION PROGRAM

Name	Affiliation	Email address	Involvement in Project
Mr Modesto Fernandez	Cuba	<a href="mailto:mffds@yahoo.com">mffds@yahoo.com</a>	Participated in two workshops
Mr Aden Forteau	Grenada	<a href="mailto:michael.forteau@yahoo.co.uk">michael.forteau@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Participated in two workshops
Mr Patrick Kariuki	Kenya	<a href="mailto:pmkariuki@yahoo.com">pmkariuki@yahoo.com</a>	Participated in two workshops
Mr Ibro Adamou (FR)	Niger	<a href="mailto:ibroadamou@yahoo.fr">ibroadamou@yahoo.fr</a>	Assisted in preparation of Niger workshop, participated in three workshops
Dr Mahamane Larwanou	African Forest Forum	<a href="mailto:m.larwanou@cgiar.org">m.larwanou@cgiar.org</a>	Participated in two workshops
Also general feedback from delegates from Chile, France, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Jamaica, Mali, Niger, and Switzerland, on the UNFF Facilitative Process website following presentation at AHEG2 meeting, and from Financing of SFM session at the AHEG2 meeting on Tuesday 13 January 2015.			
Mr Armin Plum	Capacity Development Office, UN-DESA	<a href="mailto:pluma@un.org">pluma@un.org</a>	Finance officer for the SIDS-LFCC project
Ms Gill Fickling	UN-DPI	<a href="mailto:fickling@un.org">fickling@un.org</a>	Main contact at DPI and producer of Trinidad & Tobago and Solomon Islands films
Ms Jan Mun	UNFF Consultant	<a href="mailto:msjanmun@gmail.com">msjanmun@gmail.com</a>	Communication expert for Component III. Played key role in designing no-cost extension. Consultant for New York workshop
Mr Hossein Moeini-Meybodi	UNFF staff	<a href="mailto:Moeini-meybodi@un.org">Moeini-meybodi@un.org</a>	Senior Forest Affairs Officer, supervisor of project manager
Mr Benjamin Singer	UNFF staff	<a href="mailto:singerb@un.org">singerb@un.org</a>	Project Manager
Mr Manoel Sobral Filho	UNFF staff	<a href="mailto:sobral-filho@un.org">sobral-filho@un.org</a>	Current Director of UNFF Secretariat
Ms Njeri Kariuki	UNFF staff	<a href="mailto:kariuki@un.org">kariuki@un.org</a>	Assisted in preparing and running 5 workshops
Mr Mark Petimezas	UNFF consultant	<a href="mailto:petimezas@un.org">petimezas@un.org</a>	Involved in development of FP website and other IT issues
Ms. Mita Sen	UNFF staff	<a href="mailto:sen@un.org">sen@un.org</a>	Involved in advising on communications strategy
Mr Max Zieren	UNEP	<a href="mailto:max.zieren@unep.org">max.zieren@unep.org</a>	UNEP Task Manager responsible for Project
Ms. Ludmila Khorosheva	UNEP	<a href="mailto:Ludmila.Khorosheva@unep.org">Ludmila.Khorosheva@unep.org</a>	Financial Management Officer for the project
Ms Jan McAlpine	McAlpine International Consultants	<a href="mailto:mcalpine622@gmail.com">mcalpine622@gmail.com</a>	Formerly Director of UNFF Secretariat
Mr Gustavo Fonseca	GEFSEC	<a href="mailto:gfonseca1@thegef.org">gfonseca1@thegef.org</a>	Involved in early decisions on GEF funding for Project
Mr Ian Gray	GEF Secretariat	<a href="mailto:igray@thegef.org">igray@thegef.org</a>	Primary contact at the GEF for the Project



## ANNEX IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following documents and visual outputs were reviewed as part of the TE.

### Project documents

1. Project Identification Form (PIF) for the Project
2. GEF Secretariat Review of the Project's PIF
3. PPG request and Milestone Extension approval
4. Request for CEO Endorsement/Approval
5. Project Document and appendices
6. Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) for 2013 and 2014
7. Minutes of Project's International Steering Committee meetings for 2011, 2012 and 2013
8. Selected correspondence between UNEP and UNFF dating from 2009 to 2014
9. Terminal Report for Project (dated November 2014)

### Project reports and publications

10. Summary information on Project from UNFF and Facilitative Process website (<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/> and <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/facilitative-process.html>)
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15. Indufor (2010e). "Facilitating Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries: the Case of Cape Verde". Study commissioned by the UNFF.
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23. UNFF (2012a). Report of the second workshop on forest financing in low forest cover countries, held in Niamey, Niger, from 30 January to 3 February 2012. UNFF report.

24. UNFF (2012b). Report of the first workshop on forest financing in small island developing states, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 23 to 27 April 2012. UNFF report.
25. UNFF (2012c). Report of the second workshop on forest financing in small island developing states, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 23 to 27 July 2012. UNFF report.
26. UNFF (2013a). Report of the workshop on the common forest financing strategy, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 3 to 5 June 2013. UNFF report.
27. UNFF (2013b). A guide to a common Forest Financing Strategy in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs), African Countries, and Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
28. UNFF (2013c). Forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs: Introduction. UNFF policy brief.
29. UNFF (2013d). Forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs (forestry stakeholders). UNFF policy brief.
30. UNFF (2013e). Forest financing in SIDS and LFCCs (general public). UNFF policy brief.
31. UNFF (2013f). Forest financing in Cape Verde. UNFF fact sheet.
32. UNFF (2013g). Forest financing in Jordan. UNFF fact sheet.
33. UNFF (2013h). Forest financing in Trinidad and Tobago. UNFF fact sheet.
34. UNFF (2013i). Communication Strategy facilitating financing for SFM in Small Island Developing States and Low Forest Cover Countries.
35. UNFF (2014). Report of the first workshop on online media literacy and grant application, held in New York, USA, from 8 to 12 September. UNFF report.

#### **Other documents**

36. UNEP Mid Term Strategy for 2010-2013
37. UNEP Strategic Agenda on Forest Ecosystems and their Services (dated March 2013)
38. Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy for GEF-5 and Land Degradation (Desertification and Deforestation) Focal Area Strategy for GEF-5
39. Terms of Reference for the Terminal Evaluation, dated 1 September, 2014
40. Independent Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests (2014). Report of the Team of Independent Consultants. New York, September 2014.

## ANNEX V. CONSULTANT(S) RÉSUMÉ

### *Brief CVs of the consultants*

Nigel Varty is an environmental consultant with 30 years experience in biodiversity conservation policy and planning particularly in relation to in-situ conservation (e.g. Protected Areas, NBSAPs), sustainable management of natural resources (tourism, fisheries, agriculture, forestry, energy and hunting sectors), institutional capacity building (government and NGO), ecosystem services assessment and ecosystem-based approaches to climate change, with experience of EIA for the business sector. He has a particular interest in/knowledge of forest, wetland, coastal and island ecosystems, with long- and short-term work experience in over 30 temperate and tropical countries, particularly Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, principally in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus, the Middle East, and South-East Asia. He has designed and evaluated many GEF projects for the UNDP, UNEP and The World Bank, in the Biodiversity, International Waters and Land Degradation focal areas, including 10 GEF project evaluations within the last 7 years. He was formerly employed by BirdLife International as a Programme Officer for 6 years.



# UNEP Evaluation Report Quality Assessment

Evaluation Report Title:

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All UNEP evaluation reports 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:

Substantive report quality criteria	UNEP EO Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
A. Strategic relevance: <b>Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention?</b>	Draft report:  Final report:	S	S
B. Achievement of outputs: <b>Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?</b>	Draft report:  Final report:	HS	HS
C. <b>Presentation Theory of Change:</b> 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
D. <b>Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results:</b> 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:	HS	HS
E. <b>Sustainability and replication:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?	Draft report:  Final report:	S	HS
F. <b>Efficiency:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency?	Draft report:  Final report:	S	S
G. <b>Factors affecting project performance:</b> 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	Draft report:  Final report:	S	S

system and its use for project management?			
<b>H. Quality and utility of the recommendations:</b> 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	HS
<b>I. Quality and utility of the lessons:</b> 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	S
<b>Other report quality criteria</b>			
<b>J. Structure and clarity of the report:</b> Does the report structure follow EO guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?	Draft report:  Final report:	S	S
<b>K. Evaluation methods and information sources:</b> 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
<b>L. Quality of writing:</b> Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)	Draft report:  Final report:	HS	HS
<b>M. Report formatting:</b> Does the report follow EO guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.	Draft report:  Final report:	HS	HS
<b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b>		5.4	5.5

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.

## 2. Checklist of compliance with UNEP EO's normal operating procedures for the evaluation process

Compliance issue	Yes	No
1. Were the TORs shared with the implementing and executing agencies for comment prior to finalization?	<b>X</b>	
2. Was the budget for the evaluation agreed and approved by the UNEP Evaluation Office?	<b>X</b>	
3. Was the final selection of the preferred evaluator or evaluators made by the UNEP Evaluation Office?	<b>X</b>	
4. Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised? (Evaluators should not have participated substantively during project preparation and/or implementation and should have no conflict of interest with any proposed follow-up phases)	<b>X</b>	
5. Was an inception report delivered before commencing any travel in connection with the evaluation?	<b>X</b>	
6. Were formal written comments on the inception report prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office and shared with the consultant?	<b>X</b>	
7. If a terminal evaluation; was it initiated within the period six months before or after project completion? If a mid-term evaluation; was the mid-term evaluation initiated within a six month period prior to the project/programmes's mid-point?	<b>X</b>	
8. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO by the evaluator?	<b>X</b>	
9. Did UNEP Evaluation Office check the quality of the draft report, including EO peer review, prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comment?	<b>X</b>	
10. Did UNEP Evaluation Office disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the draft report to key stakeholders to solicit formal comments?	<b>X</b>	
11. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the draft evaluation report?	<b>X</b>	
12. Were formal written stakeholder comments sent directly to the UNEP Evaluation Office?	<b>X</b>	
13. Were all collated stakeholder comments and the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance to the evaluator shared with all evaluation stakeholders?	<b>X</b>	
14. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?	<b>X</b>	
15. Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared?	<b>X</b>	

### **Comments in relation to any non-compliant issues:**